

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

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Preface

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for RSPN is designed to enhance the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of our conservation and sustainable development initiatives. As an organization committed to environmental stewardship and community well-being, we recognize the critical role of a robust M&E system in assessing our impact, learning from our experiences, and improving our interventions.

This manual provides a structured approach to tracking progress, measuring results, and ensuring that our programs align with national policies contributing to the wellbeing of the Bhutanese people. It outlines key principles, methodologies, and tools for systematic data collection, analysis, and reporting. Additionally, it serves as a practical guide for RSPN's project teams, partners, and stakeholders to foster a culture of continuous learning and evidence-based decision-making.

We extend our gratitude to all individuals and organizations who have contributed to the development of this framework. We encourage RSPN staff, implementing partners, and stakeholders to utilize this manual effectively, ensuring that our collective efforts lead to meaningful and lasting environmental and social impact.

Chairman
Royal Society for Protection of Nature

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1. Introduction

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is a structured system designed to track progress, measure impact, and uphold accountability in projects and programs. It establishes key performance indicators, data collection methodologies, and reporting mechanisms to assess effectiveness and support informed decision-making. By providing a systematic approach to evaluating outcomes, the framework facilitates continuous learning, adaptive management, and ongoing improvement, ensuring that interventions achieve their objectives efficiently and sustainably.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is essential for the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) to ensure the effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability of its conservation initiatives. It enables RSPN to track progress, measure the impact of its projects and programs, and identify challenges early. M&E also helps detect project-related issues in a timely manner, allowing for necessary interventions to ensure successful project and program management.

This framework serves as a comprehensive guide to monitor and evaluate RSPN's programs and projects and eventually contribute to the realization of its overall goal of environmental conservation through natural resources management and sustainable livelihood initiatives. It outlines standardized procedures to ensure systematic data collection, progress tracking, and impact assessment. The framework is structured into two key sections: **Monitoring and Evaluation**, with integrated templates for practical application. These templates facilitate consistency, enhance efficiency, and support informed decision-making, ultimately strengthening RSPN's conservation programs.

Key features of M&E

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Purpose	Ascertain if project activities and spending are progressing as planned	Determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a project
Use of the findings	Take corrective action to ensure that the project's progress and quality is not hindered and that it does not deviate from its intended purpose	Incorporate lessons learned in the organization's future initiatives or strategic planning and decision-making processes
Timing	Continuous Quarterly	Need based Semi-annually or annually
Focus areas	Activities Outputs	Outcome Impact
Deliverables	Reports	Evaluation reports with findings, lessons learned and recommendations

Chapter 1: Provisions of the Framework

1.1. Title of the Framework

The framework shall be called “**Monitoring and Evaluation Framework 2025**”

1.2. Purpose of the Framework

The framework shall facilitate and provide guidance on how to monitor and evaluate results of RSPN programs and projects contributing to the realization of RSPN’s five-year strategic plan outcomes and impacts.

1.3. Scope of the Framework

The framework shall be applicable to all programs and projects of RSPN either financed through donor funded projects or its core resource.

1.4. Effective Date

The framework shall be effective from the day of its approval by the Board and shall remain applicable, unless the Board passes directives to discontinue its application or otherwise revision of the framework.

1.5. Application of the Framework

The following are the policy directives:

- M&E shall be an integral part of RSPN’s five-year strategic plan and its programs and projects.
- Department of Program Coordination and Climate Change (DPCCC) shall be the central agency coordinating and managing M&E.
- M&E shall be conducted in accordance with the M&E templates, prescribed in the M&E framework.
- M&E shall be the key mandate of RSPN Secretariat and implementing partners to use the results of the M&E for rectifying and improving the program and projects.

1.6. Changes to the Framework

The provisions of the framework shall be changed as and when required, with approval from the Board.

Chapter 2: Key Concepts of M&E

2.1. Project Impact

Impact in a project refers to the long-term, significant, and often broad changes or benefits that result from the project's outcomes. It reflects the ultimate effect the project has on individuals, communities, or the environment, often going beyond the immediate scope of the project.

2.2. Project Outcome

An outcome in a project is the short to medium term change, benefit, or result that occurs as a direct consequence of the project's outputs. Outcomes represent the changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, attitudes, or conditions that result from implementing the project activities and achieving its deliverables

2.3. Project Output

An output in a project is the immediate and tangible result or product of project activities. Outputs are the direct deliverables created through the project's efforts and are essential for achieving the project's broader outcomes and impacts.

2.4. Project Activity

A project activity is a specific task or set of tasks to achieve the objectives of a project. These activities are the building blocks of the project, translating the project plan into actionable steps. Each activity typically has a defined scope, timeline, and resources.

2.5. Project Indicators

An indicator in a project is a quantitative and qualitative factors or variables that provide a reliable means to measure the progress, performance, or outcomes in a project. In other words, one can track the progress of intervention through indicators. Indicators can be assigned at input, output, outcome and impact levels.

2.6. Project Baseline

A baseline in a project is a reference point or starting measurement used to compare and evaluate changes, progress, or performance throughout the project. It represents the initial conditions or status of key indicators before any project activities are implemented and serves as a benchmark for assessing the project's impact over time.

2.7. Project Target

A target in a project is a specific, measurable goal that defines the desired level of achievement for an indicator within a set timeframe. It represents the intended outcome or result the project aims to accomplish and provides a clear benchmark for assessing success.

Chapter 3: Monitoring Guidelines

3.1. Definition

Project monitoring is the systematic process of tracking, collecting, and analyzing information about the progress and performance of a project to ensure it is on track to achieve its objectives. It involves regular assessment of project activities, outputs, and outcomes against planned targets, timelines, and budgets.

3.2. General guidelines

The general guidelines for project monitoring help ensure that the process is systematic, effective, and aligned with the project's objectives. These guidelines provide a framework for tracking progress, identifying challenges, and making data-driven decisions to improve project performance.

The following guidelines are applied in sequence during the monitoring of a program or project:

3.2.1 Define clear objectives and indicators. Establish Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) indicators. The objectives and indicators can be clearly outlined in the proposal's logical framework. The DPCCC will be responsible for reviewing and approving the proposed set of indicators.

3.2.2 Develop a comprehensive monitoring plan along with the methodology to be applied. Specify whether the monitoring will focus on the output or outcome. This will facilitate the systematic collection of data for analytical reporting of results. Utilize the project results framework to identify outputs, corresponding indicators, baseline values, and target achievements for the given period.

In RSPN, the outcome level monitoring shall be conducted by the Management Team on a semi-annual or annual basis. The output level monitoring will be conducted by Division Chiefs and Project Officers on quarterly basis. The monitoring plans for RSPN can be designed using the provided templates.

Table 1: Output level project monitoring plan

Project title: Monitoring Period: Monitoring team members:								
Project goal:								
Output	Output indicator	Target		Methodology	Actual Achievement		Observation	
		Physical	Financial		Physical	Financial	Physical	Financial

Table 2: Outcome level project monitoring plan

Project title: Monitoring Period: Monitoring team members:								
Project goal:								
Outcome	Outcome indicator	Target		Methodology	Actual Achievement		Observation	
		Physical	Financial		Physical	Financial	Physical	Financial

3.2.3 Establish a baseline and use it as a benchmark to measure progress and assess changes.

3.2.4 Analyze the data gathered during monitoring visits to find out actual results against predefined indicators and assess the project's progress toward achieving its targets. Identify gaps and its underlying causes and provide constructive feedback along with actionable recommendations to address the challenges.

The monitoring visits in RSPN should identify problems and provide productive feedback to make timely interventions in order to ensure that the project meets their expected results and impacts. The feedback of the monitoring visit can be documented using the provided template.

Table 3: Follow up action for output/outcome level monitoring

Observations		Key issues identified	Cause of the issues	Recommendation	Follow up action against the recommendation	Responsible person	Timeline
Physical	Financial						

3.2.5 Development and sharing of monitoring reports. The output level monitoring shows project-wise physical and financial performance. The purpose of the progress report is to monitor and gauge the performance of each project or projects at risk requiring immediate attention and monitoring. The outcome level monitoring shows outcome wise physical progress. The purpose of the progress report is to gauge progress towards achieving the results or the outcomes of RSPN's Strategic Plan(s). The monitoring report can be documented using the provided template.

Project title: Reporting Period:					
1.Executive summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief overview of the project's progress • Key achievements during the reporting period • Major challenges encountered • Summary of recommendations 					
2.Monitoring objective and scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of monitoring • Key performance indicators (KPIs) monitored • Geographic/location coverage 					
3.Project Progress:					
Output/out come	KPI	Planned Target	Cumulative Achievement	Project Status	Remarks
4.Key findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes: (What worked well?) • Challenges: (What issues were encountered?) • Deviations: (Differences between planned vs. actual progress) • Lessons Learned: 					
5.Recommendations and next step <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions required for the next reporting period • Adjustments needed in the project plan • Responsible persons for implementation 					
6.Pictorial evidences					

Chapter 4: Evaluation Guidelines

4.1. Definition

Evaluation is the periodic review of ongoing or completed programs and projects to inform decision-making and future planning. For RSPN programs and projects, the evaluation will primarily assess the outcomes of completed projects or a five-year strategic plan.

4.2. Purpose

Evaluation is a systematic process of assessing the design, implementation, and outcomes of a project to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The primary purposes of project evaluation include:

1. **Measuring Effectiveness** – Evaluation helps determine whether the project has achieved its intended objectives and delivered the expected results.
2. **Assessing Impact** – It examines the short-term and long-term effects on beneficiaries, stakeholders, and the broader environment, helping to understand the significance of the project's contributions.
3. **Ensuring Accountability** – By providing evidence-based findings, evaluations help organizations demonstrate transparency and accountability to donors, funders, government agencies, and other stakeholders.
4. **Improving Decision-Making** – Evaluation results inform future decisions about scaling, modifying, or discontinuing the project based on its successes and challenges.
5. **Optimizing Resource Use** – It helps analyze whether financial, human, and material resources were used efficiently to achieve the best possible outcomes.
6. **Enhancing Learning and Adaptation** – Evaluations provide insights into best practices, lessons learned, and areas for improvement, enabling continuous learning and adaptation for future projects.
7. **Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement** – Engaging beneficiaries and partners in the evaluation process ensures their perspectives are considered, fostering ownership and long-term commitment to project goals.
8. **Ensuring Sustainability** – By assessing whether the project's impacts and benefits can be maintained beyond its implementation period, evaluations help design strategies for long-term success.

4.3. Evaluation is of two types

- **Formative Evaluation** – Conducted during the implementation of a project, formative evaluation helps monitor progress, identify challenges, and provide feedback for improvement. It ensures that the project stays on track and achieves its intended goals effectively. It is commonly referred to as a mid-term evaluation.
- **Summative Evaluation** – Conducted after the completion of a project, summative evaluation assesses the overall impact, effectiveness, and outcomes. It helps determine whether the project met its objectives and provides insights for future planning and decision-making. It is commonly referred to as a terminal evaluation.

4.4. Evaluation Criteria

Project evaluation criteria are key standards or benchmarks used to assess a project's effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. These criteria help determine whether a project has achieved its intended objectives and provides insights for future improvements.

1.Relevance

In evaluating the relevance, it is useful to gauge whether the program or project:

- Aligns with RSPN's Strategic Plan goals and objectives.
- Aligns with the needs and priorities of stakeholders.
- Has the intervention addressed the problem and issue.
- Does the program or project have potential for replication.
- How relevant the project or program is to the current context.

2.Effectiveness

Evaluating this criterion shall focus on:

- To what extent has the project achieved its objectives.
- What are the measurable results and outcomes
- What are the major factors contributing to the achievement of project outcome and outputs.
- What are the major factors that influenced the non-achievement of project outcome and outputs.
- How can we make intervention more effective.
- What are the lessons learned through the intervention.

3.Efficiency

To evaluate efficiency, it is useful to take into account the following:

- Were resources (time, budget, personnel) used optimally.
- Any measures taken to utilize grant efficiently or in a cost effective manner.
- Any observation where grant is not utilized in judicious and cost effective manner.
- Were the project outputs and outcome achieved on time with quality.

4.Impacts

Under this criterion, the following shall be considered, among others:

- What are the short-term and long-term effects of the project.
- Has the project contributed to significant social, economic, or environmental change.
- Are the target population both male and female, and girls and boys adequately covered and benefitted or affected.
- Did both men and women, and boys and girls had opportunities to participate and make decisions of the project.

5.Sustainability

Under this criterion, take into account the following elements:

- Whether the project will continue, or is likely to continue through RGOB or other financing support.
- Are there mechanisms in place for long-term impact, such as local ownership and capacity building

6.Equity and Inclusion

The following areas will be considered under this criterion:

- Has the project addressed the needs of marginalized or vulnerable groups.
- Were gender, disability, and social inclusion considerations integrated.

4.5. Evaluation Processes

The evaluation process consists of three key stages: planning, conducting the evaluation, and utilizing the evaluation.

- 1.Planning – This initial stage focuses on defining the purpose of the evaluation, identifying the objectives, setting clear criteria, and developing a strategy for data collection. Proper planning ensures the evaluation aligns with the goals and context of the program or project.
- 2.Conducting the Evaluation – During this phase, data is systematically collected using appropriate methods such as surveys, interviews, or observations. The evaluation team analyzes the data to assess performance, outcomes, and impact against the established criteria.
- 3.Using the Evaluation – The final stage involves interpreting the findings, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations. The results are used to inform decision-making, improve practices, and guide future planning. The insights gained from the evaluation contribute to enhancing the program's effectiveness and sustainability.

a.Planning

A proper Planning for evaluation is important so that the end result of evaluation is what is required and useful. Key areas for consideration for the planning would include the following:

- Define objectives and scope
- Identify key evaluation questions
- Select appropriate methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods)
- Develop an evaluation framework, including indicators and data sources
- Recruitment of evaluator

b.Commissioning Evaluation

Key task under this stage involves the actual conduct of evaluation by the evaluator/evaluation team. The evaluation of RSPN programs or projects will be conducted by either the RSPN Secretariat, an independent firm, or an individual, depending on the evaluation's nature, purpose, and scope. Smaller projects (valued below 1 million) may be assessed internally, while larger projects will require an external evaluation.

- Adoption of methodology such as surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, observations, or document analysis.
- Data collection
- Analyzing and interpreting data

c. Reporting and Dissemination

Project Evaluation Reporting and Dissemination refers to the process of documenting the findings of an evaluation and sharing them with stakeholders, decision-makers, and the wider community. This step is crucial in ensuring that the insights and lessons learned from the evaluation are effectively communicated and used to improve future projects or programs.

RSPN shall share and present the key findings and recommendation of every evaluation commissioned with the Board and donor for mid-course correction of the on-going projects and assisting decision-making of future projects.

- Prepare an evaluation report with findings, conclusions, and recommendations
- Share results with stakeholders (e.g., donors, policymakers, program beneficiaries)

4.6. Evaluation Report

A project evaluation report is a structured document that presents the assessment of a project's performance, outcomes, and impact based on predefined evaluation criteria, providing insights and recommendations for improvement.

Guidelines for writing Evaluation Report

A project evaluation report should be structured, clear, and objective, providing insights into the project's outcomes, effectiveness, and lessons learned. Below are key guidelines to follow:

Table 5: Evaluation Report Template

1. Title Page

- Include the project name, evaluation title, date, and the organization/consulting firm conducting the evaluation.
- Mention key stakeholders or funding agencies if applicable.

2. Executive summary

- Provide a concise overview of the project and evaluation findings (1-2 pages).
- Summarize key objectives, methodology, main findings, and recommendations.

3. Introduction

- Background: Explain the project's purpose, duration, and significance.
- Evaluation Purpose & Scope: Define why the evaluation was conducted and what aspects were assessed.
- Key Evaluation Questions: List the main questions guiding the assessment.

4. Methodology

- Evaluation Design: Describe qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches used. Data Collection
- Methods: Explain tools used (interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.).
- Sampling & Participants: Outline how respondents were selected.
- Limitations: Acknowledge any constraints affecting the evaluation process.

5. Findings and Analysis

- Present data systematically, linking it to the evaluation objectives.
- Use tables, charts, or case studies to illustrate key points.
- Highlight both successes and challenges.

6. Conclusion

- Summarize key takeaways based on findings.
- Assess the project's overall impact, effectiveness, and sustainability.

7. Recommendations

- Provide actionable suggestions for improvement.
- Ensure recommendations are practical, evidence-based, and relevant to stakeholders.

8. Lessons Learned

- Identify transferable insights for future projects.
- Discuss innovations, best practices, or areas for refinement.

9. Annexure

- Include supporting documents such as questionnaires, interview transcripts, or detailed data tables.

Conclusion

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for RSPN serves as a strategic guide to ensure accountability, effectiveness, and continuous learning in environmental conservation and sustainable development initiatives. By establishing clear methodologies, indicators, and reporting mechanisms, this framework enhances data-driven decision-making, fosters stakeholder engagement, and strengthens project impact. Consistent application of the M&E framework will not only improve project performance but also contribute to RSPN Bhutan's long-term vision of achieving sustainable environmental and community outcomes. Moving forward, regular reviews and adaptive learning will be essential to refining the framework and maximizing its effectiveness.



RSPN

*Inspiring personal responsibility for
environmental conservation since 1987*

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