

# Measurement and Evaluation:

## Glossary of terms

In recent times, measurement and evaluation have become increasingly important concepts in the social policy and human services arenas. Evidence based approaches to designing programs and services, which can have positive client and/or community results attributed to their conduct, are seen as critical and contribute to the alignment and improvement of services.

However, the terms we use in thinking about how to measure the results of our work and how to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of what we do can be readily misunderstood and misused.

This is an alphabetical list, prepared by members of the Forum of Non Government Agencies (FONGA) to identify and explain many of the terms used when measurement and evaluation are talked about.

<b>Activity</b>	The active tasks or processes undertaken in order for the output to be achieved (e.g. hold workshops, develop brochures, etc). Should be worded with active verbs (e.g. engage target group, develop workshops).
<b>Appropriateness</b>	The extent to which the program objectives and priorities meet the needs of the intended clients.
<b>Baseline</b>	Information collected before or at the start of a program. It provides a basis for planning and/or assessing subsequent program progress and impact during and at completion of a program.
<b>Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)</b>	Evaluation of the relationship between program costs and outcomes. Can be used to compare different programs with the same outcomes to determine the most cost efficient intervention.
<b>Efficiency</b>	The extent to which program outputs and outcomes are achieved at reasonable cost and in reasonable time. How resources are used to achieve outcomes.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	The extent to which program outcomes meet program objectives.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluation is a systematic assessment – as objective as possible – of a planned, ongoing or completed project. It aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer specific management questions</li> <li>• Judge the overall value of a project</li> <li>• Provide lessons learned to improve future actions, planning and decision-making.</li> </ul> Evaluations commonly seek to determine the accessibility, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, relevance, usability and utility of a project to the organisation's objectives.
<b>Formative</b>	Generally undertaken while a program is forming (prior to implementation),

<b>Evaluation</b>	directed at optimising a program, such as a needs assessment, developing a program logic.
<b>Goal (Aim)</b>	A broad statement of intent. The desired long-term outcome of a program / intervention.  Outlines the need you are trying to meet and for whom.
<b>Impact</b>	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.  Related to the highest level of project objective – the goal – and is often assessed by the use of population-level indicators.
<b>Indicator (sometimes Key Performance Indicator or KPI)</b>	Quantitative or qualitative information that provides a reliable way to measure intended changes.  Guides what information needs to be collected, e.g. measurable changes in knowledge, attitude and/or behaviour. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressed as a percentage, ratio, or other</li> <li>• Monitored at regular intervals</li> <li>• Compared to one or more standards</li> <li>• Used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results</li> </ul>
<b>Input</b>	Financial, human, and material resources used for a program, e.g. money, people, time, equipment, etc.
<b>M&amp;E (MER, MERI, MME)</b>	‘M&E’ is a commonly used way of referring to the combination of ‘monitoring (or measurement) and evaluation’, which together provide the knowledge and information needed for effective project management, organisational and stakeholder learning, reporting and accountability purposes.  Sometimes now referred to by governments as ‘MER’ (Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting), or ‘MERI’ (Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting & Improvement).
<b>Monitoring</b>	A continuous process of collecting and analysing project information to assist timely decision-making, ensure accountability and provide the basis for evaluation and learning.  It is used to provide management and key stakeholders with an indication of progress and achievement of objectives, measured against set indicators and expected results.
<b>Objective</b>	The steps we need to take in order to achieve a goal.  They need to be SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

<b>Outcome</b>	<p>Likely or achieved short-term, medium-term, long-term effects or results of our activities, outputs, or strategies.</p> <p>Changes in attitude, values, behaviour, or condition the activity aim to, or does, achieve.</p>
<b>Output</b>	<p>Products, goods and services which are produced by the program in order to achieve the short-term outcomes.</p> <p>Can include workshops, brochures, meetings, etc.</p>
<b>Process Evaluation</b>	<p>Evaluation which investigates how the program is delivered, and can be used to continually improve programs by informing adjustments to delivery.</p>
<b>Program</b>	<p>A set of activities managed together over a sustained period of time to deliver an outcome for an individual or population/target group.</p>
<b>Program Logic / Logic Model</b>	<p>Management tool that presents the logic of a program in a diagram.</p> <p>The logically related parts of a program, showing the links between program objectives, program activities (efforts applied coherently and reliably over a sustained time), and expected program outcomes. A logic model makes clear who will be served, what should be accomplished, and specifically how it will be done (i.e. written cause-and-effect statements for a given program design).</p>
<b>Qualitative Information</b>	<p>Descriptions about people's experience, feelings and interpretations about a program. Tools include focus groups and interviews. Qualitative data is usually text or narrative. It unpacks the 'why'.</p>
<b>Quantitative Information</b>	<p>Measuring changes and effects using statistics and percentages, e.g. the % of people who stopped smoking. Tools include surveys. Quantitative information answers the how much, how many and how often of change.</p>
<b>Strategy</b>	<p>The particular range of tasks or activities that will be implemented to achieve objectives.</p>
<b>Summative Evaluation</b>	<p>Use to determine whether the program caused demonstrable effects on specifically-defined target outcomes. Assesses the positive and negative results of a program, as well as the intended and unintended outcomes delivered.</p> <p>Generally reports when the program has been running long enough to produce results, although it should be initiated during the program design phase.</p>
<b>Theory of Change (TOC)</b>	<p>The overarching set of formal relationships presumed to exist for a defined population, the intended outcomes that are the focus of the organisation's work, and the logic model for producing the intended outcomes. A theory of change should be meaningful to stakeholders, plausible in that it conforms to common sense, doable with available resources, and measurable. Theory of change defines the building blocks needed to bring about a given long term goal.</p>

## References

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