Sector/Workgroup Response Monitoring Based on the Results Chain Framework

Introduction

This section provides you with an overview of some key basic concepts that can be applied in the response monitoring. This section is based on IASC document on humanitarian response monitoring for 2015.

Response monitoring is a continuous process that records the aid delivered to affected populations as well as the achieved results set out in the objectives of Strategic Response Plan. Tracks inputs, and outputs resulting from interventions to affected populations, charts outcomes of sector activities, measures progress towards objectives of SRP, considering diversity of affected population & their perspectives of the response. Provides humanitarian actors an evidence base for making decisions about what actions should be taken to redress shortcomings, fill gaps and/or adjust the strategic plan. It serves to improve accountability of the humanitarian community for the achievement of results outlined in the SRP, towards affected populations, local governments, donors and the general public.

The Results Chain:

The interlinked results chain demonstrates how the combination of resources, (inputs and activities), produce results, the delivery of goods, or services (outputs). Over time, this leads to short or medium-term effects (outcomes), and ultimately produces change in the humanitarian situation (impact).

Activities Actions that need to be done within a defined period of time to produce outputs.

Inputs The financial, human and material resources used for an intervention (Source OECD DAC).

Outputs The products, capital goods and services which result from an intervention and may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (Source OECD DAC). Output monitoring measures the delivery of goods and/or services to a targeted population, (e.g. % of people who need tents that receive them).

Outcomes The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs (Source OECD DAC). Outcomes can be intra-workgroup requiring multiple outputs from one workgroup, (e.g. Defecation free environment) or inter-cluster, requiring outputs from multiple workgroups, (e.g. Decreased incidence rate of Cholera.)

Impact The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development or humanitarian intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (Source OECD DAC).
The monitoring process begins with, and is grounded in, the Response Plan. The Response Plan can be modified where the Monitoring Framework is connected to other processes including needs assessments, accountability to affected populations, coordination performance, evaluations and funding. It will, at different points in time, draw upon and serve as the basis for monitoring processes within the cycle.

Monitoring of Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes begins at different times and is reported at varying frequencies. As monitoring information becomes available, it will be compiled, analyzed and presented in a report. The focus of monitoring efforts and content of the reports will shift from an emphasis on Inputs and Outputs, in the first weeks of a crisis, to that of Outputs and Outcomes as the crisis continues.

The Planning and Management Chain:

Planning is conducted to take stock of and analyze the current operational situation (assessment), describe where one hopes to be at the end of a certain time period (setting of goals and objectives), agree on what must be done to attain objectives (defining outputs and activities), cost(budgeting) and establish deliverables within an accountability framework with agreed timeframes (work planning).

Implementation is the key stage of the Operations Management Cycle in which solutions are delivered. Coordination is fundamental in order to integrate actions and build effective relationships between the various actors associated with operations. Thus, Standards and Indicators can facilitate information management and exchange, build synergy and common vision, both internally and externally, with all organizations, groups and key actors.
Indicators:

An indicator is the quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or help assess the performance of a development actor (Source OECD DAC).

Two key values when creating indicators:

**Baselines** which tells the prevailing situation before an activity is implemented. It is expressed by a known value, in reference to an indicator and is not always needed.

**Target:** Expressed by an expected value referring to an indicator, it specifies the result that is reached for within a specific timeframe. It expresses what is considered necessary and realistically feasible supposing adequate funds are provided.

Indicator types:

**Input indicators:** Measure the quantity, quality, and timeliness of resources — human, financial and material, technological and information — provided for an activity/project/programme

**Output indicators (Short-term results):** Measure the quantity, quality, and timeliness of the products — goods or services — delivered, as a result of an activity/ project/programme.

**Outcome indicators (Medium-term results):** Measure the intermediate results generated by programme outputs. They often correspond to any change in people’s behaviour as a result of a programme, e.g. increased number of people who have access to safe drinking water.
We can also use Impact indicators to measure change relative to outputs.

**Impact indicators (Long-term results):** Measure the quality and quantity of long-term results generated by programme outputs (e.g. measurable change in quality of life, reduced incidence of diseases, increased income for women, reduced mortality).

Some organizations might have different names for some indicators, but we would still be able to match them to the results chain. For example, UNHCR’s OMS uses two types of indicators: impact indicators and performance indicators (outcome indicators) but they still measure outputs to calculate performance. Below are the definitions for output and the two indicator types from the UNHCR document (Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of STANDARDS & INDICATORS in UNHCR Operations):

**Output:** A specific result delivered by the activities needed to accomplish the objective.

**Performance indicator:** A measure of performance toward the achievement of planned outputs. Performance indicators can be quantified and graded in terms of quality and revisited in a planned time-frame. Performance indicators are set for outputs.

**Impact indicator:** A sign of changes in the condition of people of concern and their welfare. Impact indicators are set for objectives or goals.

**Indicators planning phase:**

A 5Ws analysis on the planned activities will help us make an informed decision on what indicators to choose, what data to collect and what units of measurements to use. This analysis will directly affect the management phase. The 5Ws will allow us to measure the output, define the target and baselines for our indicator, understand the frequency of the data collection, the partners involved, the location, and how to group our outputs toward the planned outcomes and objectives. The final product will be the data collection system for our indicators, which can be an excel sheet or a database depending on the resources and complexity of our operation.

### 5Ws Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Activity type</td>
<td>Location type</td>
<td>The Frequency of the activity</td>
<td>Provide an output to produce an outcome to achieve an objective and create impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population/Partners in response</td>
<td>Ex. (In-kind distribution, cash assistance, case management, Construction, training)</td>
<td>Ex. (Camp, Settlement, Urban location)</td>
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When putting the Result Chain and the Planning and Management Chain together with the indicators in an operational context, we will have to make clear the distinction between WHAT (level are we monitoring), HOW (which type of indicator), and WHO (roles). The below example should put it all together.
What to consider when creating an indicator?

**SMART:**

**Specific** - If an indicator is unclear or how to measure it is ill-defined; the indicator will lose its purpose of standardizing measurements so that they are comparable across time and place.

**Measurable** - An indicator must be a measurable value, something that can be expressed in numbers or in terms of a meaningful scale of values. By being measurable, indicators are objective evaluations. The measurement of the indicator needs to be reliable.

**Achievable** - Even if an indicator sounds great on paper, if it is difficult or impossible to measure from an operational standpoint, measuring it would waste too much time and energy.

**Relevant** - An indicator must be relevant and useful in measuring the objective or activity it is linked to.

**Time bound** - An indicator cannot be open in time: it has to be measured in a specific period of time at a given periodicity in order to measure progress and show a trend.

**Conclusion**

Response monitoring is an essential part of any coordination process. By setting up a solid data collection process built on the results chain and following up on progress throughout the process, agencies are able to ensure success and accountability of operations. It is important to understand that monitoring is not a static decision, but rather an on-going process that presents organizations with gaps and provides opportunities to fill them. As such, response monitoring supports a robust coordination process.