

Development Monitoring and Evaluation - A Public Service Responsibility and a Strategic Tool for Good Governance -

Khadija Khan, Development Management Professional

The concept of Development Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) has been evolved as a result of continuous efforts of development planners and managers to focus on achieving positive impact of development programs on the majority of population living in poverty and to sustain the change over a period of time.

The Development Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) takes into consideration the authenticity of policies, strategies and programs for both quantitative and qualitative change and its sustainability through building social attitudes and addressing cross-cutting issues of human rights, participation and equal distribution of benefits as well as empowerment of the disadvantaged groups.

Unlike conventional monitoring and evaluation system that works the best as a reporting system in the public sector, Development Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) encompasses a large spectrum of functions that ensure transparency, accountability and high performance to serve the people.

Another distinction is that whereas conventional monitoring and evaluation works in isolation from financial audit, the DME complements it. Social audit of financial resources invested in the development programs has become an important strategic planning tool in integrated resource-based management (IRBM). That is why; many developed countries have introduced DME as part of their financial audit, which is normally conducted by the office of the Auditor General. Canada is a leading example.

The DME approach is applied vertically and horizontally as it cuts across all levels of management and the range of policies, programs and projects. It takes into consideration the complex relationships among development dynamics and focuses on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of development programs.

Using DME as a **strategic tool for enhancing public service sector performance** is recommended for two reasons:

1. The public service sector is responsible for tax payers' money from both national and international citizens; it implements government policies and programs and is accountable to the state government and the civil society. It delivers packages of social services to the majority of people, in particular to the average poor family that cannot afford private services. Hence, its performance is directly related to the impact of development programs.
2. Good performance comes from informed decision making. This needs an adequate infrastructure, which ensures that the officials and staff at various levels of management have access to accurate, relevant and timely information; that there is an adequate institutional mechanism and systems to receive feedback and provide feed forward for use in planning and decision making; people have thorough understanding, skills and expertise in development monitoring and evaluation; there is accountability for results and most of all presence of political will.

DME makes a contribution to improving the performance of the public sector, which should lead to sustainable change in the quality of life of people and remove disparities. In order to do so, the conventional approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation has to be replaced with the new approach of development planning, monitoring and evaluation. Hence, every planning process should include an exercise in setting goals, defining objectives, activities, inputs/outputs, processes, and indicators of performance, outcomes and impact. Realistic indicators are to be developed in sequence for the results as follows:

- Short term results i.e. outputs
- Medium term results i.e. outcomes
- Long term results i.e. the impact

Systematic monitoring of change in indicators and evaluation of results is to be planned and included in the PC-1. Responsibilities are to be delegated in case of internal monitoring. In case of external monitoring, consultancy firms or individual consultants are to be identified for outsourcing. Necessary budget allocation for DME is to be made at the time of planning.

The DME system is formed of many components that could be used independently and/or complementarily to each other as conditions allow. A major challenge in this case is building capacity of public sector to establish the system and train personnel to undertake the task, which in turn requires mobilizing significant financial resources and invoking the interest of decision makers.

This, however, should not discourage development planners and implementers of the public service sector from taking the first step in the right direction and to expand the scope of learning through application of Development Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) in their respective spheres of work.

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