Participatory monitoring and evaluation:
a process to support governance and empowerment at the local level

A guidance paper

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KONINKLIJK INSTITUUT
VOOR DE TROPEN
ROYAL TROPICAL INSTITUTE

June 2006

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558 129, June 2006

World Bank: TF055592

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to Aditi Sen, CDD anchor at the WB, for providing timely support and information. We are grateful to Jean Delion, Dan Murphy, Aditi Sen, Haddy Jatou Sey and Mark Woodward for thoughtful comments received on earlier drafts. Colleagues from KIT, notably Gerard Baltissen and Wim van Campen provided important feedback and information.

ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based organizations
CDD	Community Driven Development
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSC	Community Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PB	Participatory Budgeting
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

1 Introduction

Strengthening meaningful participation and empowerment of citizens and improving the quality of governance at the local level are essential for effective poverty reduction. This guidance paper explores how a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) process can enhance participation, empowerment and governance in World Bank-supported projects and programs, which enhances the performance, efficiency and sustainability of interventions.

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PM&E is about strengthening primary stakeholders' involvement as active participants in interventions by them taking the lead in tracking and analysing progress towards jointly agreed results and deciding on corrective action. This approach contributes to demand-led planning and decision-making and improved accountability, when effective communication and feedback loops are in place with programs and agencies.

The 'local level' in this paper refers to primary beneficiaries in two contexts. One is the lowest sub-national governance level where elected local government and 'frontline' service providers engage with citizens and their organizations. These formal, territorial units may refer to a region, a district, a rural or an urban municipality, implying great variation in area, population density, economic development, available capacities and infrastructure - all of which have implications for the potential and practice of PM&E.

The second context that these guidelines address is communities that lack an administrative or legal status but are nonetheless the focus of much human activity and development work. This may include villages, hamlets, urban neighbourhoods, nomadic camps and other types of human settlements. Some World Bank financed projects, such as those promoting Community Driven Development (CDD)[1], target this level for supporting investments in basic infrastructure, economic development and capacity building of community-based organizations.

This guidance paper starts with an introduction to PM&E in Chapter 2 and outlines a framework for assessing governance at the local level and the role of decentralization in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 explores the potential benefits of PM&E for local governance, for key actors (local government, service providers and civil society organizations), and for multi-stakeholder processes. The fifth chapter sets out operational guidelines for

[1] CDD is often embodied in the next generation of social fund programs. A key difference is that decision-making about resource allocation is made by local communities and not social fund staff.

introducing and embedding PM&E into World Bank activities and is illustrated with examples from practice.

2 Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation and its Relevance for WB Projects

This chapter starts by defining PM&E and its core principles. It then discusses the range of purposes that PM&E can fulfil in practice, also noting a series of common pitfalls. The chapter proceeds by highlighting the recent shift in M&E practice from a largely accountability-oriented mechanism to focusing on its contribution to learning for improved actions. A specific consideration rounds off this chapter: that of tracking change in contexts of uncertainty.

2.1 Defining PM&E and its core principles

Participation is defined as the process through which stakeholders are involved in and influence decision-making, resource allocation, implementation and control of development initiatives[2]. Empowerment is about building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of citizens[3], program staff and other partners to guide, manage and implement development initiatives effectively. For participation to be meaningful, primary stakeholders have to be in a position to set goals, track progress, learn from change, and propose corrective action. However, while primary stakeholders are increasingly involved in some aspect of planning, their presence within the monitoring and evaluation of actions is very often lacking or inadequate.

Monitoring and evaluation is about assessing actual change against stated objectives, and making a judgement whether development efforts and investments were worthwhile or 'cost-effective'[4]. Therefore, M&E systems are generally constructed to provide information for reporting on achievements in order to fulfil accountability responsibilities. This has led to M&E being largely associated with a controlling and accountability function. Increasingly, however, there is recognition that M&E systems may also contribute to strategic management and learning lessons; and to feeding experiences into policy processes.

Social accountability is defined by the World Bank as an approach that relies on civic engagement in public affairs. PM&E differs from social accountability as it is applied to interventions within the realm of control of primary stakeholders. Therefore they are in a position to act upon findings. The PM&E process may also help to clarify rights and

[2] Waglé and Shah, 2003

[3] Citizenship involves the claiming of rights, which is not possible for all people, such as refugees. Not all residents are citizens in an active sense, although they might be legally considered as such, because they are unfamiliar with their rights and therefore do not pursue them.

[4] IFAD, 2002

responsibilities and, where needed, formulate demands towards other actors and articulate these in the appropriate fora for dialogue and decision-making. PM&E becomes linked to social accountability.

Box 1. The purposes of monitoring and evaluation

- *Supporting operational management* - providing the basic management information needed to direct, coordinate and control the resources required to achieve any given objective;
- *Supporting strategic management* – providing the information for and facilitating the processes required to set and adjust goals, objectives and strategies towards improving quality and performance;
- *Knowledge generation and sharing* – generating new insights that contribute to the established knowledge base in a given field. This includes documenting lessons learned for sharing and feeding into policy reforms that can further enhance performance;
- *Empowerment* – building the capacity, self reliance and confidence of beneficiaries, implementing staff and partners to guide, manage and implement development initiatives effectively;
- *Accountability, including impact evaluation*: demonstrating to donors, beneficiaries and implementing partners that expenditure, actions and results are as agreed or are as can reasonably be expected in a given situation.

Source: Woodhill, 2006

The special focus of this guidance paper is Participatory M&E. PM&E is defined here as *a process where primary stakeholders – those who are affected by the intervention being examined – are active participants, take the lead in tracking and making sense of progress towards achievement of self-selected or jointly agreed results at the local level, and drawing actionable conclusions*. The effectiveness (and sustainability) of such a process requires that it be embedded in a strong commitment towards corrective action by communities, project management and other stakeholders in a position to act.

This definition goes beyond involving primary stakeholders in a process of 'conventional' M&E, such as consulting them on indicators and asking them to provide information or feed-back on the results (see Box 2). Here the emphasis of PM&E is on deepening participation, a process that is intrinsically linked to learning and empowerment[5], as well

[5] Guijt and Gaventa, 1998

as linking monitoring to action. The PM&E process is build around agreeing on expected results and milestones, defining how to track progress, collecting required data, undertaking joint analysis and decide on actions. Capacity building, collaborative learning and empowerment result from working together in this cycle of analysis and action.

As a PM&E process involves different stakeholders, this invariably requires engaging with varying interests that are played out through existing power relationships, thus making the process deeply political. Inevitably, PM&E will require negotiation to reach agreement about who will participate, what will be monitored or evaluated, how and when data will be collected and analysed, what the information means, and how findings will be shared, and what action will be taken. The resulting insights can be used to improve the performance of interventions, and also to prepare better when negotiating with other actors.

Opening up project management, service providers or local government staff to comments from 'beneficiaries', 'users' or 'citizens' can be perceived as threatening and may lead to some resistance. Therefore, for a PM&E process to deliver, a culture that rewards innovation and openness about failure is required and may need to be formed. It is also important that norms, procedures and incentives are in place that support transparency, accountability, and learning. And as interventions take place over several years, flexibility is essential, since the number, role, and skills of stakeholders, and contextual conditions change over time.

PM&E and empowerment are too easily assumed to go hand-in-hand. An empowering PM&E process must be consciously constructed with that purpose in mind. This implies that the process takes place on their terms and focuses around their requirements and demands. Primary stakeholders take the lead in designing the focus and methodology and it is their skills that are developed. Finally, to gain access to relevant information and understanding of how governance works, as well as to track and make sense of change, contribute to empowerment of primary stakeholders.

Box 2. The history of PM&E in a nutshell

The value and need for basing development on the views and priorities of 'the local population' has become widely acknowledged over the last decades, leading to a practice of working *with* and *by* communities.

Initially pioneered by action research-oriented initiatives and organizations, the use of participatory approaches and methods has become increasingly mainstreamed. The use of tools such as social mapping, Venn diagrams, wealth ranking, and transects have become normal practice in much development work, including in World Bank-supported CDD programs. Ministries have started to include participatory methodologies in guidelines provided to local governments for developing municipal development plans, such as in Benin and Mali.

Participatory diagnosis, priority setting, and planning have become an accepted ethic and are practiced in hundreds of Northern and Southern development initiatives. However, 'participation' should also address implementation, monitoring and evaluation. There is a rapidly growing interest in ensuring wider participation, and since the mid 1990s, the term 'participatory M&E' (PM&E) has received increasing attention[6].

Other trends that underscore the interest in PM&E are:

- Frustration with the inadequacy of prevailing M&E systems to capture local knowledge, needs, aspirations and views;
- Recognition within development initiatives of the importance of continuous adaptation and innovation to ensure the relevance of the work. In turn, this requires capacity to reflect on own experiences and learn from them;
- Pressure for a more diverse approach towards accountability: in addition to upward reporting, also downward accountability towards communities and internal towards staff and peer organizations.

PM&E is being asked to fulfil a wide range of purposes for different stakeholders - some for citizens, some for service providers, some for government agencies and some for projects, programs or partnerships. Alongside the range of purposes that are possible to

[6] Action for Social Advancement, 2005; Estrella et al., 2000; IIED, 1998; Shah et al., 1993; Woodhill and Robins, 1998; Toledano et al., 2002. The World Bank published its first technical paper on PM&E in 1993 (Narayan, 1993).

pursue with more participatory forms of M&E is its growth as a generic term[7] and about which there is no common understanding. This makes it imperative to be clear about what is being pursued with PM&E. Is the focus of PM&E mostly on *monitoring* (tracking and feedback)? Is it on *evaluation* (valuing and performance review)? Or is it more on '*strengthening and deepening participation'* (shared learning, joint decision-making, mutual respect, co-ownership, democratisation and empowerment)[8]?

Initially, for example, the emphasis lay with making prevailing (conventional) M&E systems more participatory (*putting the 'P' in M&E*). This has generated initiatives that focused on involving primary stakeholders in determining objectives and indicators, developing locally feasible data collection methods and seeking ways in which analysis could be community-based. Much of this experimentation occurred at village level. Examples include the tracking of progress by farmers of their agroforestry activities, community groups assessing the impact of anti-poverty programs in the USA, or self-monitoring of leadership capacity-building[9].

Recent years have seen a diversifying of contexts in which the ideas of PM&E have been applied and, therefore, of methodological innovation. Examples are an explicit integration of M&E into participatory processes and locally managed interventions (*putting M&E in the 'P'*); and using PM&E to strengthen adaptive management and organizational learning (see next sections).

It is important not to assume that different purposes can automatically be achieved within a single approach or process. Each purpose has different requirements in terms of capacities, information systems, resources and minimal conditions for success. Expecting several or even all purposes to be equally well fulfilled within a short time frame may prove overly optimistic and lead to disillusion (see Chapter 5 on 'Operational Guidelines').

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[7] Other terms used to describe PM&E practice are: Participatory monitoring; Participatory evaluation; Participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation; Participatory impact monitoring; Process monitoring; Self-monitoring/self evaluation; Auto-evaluation; Stakeholder based evaluation/assessment; Empowerment evaluation; Community monitoring; community-based monitoring and evaluation; community driven M&E (in World Bank documents); Citizen monitoring; Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation; Transformative participatory evaluation

[8] Estrella et al., 2000

[9] Estrella et al., 2000; Gaventa et al., 1998; Guijt and Gaventa, 1998, Action Aid, 2005; Yanggen et al., 2004

For PM&E to be effective, choices have to be made regarding initial and longer-term objectives in order to build a feasible and inspiring process that can evolve towards fulfilling multiple purposes. Thus, the following four aspects have to be clarified[10]:

- *Required time frame* – Should efforts be invested in establishing longer term monitoring mechanisms or is a shorter tracking initiative sufficient?
- Related *type of decision*-making. Who or what does the information need to influence, and therefore into what decision-making space should the information be fed? What different priorities, processes and calendar of activities govern these spaces that need to be understood if information is to inform decisions?
- *Degree of participation of stakeholders*. Who is essential to have involved and why (ownership of analysis, their perspectives, resulting decisions, etc)? What would their role ideally be? What support do they need for their participation to be meaningful and not window dressing?
- *Depth of analysis* and *degree of rigour*. To achieve the purpose with those identified as key stakeholders, what degree of rigour and depth of analysis should be aimed for? To 'empower' citizens to monitor local service providers may require less scientifically rigorous data than seeking clarity about precise water quality management strategies.

Finally, recognising the general limitations of an indicator-focused approach is important. Deciding what to monitor is often associated with indicator identification. However, indicators are often inadequate at explaining causes behind observed changes and only able to deal with anticipated phenomena of change. Identifying performance questions, before detailing indicators, helps to focus information-gathering on what will truly advance understanding and improve results. To avoid a short shelf-life of information collected, the choice should be for sustained monitoring of the same set to get trend indications. From that derive more precise information needs, which can be matched with feasible methods[11].

2.2 Learning and PM&E

A learning-focused M&E system builds on what people already know and do, using and developing their existing abilities and skills to monitor their progress. It is a cyclical process in which communities and CSOs reflect continuously on the effects of their actions and where the process is leading them. It is this learning process that creates conducive conditions for change and action.

Combined pressures to improve the quality and adequacy of performance, while working more efficiently and effectively, are encouraging also agencies and projects to ask the

[10] Guijt (ed.), 2006

[11] Guijt (ed.), 2006; IFAD, 2002 see Annex D for many ideas

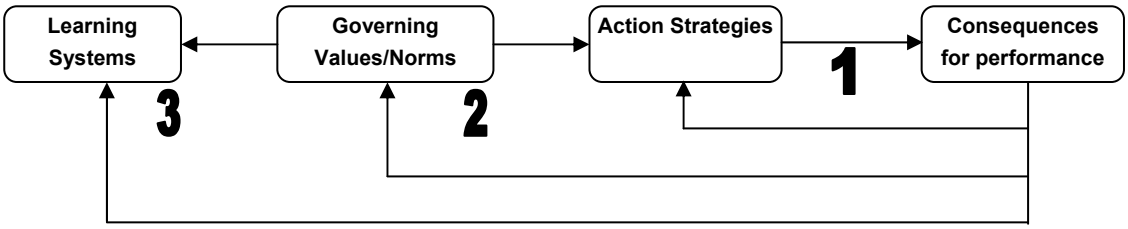
question of how they can learn better to improve their work – not just account for it. The core questions shift from *what* has happened to *why* has there been success or failure and *so what* are the practical and strategic implications[12] (see Box 3). One example of learning-focused M&E is provided by a guide that was developed specifically for CDD projects[13].

Learning-focused M&E and PM&E become synonymous, when the aim is to make interventions more demand responsive, inclusive, empowerment-oriented and sustainable by bringing voices of broader stakeholder groups systematically into discussions on strategies and performance.

Box 3. Conceptualising levels of organizational learning

A commonly used framework to conceptualise levels of organizational learning in response to monitoring is situated around 'loops' of learning.

Routine monitoring, which is functional, operational and maintenance-oriented, leads to '*Single-loop learning'*. This concept refers to a 'single' feedback loop that connects the identified outcomes of an action to modifications required in organizational strategies, so as to improve performance within the norms set by this organization, but these standards themselves remain unchanged. '*Double-loop learning'* occurs when the identified problems and opportunities are addressed in ways that involve changing an organization's underlying structure: values, objectives, policies. '*Triple-loop learning'* goes even further and involves the redesign of learning processes and systems within an organization to improve performance. This follows an analysis of formal and informal systems of learning within the organization (or partnership) and how these influence overall performance.



1= single loop learning; 2= double loop learning; 3= triple loop learning

Source: Action for Social Advancement, 2005

[12] Woodhill, 2006

[13] Action for Social Advancement, 2005

2.3 Using PM&E to deal with uncertain and dynamic contexts

There is growing appreciation of the need to incorporate the influence of uncertain and dynamic contexts on performance[14]. A program, project or partnership may be breaking new ground about which there is not entire clarity or consensus or it works on a known idea but applied under different conditions. Dynamic contexts and limited predictability are also important features of the management of a watershed or collectively used natural resources, such as forests, fisheries and grazing areas. Here, management strategies need to be context specific and informed by local data and mutual experience given the complexity of the ecological processes involved (see also Box 4). Or, programs may evolve in situations of conflict, characterised by great uncertainty and at least partial failure of the state.

For programs, projects and partnerships working under these uncertain and dynamic circumstances, this constitutes continual adaptation – incorporating new stakeholders and adjusting the roles of existing partners, modifying processes, refocusing priorities, strategies and practices, and so forth. Conscious attention is needed to signs that herald the need for such adjustments and that help indicate what shape changes must take. This awareness has stimulated greater appreciation for an adaptive management approach in which information generated through monitoring is used for refining implementation strategies and even goals, as circumstances require. Monitoring and implementation are intertwined and mutually reinforcing

A PM&E process contributes to the construction of information feedback systems that strengthen learning and build organizations that value critical reflection, and learn from success and failure alike[15].

[14] Woodhill, 2006 forthcoming

[15] IFAD, 2002;Woodhill, 2006; see also Crawford et al., 2004 on embedding PM&E in an Education Sector Support Program

Box 4. Adaptive collaborative management of natural resources

Within forest management, the idea of 'adaptive collaborative management' using PM&E is gaining credence[16]. Building trust among stakeholders, improving dialogue and learning, and strengthening partnerships can greatly enhance the success of such co-management processes. The collaborative nature implies that it becomes a social and political process, including negotiation around what information is to be collected and how to assess the findings.

PM&E can focus on the prevalence of certain resources, harvesting methodologies, quality of social interactions between users, etc. Monitoring efforts may be comprehensive, encompassing all issues within a forest area or very specific, such as beekeeping or a specific (over-exploited) grass type. In some cases, all groups involved choose to develop a single common framework for observing the effectiveness of their plans and the unexpected outcomes. In other situations, each sub-group identifies its own monitoring priorities.

Case studies on experiences with PM&E in collaborative forest management report various benefits:
- Improved understanding of the resource, the institutional environment, and of visions and management options of the various stakeholders involved;
- Increased capacity and willingness to question previously accepted technical and institutional norms;
- More informed decision-making;
- Shifting perception of monitoring as a form of policing towards monitoring as mutually beneficial for management;
- Improved quality of partnership interactions and communication;
- Increased equity regarding voice and flow of benefits;
- Improved conflict management;
- Enhanced sustainability by using less harmful forest resource management practices.

Source: Guijt, 2006

[16] Ghimire and Pimbert, 1997;Gunderson and Holling, 1995; Hinchcliffe et al., 1999; Jiggins and Röling, 2000; Lee, 1999; McDougall et al., 2006; Roe and Eeten, 1999

3 Understanding Local Governance in the Context of PM&E

This chapter starts with an analysis of the decentralization process and implications for local governance. It then moves on to identifying four characteristics that determine the quality of governance. These serve as a framework for integrating PM&E into local governance initiatives. The chapter ends with a section on stakeholders that play a role in PM&E: citizens and their organizations; local government and service providers.

3.1 Implications of decentralization for local governance

Decentralisation refers to the transfer of a sphere of decision-making from the central state apparatus to a sub-national unit. This may involve authority (*devolution*), responsibilities and functions (*deconcentration*) or financial resources (*fiscal decentralisation*). Overall, decentralisation is a complex, medium-to-long term political process that needs considerable legal and constitutional reforms, cuts across sector ministries and involves many stakeholders. Challenges include the design of robust systems for channelling money to sub-national levels and strengthening the capacities of local government to govern and uphold accountability mechanisms[17]. Conditions for local governments to act effectively may suffer from inadequate devolution of authority and resources, or too limited autonomy.

Increasingly, the World Bank and other development institutions are supporting decentralization initiatives that give greater powers to sub-national governments. This is partly rooted in a critique of central planning and a belief in the advantages of local competition and information exchange for improving service delivery. Other reasons are related to the potential of decentralisations to strengthen democratisation and enhance the transparency of public sector performance[18].

Decentralization is expected to lead to an increase of power and resources at a level that is closer, better understood and more easily influenced by local people. It inserts a new layer of policy makers, who are located closer to citizens and to 'frontline' service providers. This situation could strengthen the quality of governance on the assumption that proximity breeds commitment, facilitates accountability and allow for efficiency and competitiveness gains for service delivery.

Whether decentralised public policy becomes more meaningful for poor and marginalized people depends on a number of issues. These include features of local power structures

[17] White and Smoke, 2005; Manor, 1999

[18] Campos and Hellman, 2005

(style of local leadership, legacy of authoritarian rule, the working of political parties, openness and accountability of local political processes); the presence of articulate and effective citizen organizations and private sector; and good information flows. In highly stratified societies, it is possible that without accompanying measures devolution provokes even more exclusion or elite capture. Equity is also undermined in situations where discriminatory perceptions on participation and engagement are no longer kept in check by statutory rights.[19]

Decentralisation changes the context of participation and local governance, and therefore also influences PM&E processes. It may open new avenues for institutionalising PM&E and sustaining community level interventions, by strengthening functional relations between local government and communities. Local government may become an anchor for the institutionalisation of improved governance practices[20]. Therefore, assisting local governments to strengthen local governance and to welcome citizen participation warrants consideration.

3.2 Four qualities of local governance

Governance is about the process and institutions by which authority and control are exercised. It can be assessed in terms of four qualities[21]:

1. Efficiency and effectiveness with which institutions, rules and systems operate;
2. Equity of outcomes;
3. Exercise of power, including accountability mechanisms;
4. Quality of stakeholder interactions.

The focus and structure of the PM&E process will depend on which aspects of local governance are considered particularly pertinent to address in the project or program. Below follows a short description of the four features of what constitutes 'quality' in governance, and the types of questions that could be examined in more detail.

3.2.1 Efficiency and effectiveness

The soundness of the policy and decision-making process influences the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations or programs. Questions that could be addressed in a development initiative that aims to enhance this aspect of local governance could include:

[19] Alatas et al., 2003;Beal, 2005;Bonfiglioli, 2003;Devas and Grant, 2003;Oluwu, 2003; White and Smoke, 2005;Wong and Guggenheim, 2005;World Bank, 2004

[20] Reviews on CDD programs also indicate that integrating with local government is important for long-term sustainability and the ability to scale up (McLean et al., 2005; OED, 2004; McDonald Stewart and Muça, 2003

[21] Asian Development Bank, 1999; DFID, 2001;European Commission, 2001; Kaufmann et al., 1999

To what extent is policymaking demand-led and responsive to citizens' needs and expectations? What is the quality of data used and analysis and how has this informed appraisal and decision-making? What is the effectiveness of feedback systems such as for timely detection of problems? Is there sufficient coherence between the various activities? Another aspect that is critical for performance is the quality of management, staff motivation and efficiency of resource use. The capacity for internal learning is an important factor for improving performance, as well as other qualities of governance (see also section 2.3).

3.2.2 Exercise of power and accountability

The predictability of action by organizations and projects, and thus whether agreed policies, systems and procedures are applied, respected and enforced is a feature of the exercise of power. Related issues are whether engagements and commitments are honoured and whether interactions between staff and 'beneficiaries' are respectful. This includes the possibility for applying checks and oversights in order to prevent abuse, as well as keeping the actions of project staff and authorities in line with established rules. It also assumes that certain groups or interests do not unduly influence decision-making and the allocation of resources. These issues affect the legitimacy of an organization or body and whether it is perceived as trustworthy and credible.

Other essential features of the exercise of power are accountability, transparency and openness. Strengthening accountability mechanisms is increasingly perceived as an important strategy towards improving local governance and addressing inadequate performance and service delivery from public and private actors or programs and projects. Particularly, interest in interventions that increase transparency and exact accountability from public sector actors and elected representatives is growing as 'holding delegated authority accountable is integral to the idea of government subject to popular control'[22].

3.2.3 Equity and inclusion

Social inclusion refers to the ability of all people, without discrimination, to fulfil their rights and potentials to participate in society. Equity of outcomes refers to whether the specific interests and requirements of marginal and vulnerable groups are expressed and taken into account during policy development, implementation, and monitoring. It also requires that better-off social groups are prevented from capturing government services and that biases present in organizations and projects against working for marginal groups are identified and addressed. This characteristic also includes a look at the capacity of

[22] Goetz and Jenkins, 2005 p.2

those working in these structures to understand and see biases and exclusionary mechanisms, as well as their willingness to address these.

3.2.4 Quality of stakeholder interactions

Clearly, improved service provision and local development require the input and collaboration of a multitude of actors. Usually there are multiple stakeholders involved in local development, which may include project staff, customary authorities, formal and informal community-based organizations and groups, NGOs, local government agencies, private and public service providers, politicians, entrepreneurs, etc. The relation between office or duty bearers and right holders may shape these stakeholder interactions; the challenge is to arrive at a dialogue on expectations, roles and responsibilities.

Smooth partnerships are essential for efficiency, to avoid duplication and prevent gaps. However, this is easier said than done. In a multi-stakeholder setting, being clear on responsibilities and quality standards, sharing information, undertaking joint analysis, and honouring agreements is often a challenge. These new configurations also raise questions with respect to horizontal coordination, connecting effectively with other (vertical) levels, and accountability.

Network governance is about enhancing functional and transparent relationships between stakeholders working on similar issues in an informal or formal partnership context, such as coordination meetings, platforms, public-private dialogues, *cadre de concertation* etc. The 2004 World Development Report on pro-poor service delivery recognised this issue and introduced the 'accountability framework' that analyses the linkages between (poor) citizens, service providers and policy makers and how these can be used for improving performance[23].

[23] Campos and Hellman, 2005; World Bank, 2004; Goetz and Jenkins, 2005

4 Potential Benefits on Local Governance of Implementing and Institutionalising PM&E

In this chapter, the potential contribution of PM&E to support local governance is analysed for each of the different qualities that were introduced in the previous chapter: performance, exercise of power, equity and stakeholder interactions. Most PM&E processes can be constructed to enhance more than one quality of local governance. This chapter also highlights the role of key stakeholders, where relevant.

4.1 PM&E to enhance efficiency and effectiveness

PM&E processes can contribute to results-based management by improving policy making, facilitating adaptive management, enhancing efficiency of resource use and promoting staff motivation (see Table 1). PM&E may also redress constraints in project implementation, such as filling the information void with clarity about the expectations of marginalized and poor people.

Table 1. Performance - Efficiency and effectiveness

Purpose of PM&E	**Expected Benefits**
1.Generating location specific insights and information 2.Improve soundness of policy making 3.Facilitate adaptive and flexible management 4.Increase efficiency of resource use 5. Promote stakeholder motivation 6. Promote staff motivation (local government, service providers and other agencies)	• Better understanding about local realities and therefore, more realistic and appropriate plans and policies • Shared analysis of suggestions for improvements • Improved strategic planning at different levels • Programs are more demand-led, which enhances effectiveness and sustainability of interventions • Timely adjustments to plans, schedules and/or budgets, following local feedback on bottlenecks as well as unanticipated negative impacts that need correcting; • Identification of possibilities for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of activities; • Reduced waste of resources and time • Reduced possibility for corruption or diversion of funds to non-intended activities • More motivated stakeholders at the local level, • More staff motivation, initiatives and creativity • Shifting perception from monitoring as 'policing' to monitoring as mutually beneficial • Better working environment as learning from mistakes eases performance fears

Projects and service providers that are using PM&E for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, require a relatively simple process of seeking feedback on service delivery from users. This is based on jointly agreed criteria of what constitutes

'a good service' and a shared analysis about areas for further improvement. Many examples exist of using PM&E to improve performance, ranging from a focus on community-based M&E methodologies to more sophisticated forms of data collection. One methodology that is often used is the community scorecard (see Box 5). Community score cards are generally considered as a tool for advancing social accountability. When the findings have a very immediate practical value for primary stakeholders and who are also in a position to act upon findings, than community score cards are relevant also for contributing to a PM&E process.

A PM&E process may facilitate local resource mobilisation. By becoming better informed on resources and expenditures, it will be clearer to citizens what is actually available and what is lacking. This may increase their preparedness to contribute from own resources-money, time, support etc.- to an intervention that is regarded as worthwhile. PM&E processes have also stimulated more active engagement of future users in thinking through a proposed investment. They contributed with insights and suggestions on how to make improvements, such as on quality and efficiency. Moreover, the costs of small-scale infrastructure investments may be considerably less when managed locally than when delivered by public agencies, even with the latter being in a position to obtain economies of scale through central procurement. Besides, transferring micro-project management to communities relieves the implementing organization from being obliged to administer and oversee a large number of small projects[24].

Box 5. Monitoring performance: Community Score Card

The Community Score Card (CSC) is used as a tool for monitoring the performance and efficiency of organizations such as service providers or community level committees as perceived by users. The main objective is to improve performance, and governance more in general, by promoting dialogue and exchange between service providers/committees and users at so-called interface meetings.

Service providers and users are involved in designing the scorecards. Images are often used to capture local views. Generally, external facilitators lead the process and calculate the results, which are then discussed in public.

Scorecards may be combined with collecting data on pre-fixed performance assessment indicators. Care should be taken that the goal of community empowerment (a large number of focus group discussions) is not overridden by tracking performance as such (emphasising data collection and subsequent analysis).

Sources: Singh and Shah, 2003; Dedu and Kajubi, 2005; Salmen et al. 2006

[24] Wong and Guggenheim, 2005; McDonald Stewart and Muça, 2003

4.2 PM&E to improve the exercise of power

Some characteristics of the exercise of power are openness, transparency, responsiveness, predictability and accountability (see 3.2.2) Gathering and sharing information and dialogue are key features of PM&E processes, which contribute to openness and transparency. PM&E processes also contribute to demand-led priority setting, thus enhancing the responsiveness of the organizations involved. Addressing how power is exercised means that citizens can hold projects, service providers and local governments to account over their policies and activities. It extends the potential of PM&E into issues that can seriously challenge the status quo in situations where power abuses occur. Table 3 lists some expected benefits for using PM&E to improve the exercise of power.

Table 3. Exercise of power

Purpose of PM&E	Expected Benefits
1.Improve responsiveness 2. Promote openness and transparency 2.Strengthen mechanisms for checks and balances	• Enhanced legitimacy of programs and organizations • Reduced risk of clientelism and patronage around resource use • Improved transparency and accountability enhances willingness of citizens to contribute resources (including paying of taxes) • Local empowerment

PM&E can contribute to the supply side and the demand side of accountability. Improving the *supply* side of accountability means focusing attention on the correct application of administrative rules and procedures, respect for auditing requirements, and whether performance is according to the standards (see Box 7). A PM&E process that focuses more on the *demand* side seeks to build citizens and communities influence on decision-making and implementation in an informed, direct and constructive manner (see for example Box 6 and 13).

A focus on increasing responsiveness and accountability of office bearers via a PM&E process is in line with the growing emphasis on rights-based approaches to development[25]. However, emphasizing partnerships may be a more productive way to move forward. Mutual trust, as well as staff motivation and commitment, may grow when 'claim or right holders' and office bearers enter into dialogue, start sharing information and working together (see also Box 6). [26]

[25] Chambers et al., 2003; Malena et al., 2004

[26] Crawford et al., 2004; Picard and Goulden, 2005

Box 6. Using social contracts for school improvement in Malawi

The Education Sector Support Program in Malawi seeks to promote community involvement for school improvement. Pupils, parents, teachers, local authorities and other officials all have a claim and a duty in terms of ensuring that the education system can be improved and run more equitably, effectively and efficiently. An essential feature is that a more sharing and trusting relationship develops between 'claim-holders' and 'office-bearers'. The may result in more people becoming involved in identifying activities that can make school improvement possible, and in sharing responsibilities for this to happen.

The methodology used in Malawi is to get these stakeholders to agree on a 'social contract' on school improvement that results from a participatory situation analysis and planning exercise. The social contract outlines a set of agreed conditions and responsibilities, and documents everyone's roles in making school improvement happen (in drawings and writing). By going through a process of developing social contracts, the program seeks to increase stakeholder comprehension (at community and other levels) of their own and other's responsibilities. The contract should also make the school improvement process more transparent and accountable.

PM&E approaches and methods are embedded in the process and used to elaborate goals and changes that stakeholders want to see take place and to design ways for monitoring and assessing whether school improvement is on track. The 'significant change' evaluation tool has proved to be very popular in these PM&E processes.

The 'social contract' has contributed to changes in relationships between teachers, parents and officials. These are more harmonious, and there is more mutual respect and commitment.

Source: (Crawford et al., 2004)

Many examples of PM&E processes that deal with accountability and transparency, focus on budget allocation, procurement and expenditure management (see Box 7). The guiding questions are whether the (scarce) resources are used prudently, targeted to the right sectors and the intended groups, and if resources flow there in the stipulated amounts. Satisfactory community or CSO involvement in overseeing budgets may also reduce rumours on corruption, which undermine trust in projects and local government. The effectiveness of such a process increases when authorities and other stakeholders acknowledge communities' rights to question how decisions are taken and implemented, as well as to track performance and propose suggestions for improvement.

One result of undertaking participatory monitoring of revenues and expenditures is that community members and CSOs gain understanding about formal policies, systems and procedures that they can use for other strategic local development initiatives. It is empowering to understand official procedures and be able to read budgets and from that, dare to challenge authorities or project staff when anomalies appear. Some CDD and Social Action Fund programs are engaged in groundbreaking work around participatory expenditure management activities and performance assessments at the community level

(see Box 7). These experiences can contribute significantly to the strengthening of local governance, once the ad-hoc committees set up around micro projects use their acquired knowledge and skills to monitor other forms of (public) expenditure. These projects contribute to building a culture of accountability from the bottom up when they systematically build capacities around expenditure management and link these to feedback and communication strategies to share findings.

Box 7. Participatory public expenditure management in CDD projects

At the community level, several Community-Driven Development (CDD) programs have systematically introduced participatory public expenditure management of micro-projects, mostly dealing with infrastructures. Community representatives are tracking the implementation of thousands of micro-projects in a number of countries. Ad-hoc committees are set up and in charge of overseeing implementation. Mechanisms used include information disclosure and transparency on project budget, financing, contracting and procurement; anonymous grievance procedures; and community monitoring of contracts and implementation. This information is discussed publicly in villages and displayed. Village committees established to oversee the project are required to report back regularly to the community and to project staff. Local media and NGOs are also invited to these meetings to act as watchdogs over the proper use of development funds. Local capacity and voice of poorer communities are built by means of a gradual broadening of civic participation in policymaking and resource allocation. As a result, these groups will be in a better position to influence local government planning and decision-making.
Source: Wong and Guggenheim, 2005

4.3 PM&E to enhance equity of outcomes

Ensuring equity of outcomes requires commitment of all stakeholder groups to question the existing distribution of services. It involves an assessment into the responsiveness of projects, service providers, and/or local government as perceived by groups of (potential) users who tend to be marginalized or socially excluded. A PM&E process can enhance the equity of outcomes by continuously reviewing who is participating and benefiting in a project or program and who is not. This requires asking questions that may sit uneasily with projects, agencies, communities and local organizations, which have never contemplated the need for equity of services or a more intentionally focus on relatively marginal groups and people. For example, which social groups – due to geographic isolation, social-cultural discrimination or economic deprivation – are currently not receiving certain services and support to which they have a right? This type of questioning can lead to a range of benefits as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Equity of outcomes

Purpose of PM&E	**Expected Benefits**
1. Acknowledge and clarify diversity of expectations; 2. Identify and address barriers to participation and decision-making 3. Build voice of marginalized groups	• Increased equity in who is heard and participate • More equitable distribution of benefits from service delivery, in particular to marginalized, vulnerable and the poor • Address biases • Improve position of marginalized groups

The principle of majoritarianism, for example, may preclude support for the demands of the poorest groups[27]. Community level planning processes may overlook the needs of marginalized groups. Issues such as addressing violence against women, assistance to widows or female headed households, or responding to the health needs of a specific groups, often do not survive a participatory but competitive community level planning process.

In addition, multi-stakeholder process may be subject to elite capture or illegitimate participation. Moreover, project and program staff may be (unwittingly) biased in their dealings with communities. In situations where barriers to participation are so embedded in perceptions of participation and engagement that they have become 'invisible' to local actors, outside facilitation of PM&E can play a critical role to overcome the biases that are likely to emerge in community-led processes.

Secondly, by going through a PM&E process communities and other stakeholders become more aware of how equitably the benefits from and burdens for services and goods are shared within the community and where key problems and gaps lie. PM&E can help to assess whether there are in-built biases that lead implementation mechanisms to automatically bypass certain social groups.

Other obstacles to more equitable outcomes may result from a limited capacity or willingness (due to social codes of conduct) of marginalized groups to organize themselves in ways that enable active engagement with (more) formal systems. They may be less well informed, with information reaching them only through other people, such as community leaders or relatives, and they may have also less time to spare to participate.

[27] Hickey and Bracking, 2005

These features affect a PM&E process. These groups often have also less experience in dealing with projects, engaging in processes of discussion and negotiation, or may lack the confidence to speak up (if allowed at all to be present). Special activities towards capacity building and organizational strengthening of marginalized groups may have to be included in project design (see Chapter 5).

4.4 PM&E to enhance stakeholder interactions

Usually there are multiple stakeholders involved in local development. Well-structured PM&E systems may help communities and CSOs to develop partnerships with projects, office bearers and other stakeholders. PM&E can also promote dialogue among stakeholders who are either not in (much) direct contact or have (had) adversarial relations.

Collaboration through PM&E can strengthen a partnership as it invokes clarity about strategy and perspective and builds trust through the information sharing that it encompasses. It further contributes to improving the knowledge base and creating joint analysis that also gives meaning to the partnership. As experience and understanding of abilities and obligations are built, expectations of what each party can deliver can be clarified and become more realistic. This may, in turn, open possibilities for drawing on more resources to assist with implementation and thus increase the ability to respond to these at the local level (see Table 4 and Box 6).

Table 4. Purposes and Benefits of PM&E for enhancing stakeholder interactions

Purpose of PM&E	**Expected Benefits**
1.Building horizontal relationships 2.Strengthening dialogue and collaboration 3.Shared analysis and agreement on options for change	• Improving quality of social and organizational interactions (i.e. building social capital), and communication and (inter)group skills • Improved mutual understanding of problems, opportunities and options for change • More willingness to question previously accepted norms and constraints • Better understanding among stakeholders of institutional environment and resource availability, leading to more realistic propositions • Prevent and reduce conflict between stakeholders

The ultimate effectiveness of these interactions depends on whether findings are fed into the decision-making process. This requires establishing and strengthening the formal and informal ‘spaces’ for dialogue and exchange, for fostering coordination and encouraging the implementation of agreements for corrective action. To function, participants should

demonstrate willingness to share insights, listen, negotiate and seek consensus about conclusions.

To keep their legitimacy and hence effectiveness, these partnerships need to address also their internal accountability systems and maintain feed-back relations with their constituency. Finally, it is important that these fora contribute to the strengthening of prevailing structures of democracy, as ultimately, these remain the spaces where political choices will have to be made.

Box 8. Citizen Consulting and Monitoring Groups (CMGs) in Albania

The Albania Development Fund (ADF) has set up a pilot involving Consulting and Monitoring Groups (CMGs) at the village and local government levels. The emphasis is on promoting dialogue and partnership and not control. The long-term goal is to build robust PM&E mechanisms into local government development planning procedures. These groups advise on sub-project identification, implementation and monitoring. They receive support from a PM&E group, established to develop and propose indicators, data collection techniques (e.g., community score cards) and feedback mechanisms to the CMGs. Inclusion of more marginal groups, such as women, youth, senior citizens, and ethnic group members, is promoted by using targeted focus groups, adapted feed-back channels (using festivals instead of meetings), and making certain that the composition of CMGs is representative. Replication is expected through the demonstration effect and learning by doing.

ADF expects that this range of PM&E related activities will improve the overall performance of the program. Activities will reflect real needs, and enhance ownership of project interventions. Moreover, early warning of problems allows for timely intervention and adjustments. ADF also anticipates gaining a deeper understanding and learning lessons that are important for future program design. It is further hoped that a more credible partnership between local governments and citizens will emerge.

Source : ECANET, 2005; Cooley et al., 2004.

4.5 Key actors in relation to local governance and PM&E

4.5.1 Citizens and their organizations

The quality of democratisation processes and the attitude of government towards civic engagement influence the possibilities for (formal and informal) CSOs to participate and engage in appraisal and decision-making on local development. This attitude of government towards citizen participation tends to vary between central and local levels,

and across sectors[28]. Intermediary CSOs and NGOs can play a role in expanding the space for meaningful citizen participation, as well as building the capacity of CSOs to participate effectively.

Citizens organizations can use M&E to track performance of service providers and resource use (budget, procurement procedures, quality control etc.). A form of citizen engagement that is receiving more momentum at the local level is that of a citizens' audit, a form of social accountability. The aim is to reduce diversion of public funds for private gains or patronage, by monitoring actual implementation of policy and spending and generating extra pressure towards prudent and appropriate use of public resources (see box 9).

Box 9. Community-based monitoring (CBMES) for advocacy in Uganda

In Uganda there are three levels of local government: community, sub-county and District. The Uganda Debt Network (UDN) is supporting community-based monitoring (CBMES) by providing training to grassroots people in poverty and public expenditure monitoring, grassroots advocacy and lobbying. A CBMES starts with a local community that tracks the performance of government agencies by obtaining information about their outputs over a certain period of time and comparing this with the publicly declared outputs of those agencies. For example, they try to assess how much of the funding budgeted for schools and clinics actually reached the sub-county, which is used to prepare sub-county reports. The reports are then brought together into a District-level report with support from UDN and then used in District level dialogues with heads of departments and local politicians. Video-recordings of these local dialogues are also made and then used for advocacy purposes at the national level, as showing what people are saying is far more convincing than written reports. Some local monitoring committees are now actively involved in Uganda's anti-corruption campaign and invited to national events.
Source: www.undn.or.ug

Also data collected by using generally accepted, standardized procedures can be empowering, when the information is used to seek improved performance from, for example, service providers or local government (see Box 10).

[28] Manor et al., 1999; Reuben, 2003

Box 10. CSO using conventional M&E to improve service delivery

Civil society organizations in Bangalore, India, have used the citizen report card process (CRC) to put pressure on public service providers to improve performance and responsiveness through civil society advocacy and extensive media coverage. A CRC starts from the notion that users know best the quality and reliability of service providers, as well as direct and indirect costs for accessing that service. The methodology is inspired by consumer opinion polls used by the private sector. Data collection is standardized for a series of pre-fixed indicators (which did involve citizen consultation). Rigorous procedures are used in order to avoid that the validity of the data presented is questioned, but this requires sufficient resources and capacity to collect and analyse data. The resulting citizen report card is presented and discussed in public, such as in fora established by local governments. In Bangalore, the CRC was successful, as it has contributed to improving the quality of services, promoted a better client-orientation by service providers and improved horizontal relationships between service providers and civil society organizations. In addition, participating organizations became more aware of issues that influence the performance of service providers and some now also seek to track budget allocations and expenditures.
Source : Ravindra, 2004; Waglé et al., 2004

4.5.2 Local government

The public sector has the mandate for national legislation and policy design, budget allocation, setting norms and standards and ensuring compliance. In a growing number of countries elected local governments now exist. These can play an important role in promoting partnerships and collaboration at the local level, such as by showing direction and promoting equity (preventing that certain areas and communities are 'forgotten'). For this to happen, elected councillors and local government staff need to appreciate stakeholder consultation, welcome citizen participation, and accept to be part of non-hierarchical, collaborative relationships. The capacity to build and maintain such type of collaborative partnerships is important for governance outcomes.

The route towards effective local government that is responsive to all citizens and is accountable for its actions is both promising and challenging. Promoting participation by citizens and their organizations has been shown to be critical, as is a respect for and adherence to accountability as an obligation of office bearers. To enhance legitimacy and performance, local governments can use a PM&E process as a self-assessment tool (see next Box 11). Some CSOs and NGOs also use PM&E for self-assessment. For example,

Action Aid's work on self-assessment of its finance and human resource development functions is an innovative organizational application[29].

Box 11. Self-assessment by an urban municipality in Niger

Commune V in urban Niamey, Niger, installed its first elected mayor and council in 2004. Continual work with women's organization and political parties by local NGOs (with support of SNV- Netherlands development organization) resulted in the election of 3 female councillors among 23 councillors in total, which is a great achievement in the Niger context. The council decided to undertake an annual PM&E that is called '*auto-évaluation*' (again with support from SNV). Together with about 20 representatives of groupings within commune V they discuss the state of the commune and what was proposed in their local government development plan. Next, a few priorities are selected for the coming year, what the target will be, how to track progress and what is required from councillors and all other local actors to achieve these goals. For 2005, 4 priorities were selected: new investments in basic infrastructure (schools, health centres) to underserved parts of the territory of the commune; construction of a new livestock market; improvement of tax collection rates; and better access to identity cards for children (which was preventing them from enrolling in schools). The council is very pleased with the 'self-assessment' process as it helped to clarify roles and responsibilities among councillors, better focus activities, and improve accountability, which in turn generated more local engagement and access to support from NGOs.

Source: Field visit Niamey, February 2006.

In principle, citizens influence policy directions and resource allocation by electing their preferred representatives. However, elections are 'at best, blunt instruments of accountability'[30]. There is much dissatisfaction with the record of elected representatives in local development planning; with channelling citizens concerns into decision-making processes; and representing the interests of less powerful groups. Such disappointments may result in a low credibility of elected representatives, which undermines the legitimacy of local governments and trust in democratisation processes in general.

Engaging citizen in public affairs beyond elections has become a worldwide concern. It is spurring the search for mechanisms that allow for direct citizen participation in local government priority setting, implementation and monitoring. New initiatives are emerging in a number of countries, in which PM&E process play an important role. Many of these

[29] Action Aid, 2005

[30] Mehta 2001 in Goetz and Jenkins, 2005 p. 18; Ackerman, 2005

initiatives emerge in urban environments[31]. One of the most widely publicised examples is participatory budgeting process in Porto Alègre, Brazil (see 12). This example is interesting as it also illustrates how several qualities of local governance are addressed in one integrated participatory planning and M&E process.

Box 12. Participatory budgeting at municipality level in Brasil

The participatory budget processes (PB) (*Orçamento participativo*) is an example of using PM&E to strengthen and broaden partnerships and create spaces for mutual learning[32]. The PB process has produced actual welfare effects by improving the effectiveness of public investments, emphasizing a pro-poor orientation and reducing possibilities for 'pork-barrel politics' and other form of clientelistic policymaking.

Participatory budgeting started in 1989. Conditions that favoured its emergence were an ineffective municipal government, new, incoming political leaders willing to experiment with decentralisation, and the presence of strong and active civil society organizations. PB goes beyond micro-projects as it influences a substantial part of the resources available to the municipality and affects long-term investment choices. It produces results within one year, which was crucial for the PB process to take off and still motivate citizens' interest and commitment to engage. Every year, over tens of thousands of people participate of whom most belong to the poorer strata of society and have no history of active involvement in public affairs[33]. The participation of women and young people is strong and has increased over time.

The process is organized around the municipal budget cycle and involves a multi-tiered system of consultation around local, regional and thematic meetings. Since the start, procedures, ways of working, and state-civil society stakeholder relations have all evolved profoundly in order to build trust and improve the efficiency and transparency of this form of deliberative democracy. The aim is to make the process as democratic and transparent as possible, but also capable of coming to a decision. During the PB consultation, citizens negotiate directly with local government representatives (both political and technical) on the allocation of public resources for investments. Government representatives listen to citizen demands, explain government priorities and defend government actions. The resulting proposals guide the municipal government in actual decision-making for investments in

[31] Gaventa, 2002; Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999; Goetz and Jenkins, 2005; IIED, 2004; Pieterse, 2000; Waglé and Shah, 2003

[32] See for example Baiocchi, 2005; Cabannes, 2004;Gret and Sintomer, 2005; Koonings, 2004;Schneider and Goldfrank, 2002;Waglé and Shah, 2003

[33] This amounts to between 1.5 and 6% of the adult population depending on whether micro-level meetings are included (Gret and Sintomer, 2005).

infrastructure works and basic social services. Neighbourhood delegates monitor the implementation of the budget during the fiscal year.

'Porto Alègre' is regarded as an important real-life example of institutional innovation and democratisation, producing actual improvements for poorer groups. The experience has been replicated in over 190 Brazilian municipalities, in a number of other Latin American countries (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Argentina) and some cities in Europe, but is not popular (yet) in Asia (Arroyo, 2004). In West-Africa 'Porto Alègre' is inspiring local level experimentation with engaging citizens in monitoring the budget cycle process.

Source: Baiocchi, 2005;Cabannes, 2004;Gret and Sintomer, 2005; Waglé and Shah, 2003

4.5.3 Service providers

Service providers have become more aware of the importance to involve communities and users when planning infrastructure and assessing service delivery. One approach is to promote the emergence of 'user committees' that are given responsibility for raising local support, mobilising resources for operational costs and maintenance, and facilitating relations with communities and end-users[34]. However, these CSOs tend not to be invited to play an active role in monitoring the performance, efficiency or equity of service providers.

In the health sector, the promotion of user committees took off following the so-called Bamako initiative of 1987 on primary health care. Within the education sector, it has become common practice to establish parent/pupil committees. Projects on water supply normally work through community associations that take responsibility for maintenance. These community associations may have a formal status, which allows them to handle resources and implement projects. Service providers may be legally obliged to invite these CSOs to fora where sector specific priority setting, decision-making and implementation of programs in their communities is discussed. Where local government is in place, these may become part of specialised commission or committees (e.g., on public health, waste management, education, market management).

The effectiveness of these sector specific CSOs is chequered, however. Problems result from an unclear mandate, limited representativeness, and insufficient access to information and capacity, but also inadequate awareness of local people's expectations and needs. Often, accountability to end-users is receiving too limited attention and some

[34] Manor argues, however, that Donors' support for these user committees is undermining efforts to strengthen local government performance and accountability (Manor 2006).

of these committees tend to operate as an extension of 'front-line' service providers. Nevertheless, these associations exist and may be a useful starting point for strengthening the interaction between communities and service providers (see Box 13). Engagement in a PM&E processes may result in more functional CSOs that are better equipped to deal with service providers and more able to voice demands. Service providers may become more aware of local expectations and more committed to improve performance.

Box 13. Joint monitoring public health at the local government level

In Mali, community health associations (*Associations de Santé Communautaire*) were established during the 1990s. They are on the management board of local clinics and many run successful cost-recovery systems for medicines. Some of these associations are becoming key actors in partnerships evolving around public health at the local government level (in rural areas). They are becoming a bridge between the Ministry of Health and the local Council. Activities that brought the partnership to life were sharing of information on health policy and planning procedures, as well as the mandate of local government for public health. They have also undertaken joint analyses of progress indicators on priority issues for the Councils. Data collected by the existing health system monitoring system are used (with support of a facilitator). Benchmarks are indicated using a traffic light system. Progress of the selected indicators is visualised and then jointly assessed. When problems are detected, a discussion on possible causes and ways forward takes place. Even illiterate councillors and members of associations found it easy to read graphs, for example, on attendance rates for pre-natal care of pregnant women, and noticed that these were dropping. When discussing possible causes, the initial suggestion was to sensitise women. More in-depth discussions revealed that men often discourage women from visiting the clinic for check-ups, and that they too have to be reached.
Source: Hilhorst et al., 2005; Field visit January 2006.

5 Operational Guidance for Incorporating PM&E into Projects and Programs

The previous chapter showed that governance at the local level can be strengthened by integrating a PM&E process in the program design. Undertaking a PM&E process can be an important source of learning and capacity building, contributing to empowerment.

The process provides communities and primary stakeholders with methodologies and tools for agreeing on priorities, tracking progress, analysing data and developing a joint understanding. This analysis leads to the identification of opportunities and bottlenecks, and may be used to improve performance for activities within their realm of control.

Community level PM&E focusing on public expenditure management, for example, can become an important source for building capacities that will have wider governance implications. Engagement in PM&E processes builds skills, capacity and confidence within the community on issues such as how to elaborate a budget, how to monitor a plan or expenditures, and how to deal with procurement and contractors. This experience may foster the emergence of a local mentality that backs regular scrutiny of financial management, within CBO, farmer organizations, local government, service providers, etc., thus enhancing transparency and efficiency.

The PM&E process may also help to clarify rights and responsibilities and, where needed, formulate demands towards implementation agencies, local governments or service providers. For PM&E to have an impact beyond the community, it has to be integrated into ongoing project and program activities. The combination of generating local insights and linking these to the appropriate fora for decision-making will improve the performance of local interventions. Functional feed-back and communication loops will make programs and projects more demand-led and enhance their ability to adjust to unexpected developments or changing circumstances.

At a more aggregated level where diverse stakeholders interact to decide on local development, PM&E processes can provide content and purpose to these exchanges and negotiations. PM&E in a multi-stakeholder setting creates space for different actors to meet and interact - diverging and converging as they express their needs, priorities, aspirations and respective expectations. Working together through a PM&E learning cycle can enhance mutual understanding, creating the basis for dialogue and constructive working relationships. PM&E contributes also to openness, transparency and accountability between citizens and committees, implementing agency, service providers, etc. While dealing with diversity and divergence presents specific challenges for PM&E, it also holds interesting potential for

transformative relations in local governance. It is here that the frontier lies for furthering the practice of PM&E.

This chapter provides suggestions for integrating PM&E into programs and projects that work with large numbers of communities and micro-projects. For communities and organizations of primary stakeholders, working through a PM&E process should not demand significant extra resources or time.

5.1 PM&E with primary stakeholders

5.1.1 Prerequisites for engaging in a PM&E process at the community level

Inviting primary stakeholders to engage in a PM&E process only makes sense when it is focused on activities that are largely within the realm of action of these actors: in other words, when the primary stakeholders conclude that changes are needed, they can implement most of them themselves, even if some constraints identified have to be addressed at other levels. The implementing agency, however, should be prepared to discuss findings that concern them and act upon these when appropriate. There is nothing more demotivating for stakeholders than to see their findings and propositions ignored - this will quickly lead to waning interest and high drop-out rates. PM&E should therefore be used selectively.

If communities or primary stakeholders have little influence on the intervention that will be implemented in their midst, starting a PM&E process with them is not a good idea. Under these circumstances, other strategies may be more effective for strengthening local governance, such as building information and communication flows, and creating space for dialogue (see box 14, even although in this case communities do have some control over micro-projects). Also, other 'social accountability' types of activities may be required to work towards more local control over interventions.

Box 14. Building mechanisms for strengthening downward accountability in Malawi

The Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) was established in 1995 and real community participation was a major consideration in its design. Communities identify, finance and manage subprojects, which are geared towards the socio-economic and infrastructure needs of the area. Another objectif is the empowering of communities to exact transparency and accountability. The MASAF experience demonstrates how social accountability can be build at the community level, even where mechanisms for enforcing downward accountability are lacking.

Some of the major lessons that emerge from this project are:

- The use of targeted Information, Education and Communication (IEC) to inform users/beneficiaries about their entitlements has acted as a powerful mechanism for promoting accountability and transparency. The IEC initiatives clarified the roles that stakeholders were expected to play, and their responsibilities with respect to the project objectives. Putting information in the public domain also challenges the monopoly of the elites and experts, and empowers communities.
- The creation of structures and processes at the community level that act as rallying points for common needs enable communities to articulate their needs. These also help in aggregating and amplifying their voice in demanding accountability from both governments and service providers.
- As part of the community contracting process, funds are disbursed directly into community project accounts. The implementation of the project on behalf of the community is delegated to a Project Management Committee (PMC) composed of elected community members. Such mechanisms that enable communities to manage public resources and assume greater responsibility over the creation and maintenance of the assets allow for transparency and broader participation of citizens.

Source: Sey et al., forthcoming

5.1.2 Available experience with PM&E at community level

Programs and projects that meet the basic conditions for engaging in PM&E with primary stakeholders can base their work plans on the experiences with PM&E gained elsewhere[35]. At the community level, there is a considerable body of experience related to the large-scale application of tools such as 'community score cards' and 'participatory budget expenditure management' (see Boxes 5 and 7). Community scorecards are used to trigger dialogue between citizens and local committees and service providers. For example, in a HIV/AIDS program in Cameroon, the process has led to changes in the composition of local committees and more vigilance over performance and demands for transparency. Participatory budget expenditure management is a powerful methodology when the community has real influence over the use of micro-project budgets and has the authority to oversee the quality of work done by builders, service providers etc.[36]

The principles behind these methods and tools are generally straightforward, but resources for adapting them to suit the particular circumstances of a specific program need to be integrated into planned activities. PM&E processes taking place at community level need to link up with such multi-stakeholder fora, because some findings can only be addressed at a more aggregated level. And although experiences with sustaining quality over the long-

[35] See for example Toledano et al., 2002

[36] Samen et al, 2006; Wong, 2005

term, and establishing effective and continuous information feed-back loops and dialogue with other fora, including the implementing agencies, are emerging, this is an area that still needs work.

5.2 PM&E in a multi-stakeholder setting

5.2.1 Prerequisites for engaging in a PM&E process in multi-stakeholder processes

A second level where PM&E can contribute to strengthening local governance is in multi-stakeholder processes. Many CDD programs work towards establishing 'citizen development, consulting and monitoring teams' at municipal, ward or district level which bring together civil society organizations, service providers, public agencies and the private sector. Moreover, in most countries at these levels, coordination committees exist in which sector ministries, local government, the administration and sometimes CSOs meet to coordinate development interventions. Again, before deciding on setting up a PM&E process in a multi-stakeholder setting and inviting CSOs to participate, an analysis needs to be made of the willingness and ability of all key stakeholders to participate and to respond to outcomes.

In addition, an inquiry into the scope for adjustments and adaptation within existing regulations is needed. Administrative and legal regulations may be so rigid that projects, local government or service providers are essentially paralysed in terms of innovation and actors cannot make meaningful changes without a long and complex process of bureaucratic manoeuvring. This substantially raises the cost of incorporating the lessons learned and acting upon the recommendations from the learning process.

5.2.2 Available experience with PM&E in multi-stakeholder fora

The use of PM&E in multi-stakeholder fora has so far taken place largely in NGO settings or in specific projects, such as the social contract established for improving education in Malawi (see Box 6). The Albanian development fund (see Box 8) has been working for several years with a multi-stakeholder planning process at the local government level in five pilot areas. Other CDD programs have just begun supporting the creation of multi-stakeholder oversight committees at sub–national level, which are engaged in monitoring performance and expenditures. Using PM&E to strengthen multi-stakeholder processes is an area that still needs work.

5.2.3 Linking PM&E, management information systems and conventional M&E

Monitoring and evaluation systems are important elements in a project design. PM&E, as discussed in this paper, is not a substitute for management information systems and conventional M&E, nor for procedures for impact evaluation. These are all mutually reinforcing parts of a coherent M&E system used by the program, implementing agencies

and primary stakeholders (see Box 15). It is critical to be clear in project design about the purpose(s) that PM&E is supposed to fulfil, alongside conventional M&E processes and management information systems.

PM&E serves, in the first place, the internal needs of primary stakeholders. In contrast to conventional M&E, a PM&E system prioritizes downward and/or horizontal accountability towards users/ citizens, communities and other primary stakeholders. This is the reason why its focus may vary across micro-projects or communities. A considerable part of the detailed information and insights generated though a PM&E process at the community level will probably not enter a program's M&E system. Most of these findings concern the actions of primary beneficiaries and their organizations, and they have to decide on corrective action when required. Since these actions are likely to improve the results of interventions at the local level, the PM&E process is therefore of great importance for the program as a whole, but less so for the M&E system itself.

Management Information Systems (MIS) assist management in monitoring and controlling project organization, resources, activities and outputs, and in identifying stumbling blocks in time[37]. Some findings (constraints, opportunities etc.) of community level PM&E can only be dealt with by other actors, such as by the implementing agency, and therefore need to feed into a program's MIS. PM&E findings also help project management and staff to obtain a clearer picture of what is happening, how the project or service is being perceived, and to identify constraints, problems or unexpected results in a timely fashion. This means that adequate and regular feedback and communication systems between PM&E and project management need to be part of the project design.

The information needs of each stakeholder to carry out its responsibilities within the agreed program of activities should guide the design of these information systems. The 'need to know' rather than 'nice to know' principle is paramount, avoiding duplication of data collections or the circulation of large amounts of data that are hardly used but take considerable time to record.

Key information brokers are community facilitators who should be asked to report essential PM&E findings in writing or at meetings. Where possible, communities should also be asked to produce reports for which a format may be proposed. Occasions to discuss findings of PM&E processes include regular project meetings, review meetings, supervision visits and mid-term reviews. Within projects and programs, feed-back from PM&E should be a fixed item on the agenda of these scheduled meetings.

[37] IFAD, 2002

In conventional M&E, standardized criteria tend to be used. These are often formulated externally, but criteria identified in consultation with stakeholders can be added. Standardization facilitates benchmarking and comparison across projects, programs and organizations. Procedures for collecting information may be stipulated in the project design, in particular for financial auditing. The contribution of PM&E to conventional M&E depends on whether the collection of data on pre-fixed performance assessment indicators is included and recorded in a systematic and appropriate way. Information generated through conventional M&E tends to be used mostly for upward and internal accountability.

Box 15. Linking PM&E to conventional M&E

In a CDD program in Angola, citizen empowerment is a central goal. PM&E is a key activity and contributes to the strengthening of accountability chains and information flows. The PM&E system builds on existing competences on participatory approaches and is set up explicitly in synergy with conventional M&E.

In a World Bank-supported natural resource management program in Niger, the focus of the PM&E program was on building capacity in communities for recording data in a systematic way and depict results on wall posters. This way of tracking progress improved the quality of community discussions, made it possible to present data to other organizations and use these in conventional M&E.

In contrast, an education sector support program in Malawi decided to abandon the technical vocabulary of M&E. Progress was discussed in terms that made sense to all stakeholders, such as 'what works well and what went wrong' and using the 'significant change' methodology to track progress. The intention was to achieve better program results and not to generate data that can be used in a conventional M&E system.

Source : Crawford et al., 2004; Mohamed, 2005 ;

5.3 Integrating PM&E in overall project or program design

This section advises interested parties on what issues should be part of project design to ensure that the potentially positive effects of a PM&E process are realized[38].

[38] This chapter builds on the guidebook for 'integrating learning in the monitoring and evaluation of CDD projects of the World Bank' (Action for Social Advancement, 2005)

5.3.1 Building interest and commitment for engaging in PM&E

Policy makers have to be persuaded of the value of engaging in a PM&E process before they will support its integration in a program. Therefore, it is important to demonstrate to policy makers the value and feasibility of PM&E for the program under consideration, and that learning through experience - including from errors - is indispensable. Methods that can be used include showing and sharing practical examples of PM&E from within and outside the country. Policy makers also need to be informed about which conditions need to be met and which resources should be made available in order to engage in such a process.

So-called 'champions' tend to play an important role in building interest. When a respected, senior manager or opinion leader has publicly stated a commitment to participatory M&E and to organizational learning, this sends a positive signal about the merits of the approach.

5.3.2 Linking PM&E into project design and budget

Ideally, PM&E should be presented as an **explicit part of the overall mission and strategies**. The project design should further set out the purpose and scope of the PM&E process, and establish the basis for effective participation by stakeholders. The manner in which this can be done varies according to the context. The terms of reference developed for linking PM&E to project design need to indicate the key conditions, resources and responsibilities required for the process. The actual fleshing out of the PM&E approach takes place at a later stage in close consultation with primary stakeholders.

However, in cases where PM&E has not been mainstreamed into the project design, it ends up being retrofitted into a preceding design. It is still critical to ensure that the PM&E process is perceived as integral to implementation and to success, with findings feeding into decision-making. PM&E components therefore need to be connected with other project components, systems and procedures.

During project design, it should be considered whether to include a **pilot experimentation phase**, which precedes the main implementation phase of the project. The pilot is used to field test the PM&E framework, insert modifications and fine-tune as required, while gradually expanding the scope of the activities. This pilot may also generate information that can be used to maintain interest in the process within the implementing agency and among primary stakeholders.

The **budget**[39] for the PM&E process should include resources for the following activities: developing the PM&E approach; capacity building; costs for implementation; community and discussion fora facilitation; information and feed-back mechanisms; internal learning; documenting experience; and provisions for scaling up and institutionalization (see section 5.8). Most resources for the PM&E process are required in the start-up phase when the approach has to be designed and tested, and facilitators have to be trained and coached. External consultants may be needed to support the design and training of trainers.

A clear plan of action for **capacity-building support** on PM&E should be part of project design, strengthening the ability of marginal groups to participate, and helping to establish an environment and attitude open to dialogue, reflection and learning within and among organizations. The implementing agency's experience of working with communities and using participatory approaches and organizational learning will affect the requirements for external assistance and capacity building (see Box 16).

Capacity building and training may be needed on issues related to the PM&E process, such as the identification of core information needs; the formulation of relevant and feasible indicators; the concept of benchmarking; data collection methods; analysis processes; and how to use findings for reflection and identification of actions. Strengthening facilitation and communication skills for community level processes and multi-stakeholder fora is also required. More basic support to the organizational strengthening of participating civil society organizations, particularly for those of more vulnerable groups, may have to be included.

Capacity building activities may have to be included in the project design to support the emergence of a more favourable environment for participation and for learning within the organization. This is particularly important in contexts that are less open to dissent and a frank exchange of ideas.

But over time, the PM&E process has to become self-sustaining at the local level. Local people have to be trained in facilitation and even advocacy skills, in order to be able to convince appropriate fora that certain constraints are beyond their powers to change. This evolution should be part of the capacity building plan.

Understanding the social context and the organizational culture of implementing agencies and other partner organizations helps in shaping the PM&E approach and the

[39] Experience with integrating PM&E in CDD or other World Bank programs is still too recent to give clear guidelines on budget requirements

capacity building plan (see Box 16). Social and institutional self-assessments are useful in this regard, but specially commissioned studies may be required too. Issues that can be addressed are: the political context within which PM&E will be operating; local experience with participation and civic engagement; exclusionary mechanisms; the prevailing attitude of office bearers towards openness and transparency; the presence of fora and spaces to discuss findings; current practice with information exchange, feed-back and dialogue; experience with participatory approaches, learning and critical reflection. The results of these assessments and studies should be reviewed with respect to the implications for project design. Not everything can be known in advance, but this should not stop a program from getting started. It does underline, however, the importance of an adaptive and flexible management style.

Box 16. The implications of organizational culture for PM&E design

Generally speaking, project implementing agencies can be characterized as follows:

- Large, monolithic government departments that have limited experience of working with communities, and have neither the inclination nor the skills to implement learning-based concepts and techniques;

- Organizations that have some interest in community interaction, but need considerable handholding support to operationalize learning-based M&E concepts and derive maximum utility from them;

- Organizations that have a culture of working with communities and are familiar with participatory approaches.

In all three situations, guidance is needed for setting up a PM&E process. Moreover, in the first two situations considerable capacity building and handholding support may be required on participatory approaches and how to work with primary stakeholders on an equal footing.

Source: Action for Social Advancement, 2005

5.4 Devising the PM&E approach

Actual work on developing the PM&E process starts when the project has been approved and starts up. Even when PM&E is at the heart of project design, implementation can be problematic. The implementing agency may not realize the importance of getting the PM&E processes **started from the beginning**, particularly if it is already very busy getting the entire project off the ground.

PM&E usually represents a methodological and social innovation for the implementing agency. The implementing agency may not have sufficiently **experienced people** to

develop the approach and the input of experienced consultants may be required. The social and institutional self-assessments and other commissioned studies, mentioned in section 5.2, may contain information on social and political relations that are useful for developing the PM&E approach.

However, working only with consultants may undermine local ownership and commitment. Ideally, a '**PM&E management unit'** is set up to lead the development of the PM&E process approach in consultation with key stakeholders. This unit includes staff from the implementing agency, consultants and resource persons from experienced CSOs, for example. The members of this unit should understand the principles of PM&E and how it is built into the overall project design. They may assist the implementing agency to keep the PME&E process within the scope of project aims, strategy and available resources. It is advisable that **a program staff member be responsible** for overseeing the PM&E program; organize training, coaching and quality control; keep an eye on feed-back loops and information flows; and lead the documenting of experience.

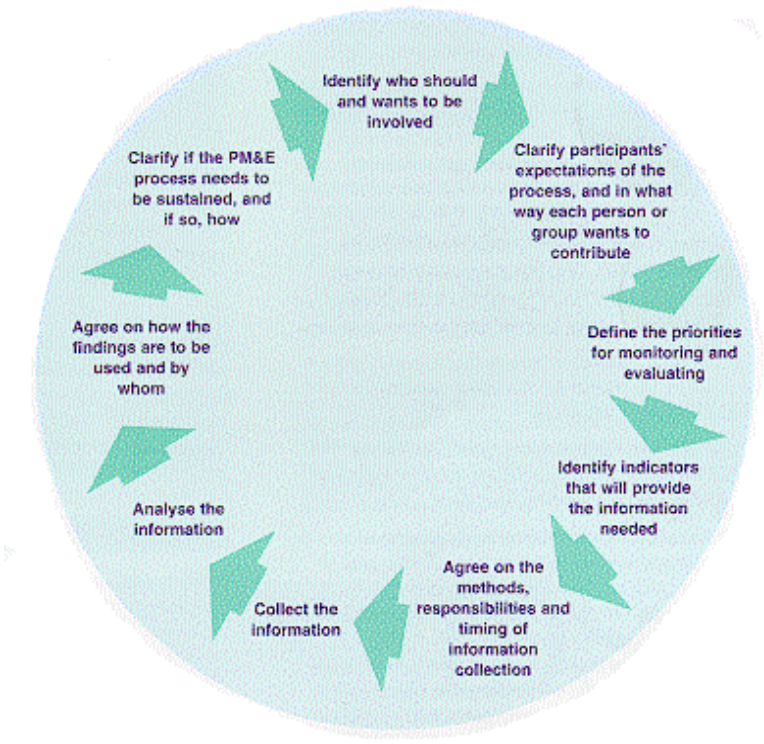
Another important starting condition is the availability of skilled and dedicated **facilitators** at the community level and in multi-stakeholder processes. Facilitating the PM&E process **with primary stakeholders** should be part of the work program of those staff members working with communities. These staff members should be provided with clear guidance and methodologies, support from coaches, follow-up training and exchange events. A training program for community facilitators therefore must precede the start of the PM&E at the community level. Understanding PM&E principles and ways of working, building commitment to the process and ensuring equity are important elements of such trainings. Coaching of community facilitators should be oriented towards maintaining the quality of the process, such as ensuring that primary stakeholders remain in the driver's seat, and that the process delivers results. These issues facilitate the expansion as well as the deepening of the process.

Facilitation of PM&E in multi-stakeholder process is of a different nature than that required at the community level. Facilitators of PM&E in a setting of multi-stakeholder dialogue need to be politically astute, skilled and dedicated, and demonstrate perseverance and enthusiasm. They should be attuned to implicit or explicit assumptions being made about the functioning of multi-stakeholder processes. These might include assumptions about the willingness of all parties to sit around the table, the capacity of citizens to speak up and be listened to, the capacity for analysis of the participants' systems and sanctions for ensuring that abuses/errors are corrected, etc., and what is therefore required in terms of, for example, capacity building and facilitation.

Steps for which methodologies need to be fleshed out during the development of the PM&E approach are (see also Figure1). :

- Building commitment and engagement at the community level;
- Deciding on who participates and how this will evolve;
- PM&E process
  - Jointly establishing goals and expectations;
  - Tracking progress and information collection,
  - Joint analysis, sharing results and identifying action points
- Communication and feed-back systems to community; to program, other stakeholders and fora

Figure 1. Schema of sequence of steps in a PM&E processes (Guijt and Gaventa, 1998)



We would like to highlight the **issue of data analysis**, as this is often not integrated well into PM&E design. For information to be significant and useful, it needs analysis and mutual sense making. This feeds into a joint process of observation, reflection, planning, action, and feedback that follow each other cyclically and are interdependent. In many early experiences, the 'participatory' aspect was limited to involving local people or CSOs in indicator identification and data collection. Little attention was paid to the importance of investing in effective reflection processes. However, as much attention is needed in

developing accessible mechanisms that support sharing, analysis and decision-making, as is needed in designing the data collection process.

Another pitfall that emerged from early experiences with participatory monitoring is the risk of a process that is disconnected from **fora of decision-making** and therefore unable to contribute to improvement and change[40]. Convincingly and credibly presenting the findings of PM&E in an appropriate format at different levels within the project and at other fora so as to contribute to improved performance, is another important but challenging step. It ensures that findings, which address issues beyond the realm of control of communities, are linked to a program's MIS and feed into the relevant decision making fora.

At this stage, clarity is needed about existing platforms and multi-stakeholder fora where coordination and decision-making takes place, about their functionality and constraints, etc. Equally important is the identification of existing mechanisms for sharing information, communication and feedback, and for dialogue and mutual learning within communities and organizations. It is worthwhile to invest effort into identifying when data will come together, what types of events these will be, who will be present and what methods will be needed to make sense of the data and come to concluding insights that can serve to guide decisions.

The project design will have set out the pace and approach for **spreading the PM&E process** to other communities. The route of getting started by a next round of communities may be facilitated when a demonstration effect is generated by the results produced by the first (pilot) communities. Promoting information sharing and exchange visits between experienced and new communities may also be of help. Other activities that can be undertaken to promote the spread of the PM&E process are the organization of special dissemination events, publicity, and the sharing of results within networks, and with other organizations and sectors.

5.4.1 Ensuring Equity and inclusion

Meaningful inclusion of marginal and vulnerable groups is an important quality of governance and remains a challenge, requiring explicit and continuous attention in design and implementation.

Both the overall project design and the set-up for the PM&E approach should explicitly aim to fully involve marginal and vulnerable groups in priority setting and ensure that

[40] Guijt (ed.), 2006

these are being served in decision-making. Ensuring equity in designing and implementing PM&E process implies that some questions need to be asked continuously. Who is participating? Who joined later and who left? How effective are feedback mechanisms between participants and their 'constituencies'? What is the influence of various groups on the decisions that have been made?

Bias at the level of the implementing agency and other stakeholders, among facilitators and within communities will reduce the participation of more vulnerable and marginal groups. Such biases and other exclusionary mechanisms need to be identified and put on the agenda, so that actions will be taken to promote equity of outcomes. Community facilitators play an important role in ensuring that the PM&E process remains inclusive. Focussed capacity building may be needed to make community facilitators aware of differences in power and influence, existing biases to participation and why these matter, and provide them with methodologies for addressing these issues. Ensuring that outcomes will be equitable may require special 'affirmative action' for marginalized groups to amplify their voice (separate focus groups, quotas in decision making structures, budget allocations). Moreover, capacity building may be required to strengthen these groups' ability to organize and participate effectively.

If principles of equitable service delivery are openly agreed to, this makes it easier to put equity on the agenda of forums at the local level. A useful approach may be to compare equity situations within and across communities and municipalities, as part of a strategy for standardizing the quality of service delivery and governance. Gender responsive budgeting is another example (see Box 17 below).

Where analysis reveals structural and poorly perceived biases at the community or organizational level that affect the equity of service provision, the input of third parties may be required to help to put any identified problems on the agenda, broker discussions with community members, and support the implementing agency in taking institutional-level actions to promote equity of program outcomes.

Box 17. Gender responsive budgeting at the local level

'Gender responsive budgeting' is a set of analytical tools to be used by local governments for making a gender analysis of the mobilization and use of public resources, and identifying priorities for the development plan. The purpose is not a separate budget for women but to convince local government that gender equality and women's rights should be as central in the development plan as other core objectives. A *barangay* is the smallest unit within a municipality. The *barangay* of Sorsogon decided to focus its gender-responsive budget effort on the health-related Millennium Development Goals. The *barangay* of Hilongos centred its gender approach on the agriculture sector, looking at ways to engage more women in jobs in local agriculture so that they are not forced to move to urban areas to serve as domestic workers.

A major obstacle to gender-responsive budgeting is the absence of disaggregated information, a reason why many local governments are adopting the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS). In January 2006, CBMS was implemented in 17 provinces, 11 cities, 228 municipalities, and 5566 *barangays* in the Philippines. It is generating valuable gender-relevant information and providing considerable help in local government planning and budgeting, as well as in monitoring achievements.

Source: http://www.pids.gov.ph; NIPFP et al., 2004

5.5 Implementing the PM&E process at the local level

The first step at the local level is to build (or confirm) **local commitment** to PM&E. Building this interest and engagement is a pre-condition for a PM&E process to deliver, and hinges on a clear presentation and discussion of what PM&E constitutes, requires and can deliver. Like policy makers, primary stakeholders need to be convinced of the value of PM&E for their activities before they commit to investing time and effort.

In addition, they should be provided with a good, realistic introduction and clear **information on the overall project** (components, conditions, and terms). Access to complete project information provides people with a sound basis to voice their concerns and needs, which can be incorporated into project activities Moreover, wide public dissemination helps to place control in the hands of communities and mitigates risks of manipulation by other actors[41]. Once the program has begun, it remains important to ensure that communities stay informed, receive feed-back on progress at other levels, and that engagements are respected and empty promises avoided (see Box 18).

[41] Action for Social Advancement, 2005

An appropriate choice of **start-up activities** is important for generating confidence and commitment, after which expansion is possible as competencies grow. Burdening a starting PM&E process with too many purposes, each of which requires specific capacities, systems, resources and conditions for success, can ask too much of those involved. Starting with a limited set of jointly agreed expectations (in relation to the program) and building on success is strongly encouraged.

Allocating adequate **time** is absolutely central to the success of PM&E. A potential risk comes from the desire for quick results from the implementing agency or other actors. The more pressure that a ministry - or donor - puts on a project for rapid achievement of intended objectives, the less inclined staff will be to stop, reflect, and shift direction and modify plans[42]. As PM&E is a negotiated process within communities and between stakeholders who will usually be new to methodological issues and will need to take on new roles and modes of interaction, sufficient time should be allocated to develop, adapt and implement an agreed process. The information and consultation part of the process, for example, should be given sufficient time, to allow for building interest in what the project is all about and the PM&E process itself, and confidence in the intentions of the implementing agency. The intention is to work towards a relation of confidence and trust between project, facilitators and communities.

Box 18. Maintaining continuous information and communication flows

Lapses in information and communication between a project and primary stakeholders may undermine the relations, decreasing a community's initial interest and willingness in participation. Investing in local infrastructure is often a key activity in CDD and sector support programs. There is a risk that the construction activities and the community participation side of such a program move along separate paths. This may lead to a lack of understanding, clarity and transparency in relation to the actual construction that will take place at the local level. Steps taken in an education support program in Malawi to overcome these problems included setting up a system of joint coordination and communication to keep all stakeholders abreast of developments; jointly developing a written agreement that details communication mechanisms between all stakeholders, including the contractors; inserting requirements for communication in contracts; and developing a documentation and picture presentation of the construction process and the various stages for communities and ensuring that all stakeholders be fully aware of what is included and what not.

Source: Crawford et al., 2004

[42] Guijt et al., 2005

The impact of PM&E within a community increases when it becomes a continuous process, with progress being tracked and compared over a prolonged period of time, while the growing capacity and experience with PM&E is used to expand into other domains. A wide sharing and discussion of ways of working and findings within and outside the community is to be encouraged.

To conclude, openness and transparency over project activities, budgets, procurement, and expenditures will not suit everybody as muddy waters provide opportunities for some. It is also possible that empowerment of marginalized groups may be perceived as threatening by other groups. The PM&E management unit and facilitators should be aware -and prepared- for the fact that a successful PM&E process might generate opposition and resistance along the road.

5.6 Tracking and refining the PM&E process

Implementing PM&E will inevitably take place with advances and problems. A PM&E process needs to include activities for regularly assessing the quality of the process, equity and results, as well as problems and possible pitfalls.

Those engaged in the PM&E process should apply the key principles to their own practice in collaboration with all actors involved. Jointly, they have to set criteria for success for the PM&E process, determine how to take stock of progress, and when to meet to analyse and discuss findings. Setting up a well-defined approach to tracking and documenting progress is particularly important in those situations in which PM&E is still considered an experimental approach or key stakeholders seek more evidence of its value.

This analysis will generate a shared agreement on the successes and downsides of the PM&E process (or stakeholder-specific insights where agreement is not possible). It will further generate clear lessons for key stakeholder groups about what they can do differently and better and may also produce greater clarity for the implementing agency and others about minimal conditions for success, requirements, costs and other key features of a good PM&E process.

These monitoring exercises may also produce materials that can be used for informing senior management and policy makers (see 5.1). Documenting experience and drawing lessons on the PM&E process is important also for guiding replication, up-scaling and institutionalization.

5.7 Promoting scaling up and institutionalization

The PM&E process can become self-sustaining when communities are in a position to use the methodologies without much external support and feel in control of the process. Therefore, they need to become independent of external 'community facilitators', although they still may want to call upon such persons for advice. This requires attention by community facilitators for building experience and competencies with PM&E processes within communities, which are then promoted to grow and spread autonomously.

For communities to be in contact with other groups or to be part of networks that go through similar processes will be important to exchange experience and for innovation as well. Communities also need to strengthen their capabilities to articulate their findings and propositions for improvements towards external actors and in external fora. Sustainability further requires that local authorities themselves acknowledge and value these processes and be prepared to take the outcomes into account, without coaching by the implementing agency or legal obligations.

Reflection on institutionalization needs to be an explicit part of a PM&E strategy. Institutionalization is facilitated by the existence of an enabling environment of laws and procedures. Laws can oblige local government or service providers to engage with citizens on certain issues and in specified ways – although there is an immense gap between legal rights and often sobering practical realities of exercising these rights. In Cambodia, for example, CDD experience has informed the formulation of decentralization regulations. The new guidelines now encourage local government to open budget discussion to the public and to facilitate direct citizen involvement in the design and supervision of community development projects[43].

However, grounding PM&E in a legal framework is not always important. An organizational culture that favours critical reflection and social learning is as important for sustaining the PM&E process. For example the participatory budgeting in Brazil has no legal backing. The process managers invested in developing and institutionalizing the approach, systems and procedures while continuously working on the legitimacy of the process and wide and diverse participation (see Box 19).

PM&E processes will be more effective when supported and complemented by other government actions and support programs. In-country alignment between initiatives and programs in support of local government, sector support programs and community driven

[43] Wong and Guggenheim, 2005

development initiatives can provide an important added value. More information exchange, coherence and alignment, coupled with less duplication and contradiction, would greatly enhance the effectiveness of PM&E programs towards improving local governance [44].

Box 19. Participatory budgeting without a legal backing

The Participatory Budgeting (PB) process in Porto Alègre, Brazil, is well institutionalized in terms of rules and procedures. These deal with issues, such as representation, coordination, mobilization and decision-making. The PB, however, has no legal backing. There is no law that forces the executive to accept the investment priorities and proposed budget allocations as voted by the PB participants. This extra-legal format was partly inevitable given the constitutional restrictions on the formal institutions of budgeting, but also allowed the PB process to adjust to changing fiscal, political, and economic circumstances. Moreover, it was argued that politicians would not go against decisions that are backed by a large number of potential voters. Another political party, that was much less involved in the PB process won the 2004 municipal elections. Whether this affects the PB process is a test for the dependency of the process on active political support.

Elsewhere, political changes have disrupted the continuity of participatory processes. In Eastern Europe, for example, cases were reported of newly elected local councils refusing to implement projects jointly identified and agreed upon by the population under the previous mayor.

Source: Baiocchi, 2005;Gret and Sintomer, 2005;Schneider and Goldfrank, 2002; ECANET, 2005;McDonald Stewart and Muça, 2003

[44] Helling et al., 2005; KIT and World Bank, 2006

6 Conclusions

This guidance paper demonstrated how a participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) process can enhance local governance and participation in World Bank-supported projects and programs. PM&E as discussed in this guidance paper serves above all the internal needs of communities and other primary stakeholders, contributing to their empowerment. PM&E is not constructed as an instrument for 'control' but focuses on improving the quality and direction of joint development initiatives and local governance.

At a more aggregated level, where multi-stakeholders interact to decide on local development, PM&E processes may provide content and purpose to these exchanges and negotiations, and contribute to strengthening mutual relations by jointly going through a PM&E process of agreeing on what is progress and how to track performance, sharing analysis and deciding on corrective action that may be required.

PM&E contributes to adaptive management approaches and better overall results when effective communication and feedback loops are in place with management information systems of programs and agencies. In so doing, PM&E becomes an effective mechanism for embedding participatory, demand-led development, building a practice of dialogue and accountability between communities and agencies, and instilling an attitude that values learning from experience. Transparency and accountability of programs is improved through the systematic sharing of information and clarity about the basis of decisions. Moreover, these third parties may gain access to views, findings and data for operational and strategic planning that cannot be obtained through MIS or conventional M&E.

A word of caution is needed at this point. Interest in PM&E has spawned a wide range of expectations about what it can deliver. It is important not to assume that PM&E can deliver results when basic conditions are not met, such as the ability of primary stakeholders to act upon findings. Expecting all purposes to be equally well fulfilled within a short time frame may well lead to disappointments and an abandoning of the entire PM&E effort. Moreover, for a PM&E process to deliver in programs, an organizational culture that rewards innovation, openness and transparency (even about failure) is required. Therefore, engaging in PM&E processes should be done selectively.

PM&E processes are integrated in regular program activities. The process becomes self-sustaining when communities are in a position to use the approach and act upon findings without external support and are capable of articulating their proposals for improvements in external fora. Sustainability requires further that local authorities and service providers acknowledge and value these processes. PM&E processes will be more effective when

complemented by other support programs. In-country alignment between initiatives in support of local government, sector support programs and community driven development initiatives greatly enhance the effectiveness of PM&E programs towards improving local governance.

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