

**PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING
M&E SYSTEMS
EXPERIENCES BY A PRACTITIONER**

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Objectives of this presentation

- Share **observations** on typical M&E related shortcomings
- Show the **potential** of tested M&E related approaches, tools and practices
- try to give **practical** thoughts and recommendations

What is this presentation based on?

Observations derived from 50+ M&E related jobs ...

- in several **countries** (mainly South East Asia)
- in a large number of **sectors**
- for a broad variety of development **organizations**
(Bilateral Agencies, UN and other Multilateral Organizations, Development Banks, NGOs, Development Consultancies, others)
- from different "**perspectives**"
 - M&E System & Planning support
 - Baseline- and Endline surveys & Outcome/Impact Studies
 - Mid Term Reviews & End of Project Evaluations

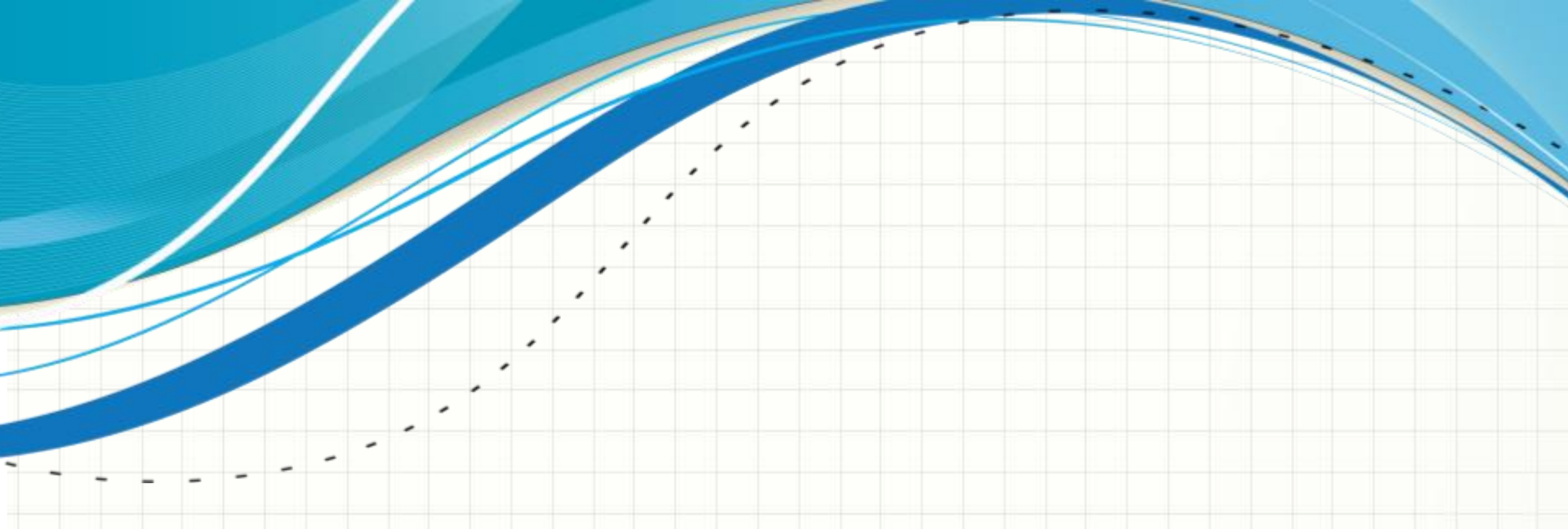
Potential Benefits from a good M&E system

- increased **understanding** on the project by staff and other stakeholders
- orientation of activities towards **project goals**
- facilitates **steering**, also of large projects with many activities
- **shows problems** and other issues in a timely manner and thereby enables implementers and managers to tackle them
- enables you to **report** what you have achieved
- facilitate the effectiveness of MTRs and EoP **Evaluations**
- enhances discussions on how to **design follow-up projects**

Terminology

To simplify the presentation, the word "**project**" will be used as the 'unit' of the M&E system. However everything said here can be applied for programmes, organizations or other units

The term **M&E System** is used in a broad sense, encompassing not only the project internal Monitoring System, but amongst others also related surveys and Evaluations



**OBSERVATIONS /
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Build a Results Model (1)

- **What is the problem?**
 - even after reading Log-Frames and Project documents stakeholders often struggle to **understand a project** well
 - **Indicators** sometimes don't well cover what the project tries to achieve
 - it is not clear which **additional information** (beyond Indicators) might be useful for the project to collect and discuss
- **What are Results Models?**
 - Results Models **visualize** the relationship between project activities, their Outputs, envisioned Outcomes and indicators in a simple manner and can furthermore show the attribution gap

Results Model for Output 5: International Obligations (5.3)

Output 5:
Lao PDR's further integration into regional and international communities enabled through adoption, implementation, enforcement, monitoring, and reporting of international legal instruments

NPAs are better able to report on international treaty implementation and human rights

Existence of a mechanism to seek inputs from CSOs for reporting on international obligations and human rights
Target: A mechanism to seek inputs from CSOs developed

Percentage of UPR recommendations supported in the new review cycle
Target: 40% of UPR recommendations supported in the next review cycle

Road Map implementation
Provide support for implementing the roadmap

Road Map
Develop a roadmap to support the role of the existing National Steering Committee on Human Rights

TA for recommendation implementation
Provide technical support for implementation of selected recommendations (such as Recommendation Nos. 6, 7, 9, 26, 29, 33, and 59)

UPR Action Plan
Develop a national action plan to implement UPR recommendations accepted by Lao PDR

Consultation Workshop
Organize a consultation workshop with relevant stakeholders to select recommendations that will be implemented (OHCHR technical support)

Awareness-raising on Reporting
Organize training sessions/workshops for nominated relevant officials on treaty reporting (OHCHR technical support on ICCPR, ICESCR and CAT, and others)
Immediate Activity Result: Awareness on timeliness and contents of reporting is created with related officials

Coordinate information on treaty reporting

Reporting Action Plan
Formulate an action plan with the timeline for all the required reports

Support CSOs (2nd cycle)
Support CSOs in developing monitoring reports on UPR implementation

Submission of UPR CSO Report (2nd cycle)
Support CSOs in submission of a UPR stakeholder report

Consultation
Organize consultations among national civil society organizations and government officials to report on UPR implementation status
Immediate Activity Result: Gaps in understanding by the government and civil society on the UPR are understood and recorded

Feedback
Receive feedback from the civil society organizations participated into the workshops
Immediate Activity Result: Challenges of treaty implementation and reporting as seen by NPAs are captured and recorded

Facilitation of Stakeholder Reports
Support for submission of stakeholder reports required under some treaty bodies (such as ICCPR, ICESCR and CAT)
Immediate Activity Result: Implementation Status of treaties is reported

International Conferences
Support national civil society in attending relevant international conferences and studies to enhance their experience
Immediate Activity Result: Improved understanding by CSOs on international obligations and human rights

Workshop
Organize at least 2-3 workshops/training annually for national civil society on international law-related activities
Immediate Activity Result:

Information kits
Develop an information kit on international law-related subjects for Lao citizens and civil society organizations
Immediate Activity Result:

National action plan for Universal Periodic Review (UPR) implementation

Treaty reporting as per UPR recommendations

Support to CSOs for monitoring

Sub-Output 5.3: Monitoring & Reporting
Selected UPR recommendations that Lao PDR accepted are implemented, monitored, and reported

Build a Results Model (2)

- **What is their function / usefulness?**
 - The **logic and structure** of the project is discussed and agreed upon between stakeholders and can be used for further planning
 - Results Models allow for the set-up or **review of project indicators** in the context of the overall logic of the project, mainly to ensure:
 - a balanced **coverage** of all activity-fields with indicators
 - that indicators are **not pure outputs** but also **below the attribution gap**
- **When to build Results Models?**
 - **as early as possible**, (best during the design-phase of the project or before the start of the actual implementation)
- **Who should design the Results Models and how?**
 - Results Models are best built in **workshops** with the participation and inputs from all key stakeholders
- **How to practically do this?**
 - **MS Powerpoint** has shown to be a functional programme to build Results Models

Formulate good Indicators

- **Typical weaknesses of Indicators:**
 - there is **no common understanding** among stakeholder on their exact meaning
 - indicators can only be **measured** with difficulty or large budget
- **How to design clear Indicators?**
 - Discuss all words used in the Indicators with key stakeholders and agree concerning their precise **definitions** in the context of the project
- **How to get measurable Indicators?**
 - Discuss from the very beginning, how the data for an indicator should be generated. Be as **detailed** as possible, if you can including
 - **sampling**
 - (concrete) **method** of data-collection (not just "monitoring system" or "survey")
 - further **details** (e.g. concrete guide-questions to retrieve the information)

Carry out useful Surveys

- **Try to design multi-purpose surveys**
 - e.g. **combine** Baseline surveys for monitoring with outreach surveys to collect preparatory information for the implementation
 - This will **save funds** and **raise more interest** in the survey
- **Use the mixed method / 'Middle Path' approach** (for most surveys)
 - use neither a small nor a huge **sampling** size
 - combine **different types of questions** creatively
 - numbers ('quantitative')
 - open questions ('qualitative')
 - ratings / predefined answers ('quantitative')
- **Use proper technical processes and tools:**
 - never design a questionnaire immediately, but **clarify first, what you want to know** (Results Models, Indicators, research questions etc.)
 - In your questionnaire, **specify** not only the questions but also the type of answer & predefined **answer categories**
 - **Analyse** your **qualitative data** by categorizing it first

Output Monitoring

(mainly for Financial Cooperation projects)

- **What is the problem?**
 - managers of large projects with many activities can easily **lose grip** on their implementation
 - in Financial Cooperation Projects, **Activity/Output Reporting** is often **not done** or not done systematically, leading to a lack of knowledge on what has been done and achieved and what were the major problems
- **What to do?**
 - make your Activity Reporting a **mandatory attachment to your Financial Reporting** (which usually functions well)
 - Link Planning and Reporting
 - **Format your** (MS Excel-based) **Workplan** in a way that facilitates monitoring from the beginning
 - Build an **Output Monitoring Module** into the Workplan file

Build M&E into other processes

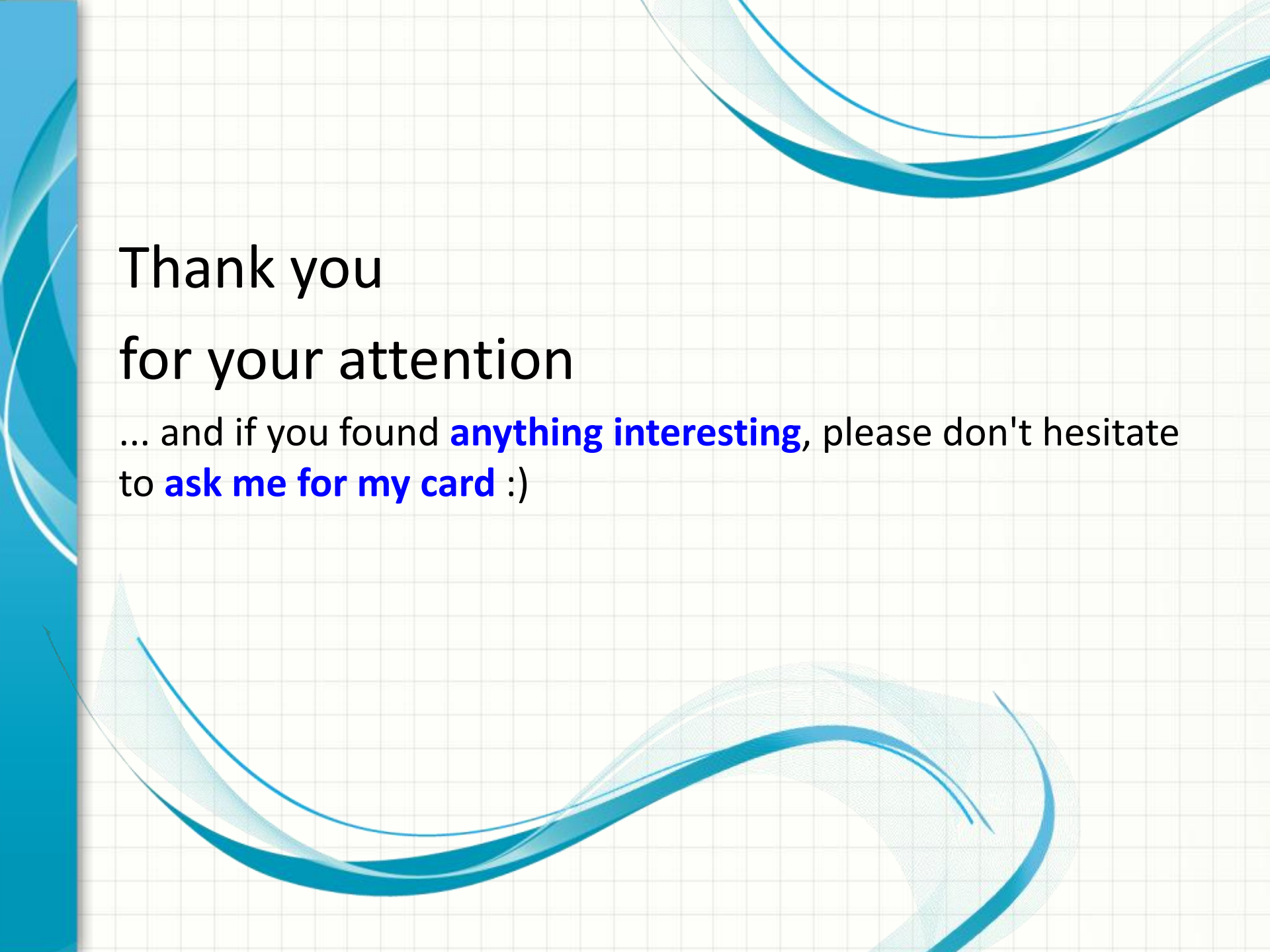
- **What is the problem?**
 - budget for **separate M&E activities** (e.g. surveys) is often limited and therefore activities can be implemented only in large intervals
 - implementers and managers **want to know about the strengths and weaknesses** of the implementation in a timely manner
- **What to do?**
 - assess, **which processes** the project is implementing anyway
 - assess **which information** would be useful for you to know (review your Results Model)
 - **add respective data-collection, analysis and discussion** (e.g. mini-surveys) to your implementation processes

Raise your staffs' MS Excel proficiency

- **Background:**
 - MS Excel is a very **powerful** programme and can be used for almost all types of data-related issues
 - If you know how to use it, in most cases you **can avoid other, more complex programmes** (like SPSS or Access)
 - However most people **don't know how to handle** it well
- **Potential functions / features of MS Excel**
 - easy **navigation** through large data-sets e.g. by filtering and sorting
 - **data-entry sheets**, which look like the questionnaires and automatically link to the data-base (= another worksheet in a data-base format)
 - safe data-entry using **validation** (e.g. to enter pre-defined variables)
 - easy and flexible **analysis of quantitative data** (numbers and ratings) by adding calculation-columns in the data-base, by using Pivot-Tables (!) and by producing charts and tables
 - easy and flexible **analysis of qualitative data** by categorizing first and then further processing it (mostly by using Pivot-Tables)

Properly prepare your MTR and EoP Evaluation

- **What is the problem?**
 - typically evaluators have **limited time** to carry out the evaluation
 - evaluators are drowned in a **large number of documents**
 - nevertheless evaluators often spend a large part of their time, collecting and collating data and don't have sufficient time to **analyse the data and work on recommendations**
- **What to do?**
 - Properly prepare the evaluation internally, best by condensing all important information into a single (typically 20-50 page) **Outcome Study Report**
 - To feed this Outcome Study Report **collect/collate** the related information, which does not emerge from your Monitoring system
 - typically you will carry out **Stakeholder Interviews** and **Surveys** with the target beneficiaries to collect the relevant information
 - follow along the outcomes as defined in the **Results Model**
 - Try to **visualize** results as much as possible (e.g. by using charts)
 - **Enjoy** your Evaluation

The background features a light gray grid pattern. On the left side, there is a vertical blue bar with a white wavy line. At the top and bottom, there are large, flowing blue wavy lines that create a sense of movement and depth.

Thank you
for your attention

... and if you found **anything interesting**, please don't hesitate to **ask me for my card** :)