

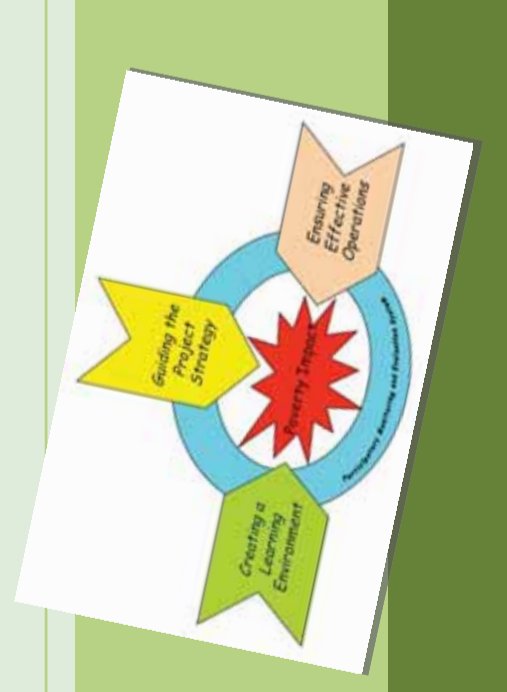


How to Manage for Impact?

M4I has four key focus areas which integrate both “technical” and “people” processes

- Strategic guidance towards impact -** *Ensuring that the strategic design of a development initiative:*
- *Is based on an in-depth understanding of the particular situation; and*
 - *Well defined and articulated theories of change; and*
 - *Can be adapted with learning and changes occurring within and outside of the intervention over time*
- Effective operations –** *Managing the day-to-day operations towards impact, such as financial, physical and human resources*
- Creating a learning environment –** *Establishing a culture of learning amongst stakeholders and a set of relationships that build trust, stimulate critical questioning and innovation and gain commitment and ownership*
- Establishing a participatory & learning oriented M&E system: -** *Putting in place systems and processes to regularly gather and process the information needed to guide the strategy, ensure effective operations and encourage learning*

M4I involves strengthening capacities & conditions for 4 key focus areas



Strategic guidance towards impact

How do we make the right decisions when the change we seek to bring about today by a multitude of previous events and the unpredictability of tomorrow?



In every development initiative, we need to put in place systems and processes that will enable us to make the right decisions to contribute towards impact within a particular context. At the beginning of a development initiative, various methodologies and approaches are drawn upon (such as literature reviews, participatory rural appraisals or economical, social or bio-physical studies) to develop an in-depth **understanding of a situation**. This analysis of the situation involves getting an overview of the situation at hand, analyzing **institutional factors** that influence it, understanding **stakeholders** and how they are related, and getting a better understanding of **problems, issues, visions and opportunities**. This understanding is used to articulate collective beliefs or **theories on how change** occurs within the particular situation. **Visions and goals** for the future are agreed on between stakeholders and **opportunities prioritized**. Finally, **strategies** most appropriate to contribute to our future vision or overall goals are developed and mapped out.

The world we engage in is complex, rarely static and none of our interventions occur in a vacuum. The change we seek to bring about today is influenced by yesterday's events and experiences, and often these are outside of our control. We also need to bear in mind that as we implement, we gain experiences and learn lessons. These experiences and lessons can change the way in which we view things over time and therefore the decisions that we make. We therefore need to be able to regularly use information and data and understand changes and dynamics taking place and adapt our strategic plans based on these insights.

Strategic guidance is about being able to sense, adapt and react quickly to both internal and external dynamics

Illustration



Efficiency at the cost of effectiveness?

Listening to the angry farmers, the project team felt helpless. They had put in the request to finance the purchasing of seeds and fertilizer a long time ago. And now, after many angry exchanges with the Head of Finance to discuss the “three quotations”, here they were. The rains had passed and the farmers were not able to plant without the inputs.

One week later, the Head of Finance listened in frustration to the project team. Hadn't he told them again and again about the procurement requirements? Didn't they know how long it took to get approval from management? It wasn't his fault that the farmers missed the season.

Ensuring effective operations

Unless day to day operations such as management of human resources, assets, budgets and even information is carried out effectively and efficiently, it is unlikely that the strategy can be implemented towards impact.

To do this, we tend to put in place systems and mechanisms such as the guidelines and procedures laid out in a Project Implementation Manual (PIM) or Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPB). However, we need to ensure that the procedures we put in place are used wisely and do not have a negative effect on our ability to contribute to positive impact.

(See: Illustration on left side).

To navigate and manage towards impact, day-to-day operations and activities need constantly to refer to and keep in mind our overall goals and objectives. This involves working together as a team and ensuring that those responsible for operational procedures (such as finance and administration officers) also have a good understanding of the changes the intervention is trying to make and context within which it is working.

Creating a learning environment

Individuals need to work together to implement and use the management systems and processes established. This requires paying equal attention to the “people processes” and developing an environment and culture that builds trust and gains commitment and ownership. In some cases this environment may evolve naturally. However, more often than not it needs to be cultivated. To do this, the team and, in particular, leaders need particular knowledge and skills and attitudes to create spaces for open dialogue between the different groups. They need an understanding of how learning occurs at different levels, how to facilitate this learning and how best to deal with conflicts if and when they arise. Unless there is an environment that enables individuals to openly share their views and opinions, the information and data collected through M&E, for example, will not be able to be reflected on in order to give rise to sound decisions.

How do we work together as a team to ensure that operational procedures contribute to and do no hinder impact?

Managing for Impact

A holistic approach to managing development initiatives amidst complexity and diversity



Why Manage for Impact?

With the changing tides brought about globalization, economic and food crisis's and climate change, today's world requires new ways of approaching development and, often, new capacities and conditions for doing so.

Managing for Impact is a holistic approach to managing development initiatives, drawing upon and integrating a diverse range of existing processes, methodologies and tools for:

- **Dealing with complex situations** which are rarely predictable and developing and adapting strategies directed towards impact;
- **Managing in a holistic manner** and recognizing the inter-dependence between, technical processes (e.g. strategic and operational management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and "people processes" (e.g. managing teams, conflicts and multi-stakeholder processes);
- Focusing on and promoting **results-oriented learning processes** of stakeholders, drawing on **sound data** and **information** collected through a **combination of qualitative and quantitative** approaches;
- Multi-directional accountability systems that enable a strong sense of **responsibility and ownership** amongst implementing partners and stakeholders; and
- Establishing a **learning environment** that encourages people to be open, honest and critically question successes and failures and actively share this knowledge between development initiatives in order to contribute to impact.



Strengthening M4I (SMIP) in eastern & southern Africa
SMIP is an IFAD funded regional programme working with pro-poor initiatives in eastern & southern Africa to build capacities to better manage towards impact.



For more information on Managing for Impact:

Visit the SMIP Mfi Blog: <http://mande4mfi.wordpress.com/>

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To manage for impact and contribute to development effectiveness, we need to strengthen capacities & conditions to engage with both the people and the technical processes



Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) can be used in a variety of different ways in order to contribute to better managing for impact

The way in which the M&E system is designed and the choice of tools used to implement the system depend very much on the purpose of the M&E system. For example, a system that is primarily for accountability is less likely to use participatory data collection and analysis tools than a system designed for both accountability and empowerment



Participatory & learning oriented monitoring & evaluation (M&E) systems

In M4I, M&E is "an integrated process of continual gathering and assessing information to¹;

- make judgments about progress towards particular goals and objectives; and
- identify unintended positive and/or negative consequences of action and insights into why."

Monitoring and evaluation can be used in a number of different ways in order to contribute to better managing for impact. These include²:

- **Accountability** – demonstrating to donors, beneficiaries, implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders that expenditure, actions and results are as agreed or are as can reasonably be expected in a given situation.
- **Supporting operational management** - providing the basic management information needed to direct, coordinate and control the human, financial and physical resources required achieve any given objective.
- **Supporting strategic management** – providing the information for and facilitating the processes required to set and adjust goals, objectives and strategies and to improve quality and performance of a development initiative.
- **Knowledge creation** – generating new insights that contribute to the established knowledge base in a given field.
- **Empowerment** – building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of beneficiaries and implementing staff and partners to effectively guide, manage and implement development initiatives.

1 IFAD, 2002. Managing for Impact in Rural Development: A Guide for Project M&E. IFAD, Rome.
2 Woodhill, J. (2006). M&E as learning: Rethinking the dominant paradigm. In Monitoring and Evaluation of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development Projects. World Association of Soil and Water Conservation.