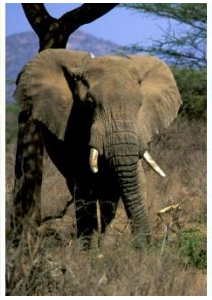
The Darwin Initiative

The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators





Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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Objective of the Session

- To discuss:
  - What is an indicator?
  - SMART indicators
  - Why do we need evidence?
  - Demonstrating progress and means of verification – providing evidence for your claims
- Group Exercise
- Other Resources

Indicators

- Demonstrate progress towards project Outcome and Outputs
- Need to be evidenced when reporting – ‘Means of Verification’
- Strong indicators should be SMART

Pop quiz!

We talk about “SMART” indicators – but what does “SMART” stand for?

In pairs or small groups of 3, you have 45 seconds to write down what each letter stands for!

SMART Indicators

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Achievable *(Attributable)*

R – Relevant *(Realistic)*

T - Time-bound

SMART Indicators

Starting point: Deforestation reduced in Uganda

S - Specific

Deforestation rates in Uganda decrease by 75%

M - Measurable

Deforestation rates (measured using satellite imagery) in Uganda decrease by 75% from an established baseline

A - Achievable

Deforestation rates in the project area decrease by 15% from an established baseline

R – Relevant

Ask yourself – does this indicator reflect progress towards the stated Outcome?

T - Time-bound

Deforestation rates in the project area decrease by 15% from an established baseline by project end

Don't forget baselines and targets!

Why do we need evidence?

- **Progress reporting and accountability** to show funds are being used appropriately
- **Demonstrate effectiveness** to justify continued support from communities, donors, policy-makers etc.
- **Evidence-based learning** from experience in order to develop and apply good practice
- **Share experiences** with the wider conservation community
- **Evidence-based policy** - use the results to influence policy reform

"Learning is experience. Everything else is just information"

Albert Einstein

Demonstrating Progress

- **Means of Verification** – this is how you will evidence achievement of (or progress towards) an indicator
- Consider both primary and secondary data
  - Is this data available from somewhere else?
  - Is this data reliable/objective?
  - If you need to collect data – who will do this/when should you do it/how much will it cost?
- Will these data show Outputs/Outcomes have been met?
- Is the evidence independent and objective?

Where could we do better?

Output

Increased public awareness of the importance of improved marine protected area (MPA) management to fisheries and the potential benefits of alternative livelihoods

Indicators

- Number of conferences and workshops organised
- Increased media coverage
- Changes in attitudes

Means of Verification

- Project reports
- Outcome evaluation surveys conducted in final year of project

Indicators and Evidence: Key Considerations

In your applications, please consider that…

- **Indicators must be relevant to the result they are measuring** – make sure your indicators actually demonstrate achievement towards stated results.
- **Evidence and Indicators should be linked** – we often see applications where sources of evidence are put down that bear little resemblance to the information needed to verify progress against an indicator

Indicators and Evidence: Key Considerations

- **Indicators are not activity outputs.** They need to be independently or objectively verifiable and linked not to activities, but to the results (i.e. Output or Outcome).
- **Unsubstantiated claims are not acceptable**

"we think that this progress is adequate" ☹✘

Group Exercise

2 stages to this group exercise – 'filling in' the **Indicator** and **Means of Verification** columns of the logframe

Stage 1

- Sort out the indicators from the 'Means of Verification' (MoV)
- Are indicators at Output or Outcome level?
- Map onto relevant part of your logframe
- Are indicators SMART? Consider how they could be improved. **Identify at least one example to feed back to the plenary.**

Group Exercise

Stage 2

- Take the 'MoV' identified in step 1 and match to the corresponding indicator.
- Discuss the MoV – carry out an evidence assessment:
  - Is it feasible?
  - Will it produce high quality evidence?
  - Is it relevant to the indicator?
  - Is it sufficient?
  - If MoV are not appropriate or feasible, discuss more robust alternative(s)
- Would alternative indicator wording be more appropriate to reflect the result/realistic likelihood that evidence may be collected?

Other resources

With your project teams, consider the other exercises:

- Carry out a **SMART assessment** of your proposal's indicators
- Consider developing an **M&E plan** (using template on final page)
- Evidence collection: how/when/who?