

Results-based Monitoring

Guidelines for Technical Cooperation Projects and Programmes

May 2004



Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

"It is better to be approximately right than precisely wrong."

John Maynard Keynes

Published by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

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Managing for Development Results - a Company-wide Challenge

Today, any agency using the taxpayer's money to perform development cooperation will be asked about the results of that cooperation. Good planning, timely service delivery and optimistic reports alone no longer provide sufficient justification. Nor can the question of results be averted by pointing out that development cooperation does not possess the leverage to radically change the world. Indeed, this limited scope for action is the very reason why development cooperation must plausibly demonstrate that it is making effective use of the funds at its disposal, thus making a relevant contribution to the economic and social development of its partner countries.

GTZ has recognised this challenge and delivered a timely response. Whereas quality assurance was oriented primarily toward "quality at entry" in the 1990s, from 1998 onwards emphasis was shifted increasingly onto "quality at exit". Following the decision of GTZ's management to define self-evaluation and independent evaluation as mutually complementary components of the corporate evaluation system, that system was readjusted accordingly. A special effort was made to revise and develop new evaluation procedures in compliance with the principles of decentralisation.

When the new Framework for Contracts and Cooperation (AURA) was introduced in August 2002, managing for development results also became a key aspect of the contracting procedure between BMZ and GTZ.¹ The achievement of development-policy goals was made a key focus. The success of projects is now measured not by the services delivered, but by the objectives achieved. Contract and cooperation management is now allowed much broader scope than hitherto; at the same time, however, it is made co-responsible alongside the partner for achieving the prescribed development-policy goals.

All these changes, combined with the increasing organisation of development cooperation activity within the framework of programmes, are having far-reaching consequences for contract and cooperation management. GTZ's current Policy on Contract and Cooperation Management reflects this change. The policy document explains GTZ's understanding of what a contract is, how GTZ orients implementation toward results, what responsibility the

¹ GTZ/BMZ, Directives for the Preparation of AURA Offers, Eschborn, September 2003.

company assumes, how it generates outputs, and what it takes into account in the project and programme planning, steering and quality assurance processes.²

To enable contract and cooperation management to meet the more exacting demands now imposed by results-based monitoring, the existing instruments need to be further refined and supplemented. One example of this was the introduction of e-VAL, launched in mid-2003.

That such reforms are needed is beyond all doubt. To guarantee successful steering and reporting, contract and cooperation management needs a results-based monitoring system. The company needs these results in order to credibly fulfil its accountability obligations vis-à-vis its contracting clients and the public. And last but not least, GTZ's partners have a strong interest in the development results of its projects and programmes.

² GTZ, Policy on Contract and Cooperation Management, Eschborn, August 2003.

General Remarks on the Guidelines

For years there has been a steady growth in the number of initiatives in the GTZ designed to focus the company's development-policy work more sharply on results. It is thanks to these initiatives that managing for development results has now become a principle of GTZ's corporate development. The present Guidelines for Results-based Monitoring constitute a further milestone in the implementation of that principle.

Projects and programmes need the freedom to identify their own solutions to the specific situations they face. Yet it would be wrong and uneconomical to start from scratch and design a new results-based monitoring system each time. What an objective is, how a project or programme achieves its objective, and how a project/programme can identify the development results that it has helped generate, does not differ fundamentally from one project/programme to the next. The present Guidelines seek to identify the general features, and forge them into a conceptual whole. The Guidelines are designed to alleviate the groundwork involved in setting up results-based monitoring systems, and to provide orientation in line with GTZ's corporate identity, without making detailed prescriptions. The Guidelines comprise three sections:

- The first section describes the general conceptual framework for results-based monitoring.
- The second section identifies and summarises the tasks to be performed on the basis of the conceptual framework.
- The third section details six general steps along the path from project/programme design through to the utilisation of monitoring results.

A short bibliography lists the texts used in preparing the Guidelines, as well as further references. The "Managing for Development Results" strategy project would be delighted to hear of any other relevant literature.

The Guidelines for Results-based Monitoring are designed for all those involved in the planning, implementation or evaluation of projects or programmes of German Technical Cooperation. It supersedes all previous GTZ guidelines or orienting frameworks for monitoring.

Zum besseren Verständnis wurde der Text in der vorliegenden englischen Version gegenüber der deutschen sprachlich geringfügig abgewandelt, inhaltlich und konzeptionell hat sich dadurch nichts geändert.

1. Results-based Monitoring – the Concept

We speak of results-based monitoring when all monitoring activities of a project or programme are geared to observing results. Results-based monitoring forms part of the self-evaluation of a project/programme. It is designed to help keep the results in view at all times and to steer the project/programme accordingly. Results-based monitoring takes in the whole results chain, from inputs, via activities through to the outcomes and impacts; it represents another facet of an already established monitoring procedure. The distinctive feature is that this kind of monitoring focuses not only on what has been done, but attempts to identify the changes generated by what has been done.

1.1 What are Results?

The term "results" should only be used to denote those changes that can be attributed to a project/programme. The mere occurrence of a change is not sufficient to merit its designation as a project or programme result – not even where the project/programme planned and intended the change. Only where a causal - or at least a plausible - link can be made may the observed change be chalked up as a project/programme result.

Results may be intended or unintended, expected or unexpected, positive or negative. They affect not only the designated target groups, but also partners and intermediaries, and may arise in a variety of spheres. Furthermore, results are generated not only when the promotion phase of a project/programme is completed, but right from the start, and throughout the entire project/programme duration. The input of human, financial or material resources can already generate first results that strongly influence the project's chances of success. Similarly, the activities of a project/programme lead not only to outputs for others, but may also – as in the case of training measures – have a reciprocal impact on the project team.

1.2 How are Results Generated?

Modern innovation research has helped us better understand development processes and causal relationships. Contrary to the teachings of Rogers³ in the 1970s, innovations do not emerge in a straight line starting with inventive scientists, passing through extension workers,

³ The social organization of innovation. A focus on stakeholder interaction. Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, 1997.

and ending up with farmers ready to try out innovations. They are rather the result of social interaction. Comprehensive social or environmental changes that development cooperation seeks to bring about are always based on a dense web of actors with specific interests and varying degrees of power. And the more actors involved in a change, the smaller - from the statistical point of view - the "weighting factor" assigned to their individual inputs. This means that the greater the distance from the individual project/programme to the spheres where the changes take place, the more difficult it becomes to assign causal relationships to development results.

1.3 The GTZ Results Model

The GTZ results model is closely related to the general results chain defined in the OECD-DAC Glossary⁴. It deals explicitly with the well-known attribution problem in development aid evaluation by including an "attribution gap" as a core conceptual element. Development projects and programmes are resourced through German and partner inputs. Using these inputs, they launch **activities** that generate **outputs**. These are then utilised by target groups or intermediaries (**use of outputs**), generating medium-term and long-term development results i.e. **outcomes and impacts**.

Up to the level of "use of output", attribution is relatively easy in most cases. However, as we climb up to the levels of "outcome" and "impact" external factors that cannot be influenced by projects and programmes become increasingly important. The attribution gap widens up to an extent where the observed changes cannot be directly related to project outputs any more. Up to the level where a causal relationship between outputs and observed development changes can be shown, projects are entitled to claim the observed positive development changes as a "direct benefit". Project and programme objectives are set at this level.

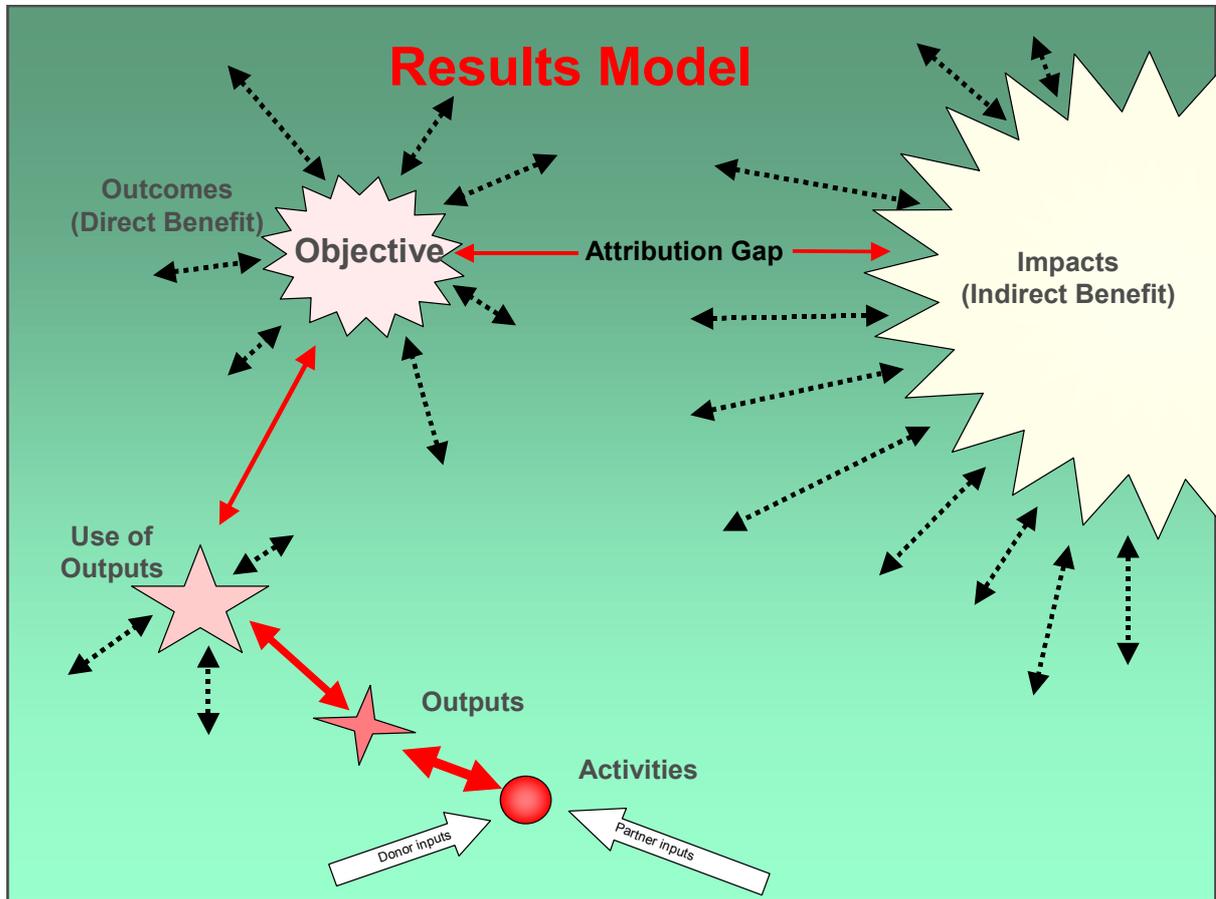
As mentioned above, projects and programmes aim to generate impacts beyond the objectives level, and these are usually the ultimate reason for the intervention. In general, it is not possible to identify a causal relationship explaining how these "indirect benefits" came about, as too many actors are involved to clearly isolate the effect of a single intervention. Nonetheless, highly aggregated development results (for instance progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals) need to be kept in view. Even though

⁴ OECD-DAC (2002): Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

⁵ OECD-DAC (2002): Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

comprehensive *attribution* is not possible, GTZ expects its managers to provide plausible hypotheses on the project's or programme's *contributions* to overarching development results.

Figure 1: Results Model

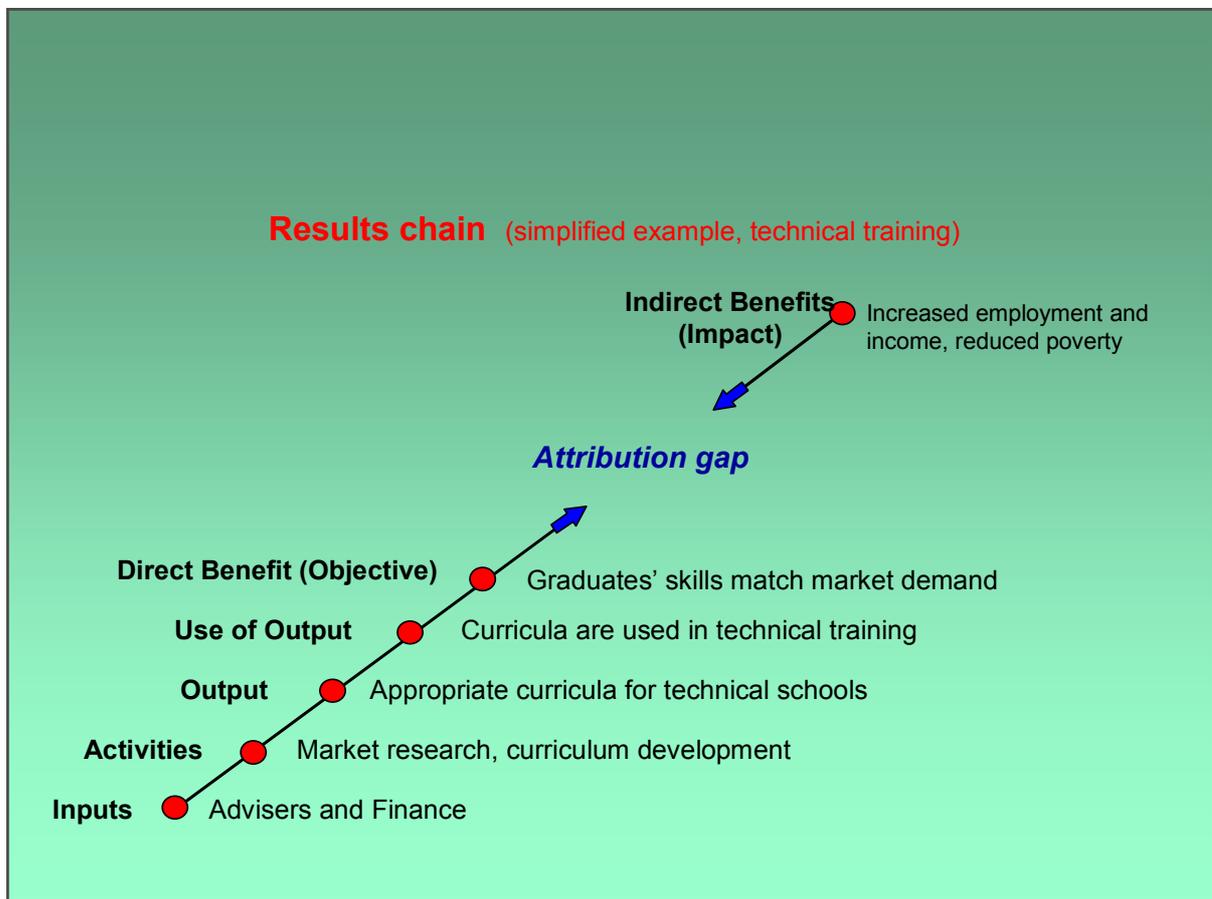


Note: The dotted arrows symbolise the increasing number of external factors

In the OECD/DAC definitions, the terms “outcomes” and “impacts” are differentiated in terms of their timeframe, i.e. as medium-term and long-term results respectively. In contrast, the terms “direct benefit” and “indirect benefit” refer to the (positive) results before and beyond the attribution gap. In practice, however, it is clear that direct benefits occur before indirect benefits. Hence, in most projects and programmes the direct benefit will be at the outcome level and the indirect benefit at the impact level.

Figure 2 shows what a results chain looks like in practice using a technical training project as an example.

Figure 2: Simplified results chain for a technical training project



2. Tasks of Results-based Monitoring

Results-based monitoring focuses on the results generated by a project or programme. To identify these results, various tasks must be performed. On the one hand, we must identify the outcomes which are clearly attributable to the project/programme and which are defined as the project/programme objectives. On the other hand, it is also necessary to identify those impacts which, although generated in the wider project/programme environment in the wake of the achievement of objectives, can no longer be clearly attributed to the project/programme.

2.1 Monitoring tasks up to the attribution gap

The design and planning of any project or programme are usually based on *results hypotheses*, i.e. assumptions concerning the links between interventions and results. The results model also contains such assumptions, in that it shows how the project/programme outputs will be used, and which beneficial results are expected.

The key task of results-based monitoring is to monitor whether and to what extent the assumed results actually occur, and whether the project/programme is advancing toward its objective. To this end, monitoring must keep an eye on the assumed results chain, but also remain alert to whether undesired results are being generated that might jeopardise the achievement of objectives or have other negative consequences. Results-based monitoring must provide the information that contract and cooperation management needs in order to keep a project/programme on track (i.e. within the so-called corridor of objectives). The key questions are:

- What are the key results hypotheses upon which the design and strategy of the project/programme are based?
- Where might desired or undesired results arise?
- Which actors and framework conditions significantly affect the project/programme, and how?
- Do the results hypotheses reflect the project reality?
- Which factors are mainly responsible for the occurrence of the positive or negative changes observed?
- Which of the observed changes can be causally attributed to the project/programme as results, especially at the objectives level?

It is not sufficient to monitor how the results of the project or programme affect its environment. It is also important to include the converse perspective, i.e. to monitor how the framework conditions impact on the project/programme, since changes in these conditions or the actions of other development organisations can impact positively or negatively on the achievement of objectives. To identify these changes, the management (responsible for contract and cooperation) must monitor the institutional, political, social, economic and ecological framework. Results-based monitoring identifies the key factors influencing the framework, and monitors and analyses its effects on the achievement of project/programme objectives.

2.2 Monitoring tasks beyond the attribution gap

The project or programme objective is set at the outcomes level. Often, however, the actual reason for launching operations in a sector or country is to achieve results beyond that level, and these can usually be influenced only indirectly by the project/programme. The project objective in the example shown in Figure 3 is: "Graduates possess the skills for which there is market demand". This objective is not an end in itself. The development-policy rationale underlying the project is based on the expectation that the well-trained graduates will find employment, that their social situation will improve as a result, and that the economy will become more competitive thanks to the availability of a well-trained workforce. These assumed results will depend on the interplay between many different actors who can be influenced by the project only with great difficulty, if at all, yet who must be monitored. If it emerges, for instance, that the sector in which the vocational training project is taking place is becoming significantly less important as a result of external factors, then the question will need to be raised as to whether the project is still addressing the right problems.

In other words, results-based monitoring also monitors changes that take place beyond the attribution gap. And it seeks to answer the question of whether these changes can plausibly be linked to the project. The contracting client, the public and policymakers expect to be told firstly what contributions have been made to sectoral objectives, and secondly what large-scale, multisectoral development progress has been achieved, for instance in the context of poverty reduction, peace-building or environmental protection. A health project must possess information on child mortality in the region, just as a customs advisory services project needs

information on the national budget, and a poverty reduction measure must be informed about the national poverty reduction strategy⁶.

Often, a sufficient quantity of reliable and utilisable data is available on highly aggregated changes of the type just mentioned. Where this is not the case, these data should be obtained not just from one project, but from several projects/programmes in a sector within the scope of a joint evaluation conducted together with the partner side and other donors, and independently of the project. The tasks of project/programme monitoring include analysing these data, and establishing what contribution the project/programme might have made toward the observed changes. Having said that, it is not necessary for monitoring to causally attribute the changes to the project/programme. It is sufficient to show plausibly, on the basis of the monitored data on inputs, activities, outputs, use of outputs and outcomes, how the project/programme might have contributed toward these changes in its environment.⁷ These questions will be pursued by contract and cooperation management not only through its monitoring instruments, but also through progress reviews and evaluations.

Core tasks of results-based monitoring undertaken by contract and cooperation management

a) Up to the objectives level:

Demonstrate the *causal links* between the desired changes associated with the project/programme objectives and the project/programme outputs.

To this end, the following project/programme parameters will need to be monitored:

- key activities
- outputs for others (e.g. for intermediaries)
- use of outputs, and external actors who facilitate or constrain the use of outputs
- outcome.

b) Beyond the objectives level:

Monitor changes in the wider project/programme environment that can be *plausibly linked* to the achievement of objectives.

⁶ GTZ, Impact Assessment with a Poverty Focus in Policy Advisory Projects: Concepts, Questions and Cases, Eschborn, 2000.

⁷ GTZ, Establishing Plausibility in Impact Assessment, 2001.

3. Six Steps in Results-based Monitoring

Having dealt with the conceptual basics, we will now turn our attention to the practical implementation of results-based monitoring. This third part of the Guidelines is broken down into six sections or “steps”, analogous to other monitoring guidelines from which the present text has in many cases profited⁸. These steps are not designed to be implemented in a strict linear sequence. Giving examples, we will describe typical packages of measures that need to be implemented so that results-based monitoring can deliver the expected outputs.

Much of what is called for below should already have been dealt with during project/programme planning, such as demarcating the system boundaries of the project/programme, formulating results hypotheses or defining indicators. Nevertheless, these points are dealt with here once again, since monitoring tasks are often assigned to individuals who were not involved in the planning process. In many cases it is also helpful for the project/programme when setting-up the monitoring system to once again review, and possibly adjust, the planning co-ordinates. Results-based monitoring should be performed largely by the project/programme itself, in order to stimulate processes of reflection and learning within the team, and harness fully the experience and expertise on hand there.

Step 1: Identify the System Boundaries

What is the project or programme, who are its stakeholders, and where does its context or "environment" start? A first step in results-based monitoring is to identify the *system boundaries* of the project/programme with reference to the levels contained in the general results model.

When an ongoing project/programme intends to make its monitoring activities more results-based, a joint understanding of the levels should be established among the project/programme actors. This will involve asking the following questions:

- Where do the project/programme activities end and the project/programme outputs begin?
- Who is directly involved in generating those outputs?

⁸ Here we refer in particular to the Guidelines for Impact Monitoring in Economic and Employment Promotion Projects with Special Reference to Poverty Reduction Impacts, GTZ, 2001, and Impact Monitoring & Assessment, Bern, 2002.

- Who will utilise those outputs?
- Which results will be created, and for whom?

Where the project/programme design is still open, the task is a different one. In this case the task is not to analyse the system boundaries of an ongoing project/programme, but to set co-ordinates for the project/programme design. The question then is not "Where are the system boundaries?" but "Where can/should they be?" So the following question needs to be asked: "Who belongs to the project/programme, i.e. who are the intermediaries, target groups and other stakeholders?" A project/programme can for instance confine itself to cooperation with a unit of the ministry for environmental issues, or with the environmental authorities located both in the capital and at the provincial and district levels in various parts of the country. The project/programme outputs, the use of those outputs and the actors using them will each be found at various levels. Key factors determining the reach of the project/programme are:

- performance capability of the partner
- situation on the ground
- development-policy directives
- German development cooperation expertise
- resources available

Examples of different system boundaries in three different forest administration reform projects			
	Project A	Project B	Project C
The direct counterparts of the long-term experts work in the ministry's department for planning and organisation (DPO).	output		
The DPO supports working groups, commissions and committees within the ministry, and in four selected provinces and eight districts involved in administrative reform.	use of outputs		
The working groups, commissions and committees are working to improve the division of competences and administrative procedures.	outcome	output	
This results in improved service delivery by the central administration, and improved directives for downstream sections of the administration.		use of outputs	
The provincial forest administrations are availing themselves of services provided by the central administration, and direct support from the project.		outcome	output
This results in improved service delivery by the forest administration at district level.			use of outputs
State forest enterprises, private enterprises, municipalities, interest groups and individual households are availing themselves of these services.			outcome
The results include improved access to fuelwood, increased household income from timber utilisation, and the creation of jobs in timber processing etc.			
At the macro level, this results in growth and distribution effects, as well as contributions toward poverty reduction, preservation of biodiversity, and forest multifunctionality etc.			

When identifying the system boundaries, economic-efficiency criteria and the minimum intervention principle should also be applied.

Step 2: Agree on the Purpose of and Procedures for Results-based Monitoring

The second step is to identify the interests and expectations of the stakeholders involved in results-based monitoring. The key questions are:

- What interests/expectations do the stakeholders associate with the results-based monitoring system?
- Who needs what information in order to a) steer the project/programme, and/or b) for the purpose of accountability
- How much time and what financial and human resources are available for monitoring?
- Are results-based monitoring approaches that might be used here already available elsewhere?

Once these questions have been answered, the procedure is largely determined.

Step 3: Agree on Results Hypotheses

Results hypotheses are assumptions based on experience, and sometimes scientifically verified, concerning the link between intervention and result. They play an important role in the planning and implementation processes and in results-based monitoring.

- Even before actual technical planning takes place – for instance during the preceding political negotiations – assumptions are made as to which interventions might be capable of bringing about changes. Such assumptions are the point of departure for planning.
- Because results hypotheses contain assumptions concerning causal relationships, they are appropriate tools for formulating indicators to measure the achievement of objectives.
- During planning, results hypotheses can be used to illustrate the procedure and methodological approach of the project/programme. They can thus answer the question as to how a prescribed objective is to be achieved. Results hypotheses are laid down in the project/programme concept.
- Results hypotheses can be formulated not only with respect to expected positive changes, but also in anticipation of developments. They are therefore helpful to contract and cooperation management for developing a monitoring system extending beyond the mere comparison of actual and planned values. Results hypotheses thus provide a basis for identifying and assessing risks.
- Results hypotheses can also be used to plausibly link observed changes within the project/programme environment to the project activities and outputs.

Example: Identifying results hypotheses for the project "Increasing the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable production"

The project offer described the following results chain:

Inputs

- experts
- funds

Activities

- advisory services to governmental and non-governmental sectoral institutions and service providers
- opening of a credit line at the agricultural bank
- advisory services to the sectoral ministries concerning legal frameworks

Outputs

- improved extension services for farmers and marketing organisations
- availability of specific agricultural loans
- certification and quality assurance procedures
- operational tree nurseries

Use of Outputs

- Farmers and marketing organisations improve their management practices and apply new practices.
- Farmers invest in new varieties and infrastructure.
- Farmers and marketing organisations utilise the certification procedure.

Outcome/Overall Objective

- The competitiveness of fruit and vegetable production is increased.

The results chain described above reflects the "major" results hypothesis of the project, which in turn is based on a number of more "minor" results hypotheses such as:

- Advisory and extension services are actually being utilised by those institutions and groups for whom they are intended.
- The advisory services delivered to intermediary institutions actually help create improved extension services for the target group.
- Available loans are actually taken on by farmers and marketing organisations, and are utilised for investment in fruit and vegetable production.
- Investment in fruit and vegetable production leads to greater productivity.
- Certification really is an appropriate means to convince purchasers of product quality.

When establishing a results-based monitoring system, the results hypotheses implicit in the intervention strategy must be made explicit, i.e. transparent. This brings into focus the areas of immediate and less immediate project results.

The economic conditions within a country, as well as fluctuations in exchange rates or export restrictions elsewhere, can have negative or positive effects on the project, and must be incorporated into the results hypotheses.

In typical TC projects and programmes, it is neither feasible nor necessary to capture all changes and explore their possible links to the project/programme. It is sufficient that monitoring be focused on the key results areas. It is advisable to begin with one or several selected areas, and thereafter to gradually develop the monitoring system on the basis of concrete experiences.

Step 4: Review Indicators and Define Milestones

To establish whether the project or programme is achieving the desired changes, indicators of the achievement of objectives are required. The key indicators will usually have been defined during the planning process. They now need to be reviewed, and perhaps adjusted or supplemented. The milestones by which the gradual achievement of prescribed objectives can be measured should also be defined. Key questions concerning indicators and milestones are:

- For whom should something change?
- To what extent should something change?
- By when should something change?

Example: Reviewing indicators and defining milestones

The offer for the project "Increasing the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable production" formulates the following indicators:

- average percentage increase in sales revenues
- average percentage reduction in production costs
- reduction in the number of bankruptcies
- percentage increase in the volume of fruit and vegetable exports

When a project is launched it will usually not be possible to say anything more about these indicators. However, it will be possible to define milestones that indicate whether the project is moving in the right direction, i.e. is within the corridor of objectives. The results hypotheses and results areas defined above are helpful in this context. Depending on the time point, the milestones may mark the transition from activities to outputs, the use of outputs, or factors playing a role in those processes. Milestones might be for instance farmers and marketing organisations availing themselves of extension services, taking on loans, or using these loans.

If monitoring reveals that farmers are not taking on loans, and that their own capital resources are scarce, then it cannot be assumed that agricultural production will be increased through additional investment. Adjustments would then become necessary to ensure that the project remains on track.

Indicators are "yardsticks" that can be used to demonstrate that changes have (or have not) taken place. They provide meaningful and comparable information on changes. To obtain sufficient information on complex situations it is usually necessary to use several indicators of both a qualitative and a quantitative nature. A distinction needs to be drawn between the indicator and its value. An individual's standard of physical fitness can be measured for instance by their performance in the high jump. At the same time, different performance values (height jumped in centimetres) would have to be assigned to the indicator for children

than for healthy adults. In other words, while the indicator refers to the "what", the value refers to the "how much".⁹

In order to interpret indicators of the achievement of objectives, reference values are needed. These indicate when a satisfactory project/programme result can be considered to have been achieved. Wherever possible, they should not only indicate relative change, but should also include the absolute value. Reference values may be:

- baseline values
- development trends
- values taken from a comparable situation
- a defined quality

Even where no actual baseline study has been carried out, an attempt should always be made to obtain a picture of the initial situation with which observed changes can be compared. Where indicators describe a certain quality or the achievement of a state, it will not always be easy to distinguish them from an objective, a result or an activity. An indicator must yield information on a parameter by which something can be monitored, and must not itself generate such questions. Usually it is not possible to describe all aspects of an intended change with a single indicator. A combination of several indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) is then recommended.

Intermediaries and target groups should be involved in the development of indicators, because as the recipients of outputs or services they will often be in a position to say more precisely than others how intended changes can be identified.

Results-based monitoring includes the review and, where appropriate, improvement of indicators. Before new indicators are defined, however, planners should ascertain whether the monitoring systems of partner institutions already possess indicators by which the desired changes could be measured.

Step 5: Conduct Data Survey

A project's/programme's data survey methodology will depend very much on the scope and quality of the information to be delivered. It will also be determined by the time and the human and financial resources available to the project/programme for monitoring purposes.

When deciding which data survey method to use, costs and benefits should be considered. Group discussions, participatory monitoring, action research, participatory rural assessment and similar qualitative methods provide information from a subjective perspective that is often more revealing than purely statistical data.¹⁰

The questions to be answered in connection with the data survey concern the "how". The key questions are:

- Which data are required for the indicators prescribed by the client?
- How precise, reliable and representative should the information be?
- How much time, and what human and financial resources, are available for the survey?
- Where is information already available that can be utilised?
- How often should the data be surveyed?
- Should project/programme staff or external personnel be engaged?

The decision as to which individuals or groups are to be interviewed is a key indicator of the methodological direction. It should be borne in mind that actors directly involved in the project/programme are often well informed on aspects such as the project/programme procedures, structures, history and processes, although they are not necessarily the best informed on results. By contrast, target groups are, and they should always be interviewed when results are being explored. The monitoring activities of a project/programme should also always target possible indirect beneficiaries or stakeholders. When surveying these groups, it is inadvisable to focus immediately on the project/programme. More reliable answers can be expected when questions are phrased initially to explore perceived changes only in general terms. Broad scope should be allowed for respondents to describe their own contributions and the contributions of others.¹¹ Only when the project/programme outputs come into focus does it become appropriate to explore causal relationships in more depth with reference to the following questions:

- How are the outputs evaluated?
- Who uses these outputs, how, when and what for?

⁹ What indicators are, and how they should be used, is described in detail in: Directives for the Preparation of AURA Offers, GTZ, 2003.

¹⁰ e-VAL, GTZ's computer-based evaluation procedure in use since 2003, can be used to survey and quantitatively evaluate qualitative data.

¹¹ A detailed example of this kind of survey can be found in: GTZ/World Bank, A Beneficiary Assessment of AGETIP, 1996.

- Do the project/programme outputs, or does the use of these outputs by others generate an outcome?
- Apart from the outcome, are there also other, possibly negative results?

The responses that partners, intermediaries and target groups give to these questions, which themselves need to be phrased more concretely in the respective context, are of major importance in assessing whether a project/programme is still on track.

Step 6: Using Monitoring Results

Reliable and up-to-date monitoring data are essential for any development project or programme. Yet the data alone are far from enough. This is because the benefit generated by the hard work invested in the survey is reaped only once the results of monitoring are actually utilised. The crucial point is whether the monitoring system succeeds in obtaining - from the raw data - meaningful information that can be put to use for purposes of project/programme steering on the one hand, and of accountability vis-à-vis clients and the public on the other.

Unfortunately, it is a widespread misconception that the monitoring tasks are complete once the information has been fed into graphics and passed on. Although graphs and tables are helpful, the key step toward utilisation is interpretation of the data. The actors directly involved in the project/programme are best able to do this; they are familiar with the context and are able to interpret the "raw" data. Whether or not a vocational training project is producing the planned number of graduates can usually be established with reference to the corresponding documents. Establishing whether or not the project, by promoting graduates, is actually moving closer toward achieving its objective of facilitating the professional integration of youth, requires a precise understanding of the context. With results-based monitoring it is possible to make these judgements, and it is therefore an effective tool for contract and cooperation management.

The external tasks of monitoring include helping to fulfil the accountability obligation toward contracting clients and the public, and supporting corporate knowledge management and project marketing. Monitoring provides current and reliable information for reports, workshops, focus discussions with user groups, lectures, newsletters, web pages etc., through which the above tasks are performed. The preparation of this information and the form and frequency of its presentation are determined largely by user needs. Experience shows that the communicative potential of lengthy reports is limited: when communicating with individuals or agencies outside the organisation, "less" almost always means "more". In fact, the Framework for Contracts and Cooperation (AURA) expressly requires that reporting

be confined to the essentials. In addition to the customary brief description, GTZ's reports to its major contracting client, BMZ, are required to cover only the following three points:

- current project/programme status:
status of the achievement of objectives; key changes in the project/programme, its setting and its framework conditions; identified results
- changes in the risk assessment
- proposed measures¹²

A results-based monitoring system will generate conclusions that GTZ's knowledge management mechanisms should then make available company-wide. The monitoring system should then deliver the 'lessons to be learned' as clearly and as quickly as possible, in order to maximise the likelihood of their becoming 'lessons learned'.

Utilising monitoring results is the key step in reaping the benefits of the project or programme. Once this step has been taken, results-based monitoring itself begins to generate results.

¹² See Directives for the Preparation of GTZ Progress Reports to BMZ.

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All publications can be accessed at: <http://intranet.gtz.de/wirkungsorientierung>

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