

EVIDENCE REPORT

No 159

Policy Anticipation, Response and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation Report: Year 3

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October 2015

The IDS programme on Strengthening Evidence-based Policy works across seven key themes. Each theme works with partner institutions to co-construct policy-relevant knowledge and engage in policy-influencing processes. This material has been developed under the Policy Anticipation, Response and Evaluation theme.

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AG Level 2 Output ID: 349

MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT: YEAR 3

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Contents

	Abbreviations	2
	Introduction	3
1	Use of CRM in Year 3	4
	1.1 Achievements in online publishing	4
	1.2 Constraints to automatic reporting	4
2	Stakeholder survey	6
3	Events feedback	7
4	Future developments	8
	References	9
Figures		
Figure 1.1	Quality assurance	5
Tables		
Table 2.1	Stakeholder responses (Year 3)	6
Table 3.1	Events feedback (Year 3)	7

Abbreviations

AG	Accountable Grant
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
M&E	monitoring and evaluation

Introduction

This is a brief report on the developments and use of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system within the Institute of Development Studies' (IDS) Accountable Grant (AG). In its third consecutive year, the AG operates under an established system with seven key Outputs (six key policy themes and one policy response and evaluation output), 20 Sub-themes, 68 Activity Domains, and over 350 planned and supplemental Level 2 Outputs (or Policy Products). The Level 2 Output is the base on which all programme data are gathered and stored, and includes evidence reports, reviews, briefs, events, guidelines and other tools that aim to influence the policy process. As our previous reports discuss ([Munslow, Bingley and Sumberg 2014](#); [Munslow, Befani and Sumberg 2013](#)), the M&E system utilises Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. The system is now fully operational as a tool for programme management.

1 Use of CRM in Year 3

1.1 Achievements in online publishing

In Year 2, CRM was developed to integrate contracts, contacts and process management functions, as well as to automatically link budgeting and financial management records. This meant that the Level 2 Output records were sufficient to satisfy needs across the AG programme, including for: (1) grant coordination, (2) publishing, (3) partnerships, and (4) finance.

CRM continues to be used as the backbone of the M&E system for tracking the status of individual outputs; linking the output record with the IDS permanent, online publication archive (OpenDocs); and storing download data for each publication. The page view function in particular is useful because it enables other projects within the Institute to view AG records (see Figure 1.1).

1.2 Constraints to automatic reporting

In Year 2, we reported that IDS' Computer and Technology Services (CATS) developed a system to assist with quarterly reporting and time posting. The reports were designed to monitor the progress of Level 2 Outputs alongside changes in planned end date and days worked. These data were intended to provide programme management with a much better understanding of the 'lifecycle' of particular products. For example, to produce data on the number of days required for completion and final average costs per Output type. In practice, we have encountered problems in making this system work to a satisfactory standard, and it is presently being reviewed and redesigned.

Figure 1.1 Quality assurance

1. Shared views

Name	System Name	Level 2 Output	Output Name	Period start date	Period end date	Publication date	Status	Value
1. Hunger Report	Level 2 Output	Report	Annual report on hunger & malnutrition	01/01/2012	31/12/2012	01/01/2012	1 Completed	
2. Hunger Report	Level 2 Output	Report	Annual report on hunger & malnutrition	01/01/2012	31/12/2012	01/01/2012	1 Completed	
3. Hunger Report	Level 2 Output	Report	Annual report on hunger & malnutrition	01/01/2012	31/12/2012	01/01/2012	1 Completed	
4. Hunger Report	Level 2 Output	Report	Annual report on hunger & malnutrition	01/01/2012	31/12/2012	01/01/2012	1 Completed	
5. Hunger Report	Level 2 Output	Report	Annual report on hunger & malnutrition	01/01/2012	31/12/2012	01/01/2012	1 Completed	

2. Output record

Name	Level 2 Output	Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Output Name	Period start date	Period end date	Publication date	Status	Value
Mapping paper 1 (Shana)	Level 2 Output	Mapping paper 1 (Shana)	Strengthening Evidence-based Policy: Reducing Hunger and Undernutrition	Strengthening Evidence-based Policy: Reducing Hunger and Undernutrition	Strengthening Evidence-based Policy: Reducing Hunger and Undernutrition	01/01/2012	31/12/2012	01/01/2012	1 Completed	

3. Open Access Publication

OpenDocs: Sharing global knowledge for global change

Item submission

Describe Item

* Authors:

Enter the names of the authors of this item below:

Last name, first name

First name > " " > Last name

EVIDENCE REPORT No 2 Reducing Hunger and Undernutrition

Strengthening Agri-Food Value Chains for Nutrition: Mapping Value Chains for Nutrient-Dense Foods in China

Mark 2011

Policy BRIEFING

Gender-Equitable Public Investment: How Time-Use Surveys Can Help

4. Feedback

Strengthening Evidence-based Policy: Reducing Hunger and Undernutrition

3 / 6 60%

2. How influential do you think IDS and its partners are in the area of Hunger & Nutrition?

1. Very influential

2. Influential

3. Somewhat influential

4. Not particularly influential

5. Not at all influential

3. How would you rate the credibility of IDS and its partners in terms of knowledge and expertise in the area of Hunger & Nutrition?

1. Very credible

2. Credible

3. Somewhat credible

4. Not particularly credible

5. Not at all credible

Usefulness

www.FoodNet...

Sharma, I., Datta, R., V...

Robinson, E., Akopyev...

Neuman, N., Rostetter, E...

Barnett, T. and Maitiga...

de Lima, D., Fiedler, ...

1. Very useful 2. Useful 3. Neither useful nor unuseful 4. Not useful 5. Not useful

2 Stakeholder survey

The annual stakeholder survey is designed to gather information from stakeholders on the quality and relevance of the programme's outputs. A stakeholder is defined as any person or organisation with a professional interest in the work undertaken by the programme. For this purpose, stakeholders did not include those individuals or partner organisations involved in producing the work.

In order to make the survey manageable, Sentinel Outputs are prioritised. Sentinel Outputs are those that are expected to have greatest potential for impact and therefore have additional resources allocated to them to maximise dissemination and uptake. It is also anticipated that Sentinel Outputs encompass knowledge that has the greatest utility for the maximum number of stakeholders. For each Theme over 100 stakeholders were sent a request to answer questions related to the quality, use, and applicability of publications to their current work. SurveyMonkey internet-based software was used to develop, send and manage the survey.

Response rates for surveys like this are notoriously low: we experienced this problem last year. For the Year 3 survey we made extra efforts: more stakeholders were contacted, they were contacted earlier, and were systematically sent reminders. Nevertheless, response rates were highly variable, and for some Themes, disappointingly low (see Table 2.1).

We are coming to the conclusion that this type of annual survey is of limited value and is probably not appropriate as a means of verifying a logframe indicator. For the final year of the programme we will propose an alternative approach.

Table 2.1 Stakeholder responses (Year 3)

Theme	Number of stakeholders contacted	Number of surveys returned	Response rate (%)
1	100	14	14
2	100	3	3
3	100	14	14
4	100	2	2
5	100	9	9
6	100	18	18
7	100	14	14
Total	700	74	10.5

3 Events feedback

Events include workshops with programme partners, seminars with a broader range of stakeholders, focus group discussions with Members of Parliament or Working Groups, high-level panels, and/or online events (e-discussions and e-webinars). For example, in Year 3 over 21 workshops have been held with programme partners in over ten countries.

In previous years, we observed low response rates when participants were requested to evaluate the usefulness of AG-funded programmes. This was due in part to a less than systematic approach to feedback collection. To maximise feedback event forms were simplified, and now include only four simple questions and can be completed in less than two minutes. The forms ask about participant perspectives on use, quality, engagement as well as other contextual information related to the attainment of new knowledge as a result of the workshops (see Table 3.1). Those participants who request to stay in touch with the programmes are stored in a central mailing list that is comprised of all the programme’s core stakeholders. In Year 3, events have also been evaluated using a standard online survey. This has, however, not resulted in a noticeable increase in response rates.

Table 3.1 Events feedback (Year 3)

Theme	Number of events conducted	Number of surveys returned	Rating of usefulness % (mean %)
1	7	63	90
2	4	86	98
3	3	53	98
4	1	15	87
5	3	50	90
6	3	101	88
7a,b,c	5	31	80
Total	26	399	(90)

4 Future developments

As has been mentioned in previous reports, while CRM has all the functionality required for large-scale programme management, previous to the AG it was not used to fulfil this function in IDS. The experience with the AG has demonstrated the value of CRM. Further integration of CRM, and the approach and tools developed under the AG, into programme management within IDS would be facilitated by developments in the following areas:

1. **Data collection:** Tools for data collection could be broadened beyond simple administrative surveys. The use of graphics and online media for event and publication feedback is an area with great potential.
2. **Stakeholder lists:** Stakeholders of each Theme could be stored centrally on CRM. CRM is easy to access and share and would maximise the quality of our engagement with individuals and groups professionally interested in the programme. It would also make lists more comprehensive if all staff entered new 'clients' quarterly. This means that stakeholder feedback could be gathered more regularly.
3. **Programme monitoring:** The training of and buy-in from Theme Convenors and programme support staff working to produce project outputs, including training on how to fill in quarterly reporting records with full and correct data, is required.
4. **Data accessibility:** The data stored in the Level 2 Output record are valuable to all staff. It would be useful for Theme Convenors and programme staff to be able to view these figures easily to support future proposals and/or progress reports.

References

Munslow, T.; Bingley, K. and Sumberg, J. (2014) *Monitoring and Evaluation Report: Year 2*, IDS Evidence Report 51, Brighton: IDS

Munslow, T.; Befani, B. and Sumberg, J. (2013) *Monitoring and Evaluation Report: Year One*, IDS Evidence Report 6, Brighton: IDS



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