



PART IV

Use of Monitoring and Evaluation Information

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Knowledge and Learning: Use of Evaluative Evidence

The chapter is intended to help users effectively apply monitoring and evaluation information for improvements in performance, decision-making and learning. It addresses the use of evaluative evidence, monitoring and evaluation information, and the purposes of evaluation. It describes how to ensure effective feedback on monitoring and evaluation results, touches on evaluative evidence and discusses lessons learned.

- A. Introduction
- B. Knowledge and learning from experience
 - Definitions
 - RBM and knowledge management
- C. Feedback from monitoring and evaluation
 - The feedback process
 - Information tools and methods
 - Applying the recommendations from feedback
 - Publication of evaluative evidence and feedback material

A. Introduction

Knowledge gained through monitoring and evaluation is at the core of UNDP's organizational learning process. Monitoring and evaluation provide information and facts that, when accepted and internalized, become knowledge that promotes learning. Learning must therefore be incorporated into the overall programming cycle through an effective feedback system. Information must be disseminated and available to potential users in order to become applied knowledge.

At country office level, UNDP uses and applies learning from monitoring and evaluation to improve the overall performance and quality of results of ongoing and future projects, programmes and strategies. Learning is particularly significant for UNDP support to the policy reform process, which is often innovative and contains uncertainties. To ensure the relevance of learning, evaluative evidence should demonstrate “real time” capability. An immediate advantage is that conclusions

can be field-checked with respondents within weeks, providing important opportunities for eliminating erroneous interpretations, increasing respondents' sense of ownership of their distilled experiences and providing evaluative results to interested stakeholders when it is likely to be most useful. Giving real-time results to stakeholders means getting it right from the start. The publication of outdated results or irrelevant recommendations should decrease once dissemination of real-time information becomes normal practice.

Learning complements performance measurement by lending a qualitative edge to assessments. Even when the indicators associated with results are not good or clear, it is possible to learn from the process and to use this knowledge to improve it. Learning is also a key tool for management and, as such, the strategy for the application of evaluative knowledge is an important means of advancing towards outcomes. Outcomes are a more ambitious and complex endeavor than the simple supply of inputs and production of outputs. This is why a premium is placed on UNDP's ability to learn what works—in terms of outcome relevance, partnership strategy, output design and indicators—and feed this back into ongoing and future outcome assistance. Outcomes present more variables around which learning can and must take place.

Evaluations should be seen not as an event but as part of an exercise whereby different stakeholders are able to participate in the continuous process of generating and applying evaluative knowledge. Managers must decide who participates in this process and to what extent they will be involved (informed, consulted, actively involved, equal partners or as the key decision-makers). These are strategic decisions for managers that have a direct bearing on the learning and the ownership of results. A monitoring and evaluation framework that generates knowledge, promotes learning and guides action is, in its own right, an important means of capacity development and sustainability of national results.

BOX 1. CHECKLIST FOR LEARNING

- **Record and share lessons learned**
- **Keep an open mind**
- **Plan evaluations strategically**
- **Involve stakeholders strategically**
- **Provide real-time information**
- **Link knowledge to users**
- **Apply what has been learned**
- **Monitor how new knowledge is applied**

Monitoring and evaluation contribute to the organizational and global body of knowledge about what works, what does not work and why. They also indicate under what conditions in different focus areas lessons learned should be shared at a global level, through communities of practice or monitoring and evaluation groups, for example. This requires that staff record and share the lessons they have acquired with others, following such

actions as listed in Box 1. Learning also requires that managers are open to change.

With the focus on outcomes, the learning that occurs through monitoring and evaluation has great potential for application at the organizational level and for policy and operational purposes. Lessons learned for an SRF outcome that is pursued by many COs are more likely to be replicable beyond that country than would be more context-specific, project-related lessons. Outcome evaluations may help bring together development partners. In this way, learning from evaluative knowledge becomes wider than simply organizational learning and also encompasses development learning. It helps to test systematically the validity, relevance and progress of the development hypotheses. To

maximize learning, country offices should plan and organize evaluations to ensure that they cover the most crucial outcomes, that they are timely and that they generate sufficient information on lessons learned.

Effective monitoring can detect early signs of potential problem areas and success areas. Programme Managers must act on the findings, applying the lessons learned to modify the programme or project. This learning by doing serves the immediate needs of the programme or project, and it also may provide feedback for future programming.

B. Knowledge and Learning from Experience

DEFINITIONS

The UNDP country office needs to use information and evaluative evidence effectively in order to manage development processes and to achieve results. Success is based on the premise that development practitioners learn from what worked—and did not work—in order to ensure better progress towards results and better results. **Learning** has been described as a continuous, dynamic process of investigation where the key elements are experience, knowledge, access and relevance. It requires a culture of inquiry and investigation, rather than one of response and reporting. This is more easily accomplished when people are given the chance to observe, engage in, and invent or discover strategies for dealing with particular types of problems or development issues.¹⁷

Knowledge is content- and context-specific information capable of bringing change or more effective actions at a wider level that can contribute to new learning and knowledge. The management of knowledge involves creating, sharing and leveraging knowledge that not only requires establishing systems and processes to gather, organize, package and disseminate information on time to the right decision makers, but also conducting assessments of the processes. Information gained from the processes may be described as **feedback**. (See Chapter 1.)

Evaluative evidence helps us to use information generated from experience to influence the way in which appropriate policies and programmes are developed, or the way in which projects are managed. **Evaluative evidence** refers to information or data indicating qualitative and quantitative values of development processes, outcomes and impact, derived from multiple sources of information and compiled in an evaluation exercise. Evaluative evidence is based on:

- The explanation of causal links in interventions and their effect;
- Analysis from close-up, detailed observation of the development context by the investigator(s), which is part of empirical evidence;
- Analysis from research and review and other documents (secondary sources) relevant to the development context;
- The attempt to avoid any preconceptions in the assessment.

¹⁷ Senge, Peter et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*, New York, Doubleday, 1994.

Evaluative evidence does not, however, always include direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence. Good evaluations are empirically based. **Empirical evidence** is verifiable information based on observation or experience rather than conjecture, theory or logic. Empirical evidence is designed to reflect:

- Validity of conceptual ideas or issues;
- Consistency in trends or patterns;
- Factors contributing to actual outcome(s) and impacts.

BOX 2. KEY PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

- Help others actively interpret—rather than record—information so they can construct new knowledge for themselves;
- Use timely, effective and innovative information management strategies;
- Derive performance standards and learning from the various units/constituencies/communities of practice with which UNDP works to make UNDP assessments more participatory, contextually determined and independent;
- Situate abstract tasks in authentic contexts so that the relevance of the task is apparent and others can embed new knowledge;
- Extend to others the opportunity to work at problem solving by actively sharing skills and expertise with one another; i.e. “face-to-face” interaction without unnecessary dependence on information technology;
- Unbind knowledge from a single specific context in order to maximize knowledge transfer;
- Enable others to recognize and respect what they already know as well as the knowledge that exists within their community;
- Provide others with many examples of a new concept as well as an understanding of how essential features of the concept are reflected in a range of settings;
- Strengthen own and others’ ability to judge when new knowledge should be used.

RBM AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

While monitoring helps to provide initial lessons specific to the outcome, programme or project, evaluation is aimed at extracting lessons from experience in such a way that both generic and specific issues are identified and alternative solutions are developed. Implicit in RBM is continuous planning/implementation/monitoring/evaluation for managing results and learning from experience. This requires more interaction among stakeholders and institutions around results. It also requires the use of communication and reporting mechanisms to reflect learning and facilitate the flow of knowledge, information and resources.

UNDP’s knowledge management strategy points towards a number of emerging principles to enhance learning, as noted in Box 2.¹⁸ These principles imply the optimal use of monitoring and evaluation tools to establish reference points that help management to achieve effectiveness at two levels. One level is that of **development effectiveness**, which encompasses the results (outputs, outcomes and impact) of assistance. The other level is that of **organizational effectiveness**, which refers to the organizational standards of performance.

C. Feedback from Monitoring and Evaluation

The major challenge in monitoring is to gather, store and use information that serves different levels of assessment. Monitoring should be multifunctional so that information generated at one level is useful at the next. Monitoring should also go beyond checking

¹⁸ See http://groups.undp.org/km-strategy/workshop/km_annotated_agenda.html

whether events are taking place as planned. The quality of the two-way flow of information at the country level between the project staff and the programme staff must be regularly investigated. The same is true for the flow of information **within** the CO among programme staff engaged in managing different programmes and monitoring the outputs produced by projects and their effect on outcomes. This can be achieved through periodic interviews, review of annual and other programme and project reports, and independent observation of events. The monitoring process should be committed to improving the lateral linkages among project and programme staff, including feedback processes, for learning purposes. Analysis of the existing or possible linkages across programmes and projects should be as critical, objective and exhaustive as possible. Managers, including at the senior CO level, must be involved in the entire monitoring process.

Evaluation is a process-oriented exercise that requires establishing common baseline data for making comparisons. The problem is knowing from the outset every factor that is relevant and how all factors affect each other. Before any evaluation, take the following steps:

- **Agree on the priority issues demanding information.** Secure agreement on those issues that most urgently require information to make the most of the resources available for information management, which tend to be limited and complex. A high degree of consultation is required during the agreement process since stakeholders may have widely differing views on priorities. A draft list of priority issues could be prepared and distributed to stakeholders for comment. Alternatively, a workshop or other discussion forum could be held specifically to reach consensus. Reconciling different viewpoints by negotiating a consensus on priority issues can help build ties between stakeholders and facilitate cooperation.
- **Determine the information needs of decision-making groups.** The key to effective use of information is to focus only on essential information. Ask decision makers to articulate their needs directly before embarking on a review of CO, national or UNDP corporate databases and other sources of information. A thorough assessment of information needs is a critical initial step.

One of the most efficient ways of arriving at transferable information (lessons) is through outcome evaluations, the sharing of which can facilitate learning across different countries and geographical locations.

Focusing on outcomes means that UNDP deals with partners—government and donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, parliaments—whose development activities, like UNDP’s, depend for their success upon the performance of other agencies under separate control. These agencies often accumulate a large stock of qualitative information that might change how development results are viewed if it were fully taken into account. As partners, they may be engaged to assist and facilitate the monitoring and evaluation process but not to direct or prescribe what should be done. This involvement of partners is likely to foster greater exchanges for learning and knowledge building.

Without reliable and regular feedback, monitoring and evaluation cannot serve their purposes. In particular, emphasis must be given to drawing lessons that have the

potential for broader application—lessons that are useful not only to a particular programme or project but also to broader development contexts. While learning depends on having systematically organized feedback (e.g., evaluation results, pilot studies, data for monitoring output and outcome indicators and indigenous knowledge), the information that COs must organize and manage to meet their own needs must respond to specific requirements that are complex and often transcend conventional sectoral divisions. In such cases, partners from government and research institutions might be asked to analyze emerging monitoring and evaluation issues (e.g., methodologies for data collection, analysis, policy dialogues and advocacy) and advise UNDP to identify gaps and duplication.

THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

The feedback process for COs when undertaking monitoring and evaluation follows some basic steps:

1. Ensure a Focus on Results

- Elaborate projects and programmes based on intended outcomes;
- Establish what evidence is being sought, what variations can be anticipated, and what should be done if such variations occur (i.e., what would constitute supportive or contrary evidence for any given project or programme);
- Define, for each staff level and partners, the purpose for generating knowledge or decision-making information and its scope;
- Define monitoring priorities oriented to outputs and outcomes and have reference points or standards against which judgments can be made about feedback;
- Select knowledge and information indicators based on corporate priorities, use and user;
- Be cost-effective in regards to the level of resources applied and identify key evaluation resource requirements in future programming;
- Incorporate a timescale covering future changes in programming;
- Agree on the system to collect and analyze data, and allocate responsibility and costs;
- Scan qualitative information to improve the application of certain monitoring and evaluation techniques such as field-checking of assumptions, better framing of questions or issues, and more astute choice of assessment areas;
- Monitor learning processes, including the use of feedback and knowledge products.

2. Ask Questions

- Constantly inquire, through feedback mechanisms, about why events appear to have happened or to be happening in projects and programmes;
- Identify the extent of the effect that projects or programmes are having as compared to other factors influencing a development situation;

- Specify where, when and how information will be interpreted, communicated and disseminated, including consultations as inputs to routine processes.

3. Share Knowledge

- Document, analyze and review comparative experiences in programme design, partnerships, monitoring and evaluation activities;
- Operate at different organizational levels (operational activities, strategic choices, corporate vision/priority) consistent with UNDP’s knowledge-management strategy;
- Share knowledge and learning with communities of practice, using the global knowledge networks;
- Determine knowledge and information sources, including the type of evaluative evidence they provide and the frequency of their availability.

4. Target Strategically

- Generate information that is appropriate for different users and timely in relation to decision-making and accountability requirements;
- Design, in consultation with users, appropriate formats and train staff to use them;
- Seek views of all key stakeholders, including programme beneficiaries.

5. Seek Empirical Evidence

- Cross-check and ensure quality of evaluative evidence to produce valid and relevant feedback.

BOX 3. THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FEEDBACK PROCESS

- Extracting lessons from experience
- Transforming lessons into knowledge
- Providing access to feedback
- Assessing the relevance of feedback
- Using the feedback

The key steps in the monitoring and evaluation feedback process, as outlined in Box 3, should use the principles outlined above to “close the loop” of using feedback to make better decisions. Feedback should be action-oriented and designed in a way that it can aid decision-making in programmes or projects as well as in

evaluation. Lessons from evaluations must be available before and at the formulation stage of new projects, programmes and outcomes. In general, lessons from evaluations should be available when new outcomes are being formulated or projects or programmes identified, designed and appraised. At the same time, feedback on the success or failure of new or innovative types of assistance (e.g., policy advice, advocacy, capacity development) may be helpful in formulating new programmes, projects or outcomes.

In undertaking these steps, Programme Managers and partners should guard against the tendency to assess only activities, expenditures and outputs. For example, do not only look at internal management factors such as the costs and timing of inputs and outputs. Monitoring and evaluation have to provide information about results and identify possible unintended processes and their implications.

INFORMATION TOOLS AND METHODS

As noted above, information from monitoring provides the basis for making decisions and taking action. As such, it supports immediate decision-making needs more than it contributes to long-term knowledge building. In contrast, information from evaluation exercises supports the learning function more than it assists in immediate decision-making. Evaluative feedback takes the form of lessons learned about what works or does not work under certain conditions.

For both monitoring and evaluation, information needs to be pursued from the perspective of how it will be used. It is important first to answer the following questions about how information is currently obtained, used and shared:

- What is the specific objective of information gathering, sharing and use?
- Who are the main decision-making/influencing groups who decide how information will be gathered, shared and used within the context of a project, programme or outcome?
- How do these groups currently gather, share and use information?
- Under what constraints do they work?
- Does a mechanism (or policy) exist in the project, programme or outcome within which decisions are being made about information?
- What information is needed to improve the project, programme or outcome?
- How, when and to whom should this information be delivered?

These questions should help identify what kind of feedback is needed to promote effective decisions about projects, programmes or outcomes on the part of project, programme, senior CO and HQ staff. All monitoring and evaluation activities aim to ensure the relevance of information; to use information in a targeted, timely and efficient manner; and to tap the existing knowledge of key stakeholders. The application of certain monitoring and evaluation techniques can be greatly improved by qualitative information through, for example, field checking of assumptions, better framing of questions or issues and more astute choice of assessment areas.

A wealth of information is available within UNDP and the larger international donor community, containing lessons on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of technical cooperation programmes and projects in developing countries. Some of the most important sources for such information are listed below.

Evaluation databases and search engines: CEDAB (UNDP's central evaluation database) provides access to past evaluations and is available at <http://intra.undp.org/eo/cedab>. The Evaluation Office is also designing an evaluation search engine to provide access to evaluative knowledge. It will function as a knowledge repository linking UNDP to various evaluation websites and will provide access to empirical evidence. In addition, the evaluation databases of the international donor community contain lessons on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of technical cooperation programmes and projects in developing countries. These include IFAD, OECD/DAC, World

Bank and UNICEF. (For important databases, see the bibliography and links annex and <http://www.undp.org/eo>.)

SRF/ROAR processes: These annually identify and systematically update information on specific strategic priorities of country offices, regional strategies, programmes, support services, management plans and key benchmarks based on lessons learned. They also focus on UNDP's achievements with stakeholders, advocacy, partnership building, resource mobilization and major SHD concerns. UNDP staff can consult the Results-Based Management System (RBMS) for information about the SRF/ROAR process at <http://intra.undp.org/osg/results>.

Other key country specific reports or documents: These include outcome and project evaluation reports, Country Programmes and Country Cooperation Frameworks (CCF), CCA/UNDAF and Country Reviews. Lessons learned from these sources would be most useful coming from other countries or regional programmes with similar outcomes or projects.

National databases: These databases are wide-ranging and usually divided sectorally by government and national research institutes. Use them, for example, to obtain information about outcomes, to find indicators and to learn lessons for CCA or project formulation.

Global networks and communities of practice: The role of global networks and communities of practice is important in scope and effectiveness, providing a valuable source of information for monitoring and evaluation. They are intended to:

- Promote dialogue between various stakeholders through meetings, workshops, correspondence, newsletters and other forms of exchange;
- Assess the capabilities and needs of stakeholders in terms of information, knowledge and specific expertise;
- Enable stakeholders to contribute to information and knowledge management (i.e. support prioritization of development issues, selection of consultants, development of knowledge products and adoption of standards for accessing new information, among other functions).

BOX 4. OUTCOME COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Communities of practice can be developed around outcomes to facilitate information exchange between country offices and between COs and major stakeholders in order to share information that will help maximize progress towards outcomes.

The Evaluation Planning and Tracking system could be used as a tool to initiate dialogue, as it will provide information about the evaluations scheduled, as well as recommendations and follow up actions on previous evaluations. (See the Evaluation and Planning Tracking System in Annex A.)

Global networks function as multi-stakeholder information systems, offering well-produced information generated by respected, wide-ranging groups or development practitioners, some of which are specifically focused on monitoring and evaluation processes. Some of these networks also provide support to decision-making. Communities of practice in particular, whether existing within global networks or independent of them, can be particularly useful if developed around outcomes, as noted in Box 4.

Global networks and communities of practice are both linked to UNDP's worldwide system of sub-regional resource facilities, or SURFs. Among the important services provided by the SURF system are referrals, responding to requests from country office and headquarters programme staff with advice or information. Referrals are based on queries related to UNDP programme policy or programme implementation (e.g., a request for a consultant, a comparative experience, funding sponsor, policy document, example, template or training opportunity). The SURF system, however, does not disseminate evaluative data per se.

The Evaluation Network or "EVALNET" functions more directly than the SURF system to support the design and development of information and knowledge products from monitoring and evaluation activities. This network, described in Box 5, remains largely driven by stakeholder participation.

BOX 5. UNDP EVALUATION NETWORK (EVALNET)

EVALNET is a group of UNDP staff, mainly from country offices that participate in UNDP evaluations, development of RBM tools and methodologies, and evaluation capacity development activities. The objectives of the network are to enhance UNDP as a learning organization and to promote results-oriented monitoring and evaluation as part of the UNDP organizational culture.

At the individual level, EVALNET members gain new insights on programme issues such as support to transition economies and newly created democracies, decentralization and local governance; operational matters such as the use of UNOPS as executing agency; RBM including indicators; and evaluation methodologies. Similarly, EVALNET members contribute their own expertise and help achieve cross-fertilization of ideas and promote learning from a broader perspective. The participation of EVALNET members from country offices also provides a reality check to corporate initiatives relating to the development of monitoring and evaluation methodologies, such as this *Handbook*.

Essentials: Each year, the Evaluation Office produces a series of publications entitled *Essentials*. These publications focus on thematic issues and provide succinct practitioner-oriented information based on scanning current conceptual and evaluative evidence from UNDP and other development organizations. Access *Essentials* on the Evaluation Office website at <http://www.undp.org/eo>.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires use a highly structured method of information/data collection for both monitoring and evaluation in which targeted respondents are requested to "fill in the blanks" on a form or to reveal specific information or opinions on narrow options. Their limited nature and tight formulations make questionnaires valuable data-gathering tools. They also are useful as a preliminary screening method to help determine which institutions or functions should be examined in more depth, perhaps through interviews.

Any particular type of activity may require only a few of these sources, the most appropriate depending on scope, the nature of the issue being addressed, the target audience for the information and the previous experience of those requiring the information. Once relevant information is accessed through these tools, a thorough assessment must be undertaken to determine how to apply the recommendations from the feedback.

APPLYING THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FEEDBACK

Part of the feedback obtained through monitoring and evaluation will be in the form of recommendations for action. Different types of recommendations from monitoring and evaluation processes should be analyzed separately. This is accomplished by answering a number of questions about the type and consequences of recommendations. The questions address both substantive and implementation recommendations. Feasibilities and priorities based on the answers to these questions must then be set for the short, medium and long terms. The following list of questions concerns the type of recommendation (substantive or implementation) and its consequences.

Questions about the consequences of **substantive** recommendations from monitoring and evaluation:

- Who or what will be directly or indirectly affected by the recommendation(s) in terms of planned outputs and outcomes?
- How do the recommendations differ from previous ones?
- What are the key reasons and approaches used to substantiate the recommendation(s)?
- How do the recommendations compare with similar outcomes, projects, programmes or activities in other parts of the country or other countries?
- How do recommendations contribute to overall intended outputs and outcome(s)?
- Is there a “fit” between intended outcome(s) and actual outcome(s)?
- How do recommendations link with regional and global programme objectives?
- How does the senior CO management intend to respond to, and follow up on implementation of, the recommendations?

Questions about the consequences of **implementation** recommendations from monitoring and evaluation:

- What will be the positive or negative effects in terms of key target groups or stakeholders?
- What can be done to improve the positive effects and compensate for the negative effects?
- What actions are required and by whom?
- What is the time frame?
- Who has the authority to implement the action?
- What are the financial implications?
- What are the political implications?
- What human resources are needed?
- Are special approaches, including training, or new types of partnership required?
- What monitoring or follow-up is required?

Analysis of the above questions will help identify a number of concrete actions through which recommendations may be judged, improved and implemented. While some of these actions will be implemented in the short term, others—especially those requiring political decisions, affecting institutional structure(s) or requiring extensive financial resources—will only be implemented in the medium or long term.

A management response to the substantive and implementation issues raised is important for all monitoring and evaluation recommendations. For outcome evaluations in particular, the management response should identify what recommendations are accepted or not accepted and why, and how the accepted recommendations will be implemented and monitored. (See the Evaluation and Tracking Plan in Annex A.)

Training sessions and workshops for UNDP staff are an effective means of disseminating feedback. These substantive lessons from experience are useful in various stages of programme or project management, including evaluation. Training should focus on such areas as how to improve the quality of UNDP programmes and projects. Training also should develop skills in methodological innovations such as participatory evaluation, the selection of indicators, and use and presentation of information and knowledge in areas not traditionally captured, such as “soft” assistance.

PUBLICATION OF EVALUATIVE EVIDENCE AND FEEDBACK MATERIAL

BOX 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT

- Designed for a specific audience;
- Relevant to decision-making needs, especially for country office staff;
- Available when the “window of opportunity” for decision-making arises (i.e. timely);
- Easily and quickly understood;
- Based on sound methodological principles;
- Delivered through recognized channels;
- Areas of uncertainty and their significance clearly identified;
- Accompanied by full acknowledgement of data or information sources;
- Provides information on both tangible and intangible products and processes of development;
- Available at minimal cost in terms of time, money and administrative costs.

Publication of evaluation results should follow a clear format in order to treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions and to rule out ambiguity. Information may be presented through various analytic techniques. The main point, however, is to make information from evaluations and monitoring user friendly, easily accessible and advantageous to the user. The characteristics of a good knowledge product, including a good publication, are listed in Box 6.

Keeping these characteristics in mind even before the start of actual analysis or the preparation of a publication will help organize the evidence in an orderly fashion. The assessments from evaluation should be documented and distributed to stakeholders for feedback. This will help

identify information needs. A number of suggestions for improving evaluation feedback are listed in Box 7. Once a position on information needs has been agreed, the products and services required to meet them can be designed.

The dissemination of evaluation results is as important as their publication. Only an efficient system of dissemination will ensure that the target recipients receive the evaluation feedback that is relevant to their specific needs.

BOX 7. ACTION POINTS TO IMPROVE EVALUATION FEEDBACK

- Understand how learning happens within and outside the organization (identify where the blockages occur);
- Assess how the relevance and timeliness of evaluation feedback can be improved, and ensure that this happens;
- Be explicit in identifying key audiences for evaluation feedback and the reasons for wanting to reach them, both in general and in specific cases;
- Get to know target groups better to learn what they want from evaluations, how they use evaluation information, and how feedback systems can respond better to these demands;
- Develop a more strategic view of how feedback approaches can be tailored to the needs of different audiences;
- Make sure the quality of evaluation outputs is up to standard—particularly in terms of brevity, clarity and presentation;
- Consider diversifying the range of approaches used to communicate with audiences, using innovative methods where appropriate;
- Improve evaluation websites and intranets, recognizing that ease of access and user-friendliness are key factors;
- Ensure that full disclosure of evaluation reports becomes the norm and that proper approval and notification processes are in place so that senior management or key partners are not caught unawares by controversial findings;
- Put more effort into finding better ways of involving country-level stakeholders in evaluation work, including the feedback of evaluation lessons, recognizing that language barriers are a key constraint;
- Recruit specialist staff where necessary to fill skills gaps, particularly in communications work.

Communicating all that has been learned poses a challenge. The underlying issue is how to capture lessons from experience that are **transferable**; that is, those lessons that have a broader application as compared to those that are relevant only to a single programme or project. This challenge can be addressed through the institutionalization of learning from monitoring and evaluation feedback. Institutionalization of the learning process can be achieved in part by better incorporating learning into existing tools and processes, such as the project and programme document drafting, the ROAR and the APR. Examples of how evaluative learning may be integrated within UNDP as an institution are provided in Box 8.

BOX 8. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF LEARNING

PROJECT DOCUMENT: Project documents should provide a reference (and hypertext links) to the findings of relevant reviews or evaluations in the situation analysis section. The PAC should ensure compliance with this requirement.

PROJECT DOCUMENT REVISIONS: When budget or other revisions are made to the project document, the lessons associated with the purpose of the budget change should also be stated.

ROAR: In its submission of the ROAR, the country office should highlight in the narrative section the key lessons learned on each outcome—particularly the section on strategic issues and agreed actions. One of the major sources of such lessons learned is the Annual Review.

Conclusion

The monitoring and evaluation framework contained in this *Handbook* is not “cast in stone” but rather is expected to evolve and improve as practitioners gain experience with it. Some of the elements call for changes in mindset and behavior of staff, and therefore the organization should fully expect to continue to learn from the new framework over the next few years.

The Evaluation Office’s website (<http://www.undp.org/eo/>) will feature up-to-date resources on monitoring and evaluation methodologies, and the Office encourages country offices and headquarters units to use the website by sharing lessons learned and concerns. The website will contain frequently asked questions (FAQ), a constant update and development of **all** monitoring and evaluation methodologies within UNDP, references to other resources, training packages, examples of reports and tools, and sample TORs. It will also contain a companion series to this *Handbook*. Each installment will address a thematic issue related to monitoring and evaluation, with titles including *Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators*, *Monitoring and Evaluation in Post-Crisis Situations* and *Evaluation Capacity Development*.

Other funds and programmes of the United Nations are encouraged to use the website. The website and this *Handbook* will have some relevance because their monitoring and evaluation activities take place within the overall results-based framework of UNDP guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. In addition, however, these agencies also may need to refer to their own documents for guidance in reflecting their specific contribution to outcomes.¹⁹

The framework presented in this *Handbook* represents innovative change in terms of simplification and of results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies. In particular, an attempt has been made to move from procedure-based and detail-oriented requirements for monitoring and evaluation to a system that allows for a more rigorous focus on results, learning and the actual application of knowledge gained from monitoring and evaluation.

¹⁹ For example, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) helps achieve results at the grassroots/community level that can and should inform UNDP’s upstream policy work. In this way, UNV complements UNDP in its effort to promote more people-oriented and participatory development. Country offices should ensure that results achieved in such partnerships are captured and fully reflected in their reporting.

