STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR BUILDING A RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Center for Policy, Planning & Evaluation

District of Columbia Department of Health

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1. **Purpose of the Guide**

The District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH) has been working over the last two years year to systematize and enhance the quality of monitoring and evaluation of its activities in fulfillment of the essential public health services, and for improved delivery and implementation of its services. This simple guide has been developed to help monitoring and evaluation staff, Senior Deputy Directors, Bureau Chiefs and Programs Managers, follow the steps involved in the process. This guide is a reference for how to develop a result framework and plan for monitoring & evaluation as designed by the DOH Evaluation & Measurement Workgroup. It is not a training manual and does not provide a detailed explanation of the process. However, those who have gone through the DOH

M & E training program will find this guide a useful reference material.

1. **Structure of the Guide**

This guide covers the monitoring and evaluation process; steps in developing a results framework; and examples for easy reference.

1. ***What is monitoring and evaluation?***

The two terms should not be confused with each other. They are two distinct sets of organizational activities that are related but not identical.

* 1. **Monitoring**

Monitoringis the systematic collection and analysis of information. Information should be collected as a project progresses that informs how effective or how efficient the program is at meeting its objective(s). It is based on targets set and activities planned during the planning phases of work. It helps the project manager and management as a whole keep track of progress made.

**2.2** Evaluation

Evaluation looks at what you set out to do, what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it. It can be **formative** (helps you find out if you are achieving your goals and objects in the formative stages of your project, instead of waiting until you are have finished the project). It can also be **summative** (drawing information from a completed project or an organization that is no longer functioning). Monitoring and evaluation have been described as the difference between a check-up and an autopsy. Whereas monitoring is the check-up allowing managers to see how the program is progressing, evaluation is the autopsy that allows managers to see why or what happened to affect the results of the program.

Both monitoring and evaluation seek to learn about the project/program by focusing on

* Efficiency
* Effectiveness
* Impact/Results

**2.3 Differences between Monitoring & Evaluation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Monitoring** | **Evaluation** |
| When is it done? | Continuously-throughout the life of the project/program | Occasionally-before implementation,  Mid-term, at the end or beyond the  project/program period |
| What is measured? | Efficiency-use of inputs, activities,  outputs, assumptions | Effectiveness, longer term impact and  sustainability- achievement of purpose  and goal and unplanned change |
| Who is involved? | Staff within the agency | In most cases done by people from  outside the agency |
| Sources of Information | Internal documents e.g. monthly or  quarterly reports, work and travel logs, minutes of meetings | Internal and external documents e.g.  consultant’s reports, annual reports,  national statistics |
| Who uses the results? | Managers and project/program  staff | Managers, staff, funding agency (e.g. CDC) beneficiaries,  other agencies |
| How are results used? | To make minor changes | To make major changes in policy, strategy and future work |

1. **What is a Results Framework?**

A results framework is both a planning and management tool that provides the basis for monitoring & evaluation. It provides a program-level framework for mangers to monitor the achievement of results and to adjust relevant programs and activities when necessary. It gives the reader an instant idea of what a program is trying to achieve. Results Framework focuses specially on impact and the outcomes of the work done through the program.

The Results Framework approach has a lot in common with the **Log frame** that is used on individual project basis. A log frame is a tool for improving the planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects. It is a way of structuring the main elements in a project that shows the logical linkages between them (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Example of a simple Log Frame**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objectives**  **and Outcomes** | **Indicators** | **Means of Verification** | **Important Assumptions** | **IMPACT** |
| Objectives | Action taken (Tasks) | Products or services | Intermediate effects | Long term effects |
| Objective:  (Describe what the target group will achieve) |  |  |  |  |
| Outcome:  Describe the desirable future result |  |  |  |  |

1. **Prerequisites for developing a Results Framework**

*5.1 Solid information & background materials*

* Perspective Plan
* Periodic Plan/Key Performance Measures
* Strategies/ Policy Papers
* Other relevant documents/information

*5.2. A clear understanding of “cause and effect” logic*

* Cause and effect “logic is usually based on hypothesis and may not have evidence to support the relationship between the cause and the effect
* A detailed, but informative, discussion on “cause and effect” logic is available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality

1. **Steps in Developing a Results Framework**

These steps need not be followed sequentially. Developing a Results Framework (RF) is and should be an iterative process. Programs may use a variety of approaches to develop their respective results frameworks. Whichever process is followed, it is important to involve members of your staff. Although this takes time, the results framework will be more complete and representative with their participation. Moreover, broader ownership of the RF among the staff may promote greater understanding of your programs’ goals and objectives. It is important not to rush to finalize an RF. It is necessary to take time for the process to mature and to be truly participative. Please make changes as necessary to improve your RF.

**Step 1: Set an Appropriate Objective**

The ***strategic objective* (SO)** is the center of any results framework. This is one of the most critical and difficult tasks a team will face. It is a critical task because “the strategic objective” forms the standard by which the operational unit is willing to be judged in terms of its performance. The strategic objective is the unifying result that the Administration/Bureau/Division is striving to achieve as a whole. You can use the Results Framework Starter Worksheet (Appendix 1) to brainstorm about your program structure.

**Step 2: Identify the intermediate results**

After agreeing on the SO, the team must identify ***“intermediate results (IR)”*** necessary to achieve the SO. To achieve a longer term strategic objective, a set of “lower level” intermediate results must first be reached. An *intermediate result* is a discrete result or outcome thought to be necessary to achieve an objective or another intermediate result critical to achieving the objective (See Figure 1).

Initially, the SO team might identify a large number of possible results relevant to the SO. As the team develops the RF, though, it will want to settle on a critical set of intermediate results necessary to achieve the objective. This number will vary with the scope and complexity of the SO. Eventually, the team should arrive at a final set of results that the team believes is reasonable. This set of results will become the RF the team will submit in its monitoring & evaluation plan for approval.

**Step 3: Clarify the causal linkages between results**

Once the intermediate results have been identified, the team must clarify the principal causal connections that link the two. I.e. you should determine cause and effect relationships. Causal links may flow from one intermediate result to one or several others; that is, one intermediate result may contribute to the achievement of others. Cause-and-effect linkages usually move “up” a results framework; that is, intermediate results that have a lower level of impact most commonly support the achievement of intermediate results that have a higher level of impact.

Please note that causality in the RF is only an assumption. It is hardly ever possible to prove the cause-and-effect relationships between results that are identified in an RF (nor is it necessary). However, you should ensure that connections defined between results follow a logical relationship (See figures 1

& 2)

**Step 4: Identify critical assumptions**

Next the team must identify the set of critical assumptions relevant to the achievement of the SO. Critical *assumption* is a factor that can affect the smooth running of your project/program that is generally outside the control of the program/project. (For example, “lack of continued support from partners”). ***We have not insisted on this step at this time. So you can skip it.***

**Step 5: Complete the results framework**

The team should step back from the results framework and review it as a whole (See figure 3). The RF should be straightforward and understandable. Check that the results contained in the RF are measurable. You can color code the boxes so that various programs or projects are clearly distinct from each other. Also, give a **grey color** to the borders of boxes that show results that cannot be accomplished now or the near future, either because of funding issues or lack of other resources. Give a **yellow color** to the borders of boxes that show results that your partners are responsible for.

**Step 6: Next steps**

This is the stage where the team should also begin identifying performance measures and formulating activities required to achieve the intermediate results for which the operating unit is responsible (See table 2 below). Develop a complete set of performance indicators, establishing related baselines and targets, and complete a **performance monitoring plan (Table 2).** Once you complete this step you can decide on your which of the results you have defined will become your **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Please note that Your KPIs should be extracted from your RF.**

**Figure 1. A Results Framework Diagram**

**Figure 2. A Blank Results Framework Diagram used by DOH Programs**

**Figure 3. A completed Results Framework**

**Table 2. INDICATOR MATRIX**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Results** | **Activities** | **Indicator** | **Levels**  **(Type of indicator)** | **FY09** | **FY10 proj** | **FY10 YTD** | **FY11** | **FY12** | **Data source** |
| **Improve perinatal outcomes among high risk populations** | Increase healthy start program participation | Number of women participating in Healthy Start | Output | 620 | 370 | 324 | 395 | 420 | Healthy start data |
| **Strengthen parent education and supportive services** | Increase the number of men enrolled in healthy start male outreach component | Number of men enrolled in Healthy Start Male outreach | Output | 140 | 117 | 150 | 155 | 160 | Male outreach data |

**APPENDIX 1**

**RESULTS FRAMEWORK STARTER WORKSHEET**

1. Who are your customers? Who does your program serve?

2. In plain English, what results are you trying to achieve for your customers? What are you trying to accomplish? What story do you want to be able to tell those you’re accountable to?

3. Who are you accountable to for these results? Who are your program’s stakeholders?

4. What are your key program activities?

5. What are your current performance measures? How can you tell if you’re achieving your desired results?

1. How much did we do?
2. How well did we do it?
3. Is anyone better off?

6. How are you currently doing on these performance measures?

7. What are some potential performance measures *could be added* that would tell you something new and important about whether you’re achieving your desired results?

a. How much did we do?

b. How well did we do it?

c. Is anyone better off?

8. What types of program evaluation activities does your program currently conduct or are you planning to conduct?

Some examples

Measures of “How much did we do”

* Number of clients served
* Number of hours of services provided
* Amount of material distributed and location of distribution

Measures of “How well did we do it”

* Client satisfaction with program
* Assessments of the extent to which the program reaches the intended population – are some intended groups missing? Why are people not enrolling or enrolling late?
* Program drop-out rates

Measures of “Is anyone better off”

* Measure of key outcomes – e.g., reductions in prematurity rates, assessments of increases in mother’s knowledge about infant nutrition, etc.
* These are your most important measures, but the hardest one to get data for

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