ACQF

African Continental
Qualifications Framework

ACQF Training Module 7 : M&E in the context of qualifications frameworks

Training Module 7

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Introduction

Overview of Training Manual 7

1. General information.
2. Overview of the Training Manual.
3. Rationale for M&E and key M&E concepts.
4. Considerations for establishing an M&E system.
5. Establishing a M&E system for a qualifications framework
6. Assessment of learning.

Annexures:

- References for further reading
- Case examples of M&E of qualifications frameworks in different contexts
- M&E templates and tools
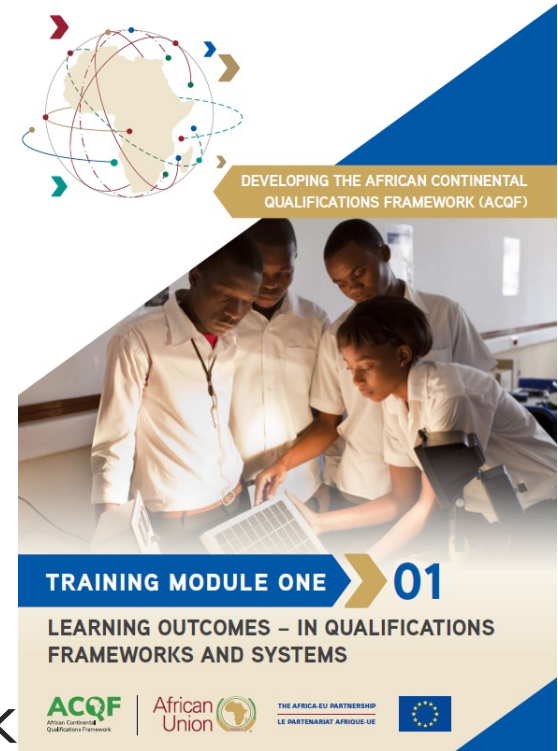
Training Module 7 Key Learning Outco

1. Understand key monitoring and evaluation concepts.

2. Understand monitoring and evaluation in the context of qualifications frameworks.

3. Introduced to a results framework for a qualifications framework.

4. Able to identify indicators in line with a results framework for a qualifications framework.

5. Understand the relationship between indicators and data sources.

6. Able to develop an evaluation plan for a qualifications framework.
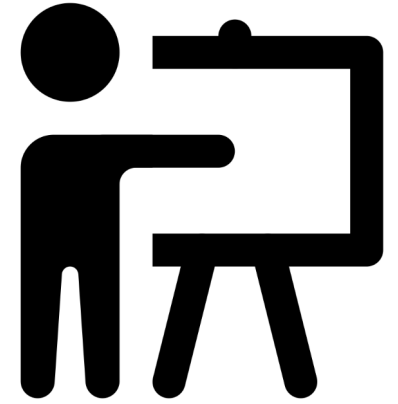
Overview of the session

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

2. Rationale for M&E of qualifications frameworks & key concepts (15 minutes)

3. Considerations for establishing an M&E system (15 minutes)

4. Results framework and indicators: key building blocks of an M&E system (30 minutes)

5. Evaluating a qualifications framework (5 minutes)

6. Summary (5 minutes)

02

Key Concepts and Rationale for Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation: Definitions

- **Monitoring** is the regular collection and analysis of information to determine whether or not progress is being made towards an intended result (SADC, 2011).

- **Evaluation** is a periodic assessment which aims to answer specific questions about the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of a policy or programme. Evaluation can also measure the impact both expected and unexpected – and identify effects that can be attributed to a policy or programme. (SADC 2011).

Monitoring and Evaluation: Key Features

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Who does it?	Programme managers and implementation staff	Evaluators working with programme staff and other key stakeholders
Purpose/ interest	Adaptive management	Accountability Learning
Timing	Continuous	Periodic ,at key intervals
Typical scope	• Use of funding and other resources • Implementation including activities, outputs and short-term outcomes • Fidelity • Performance against targets	• Achievement of objectives • Evaluative criteria (relevance, quality, effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, sustainability) • Outcomes, impact, attribution • Draw conclusions of merit/worth
Funding	Embedded in programme budget	Dedicated line item
Measures	Indicators and targets	Criteria, indicators and standards
Data	Involves primary data collection (programme data)	Usually involves primary data collection, uses programme & other secondary data, typically draws on multiple data sources
Reporting	Descriptive, performance-related	Explanatory, judgemental, lessons learned

Key components of an M&E system

- Description of the evaluand (project/programme/policy)

- Results framework

- Indicators & targets

- Data sources, methods, instruments

- Data collection

- Data management (MIS) & analysis

- Reporting, dissemination & use

- Evaluation/learning questions

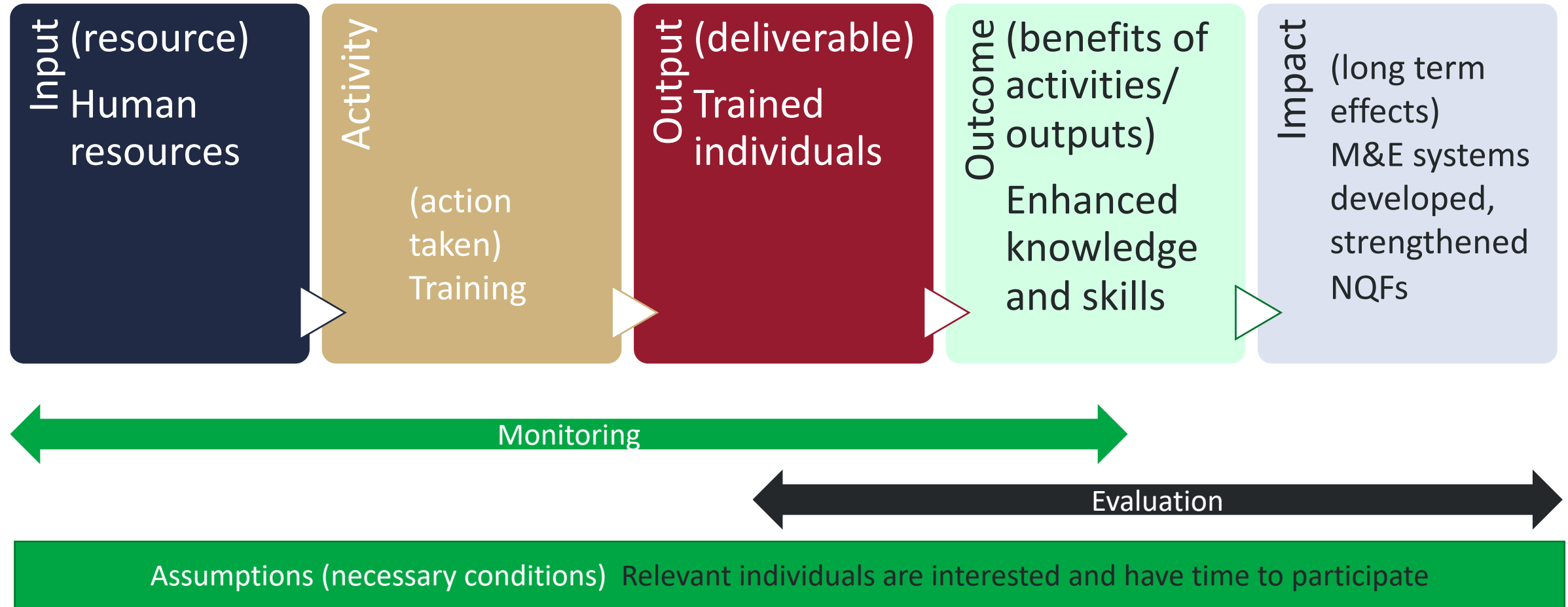- Evaluation plan

Cross cutting considerations

Context & culture
Purpose
Capacity to implement
M&E users & use
Feedback loops

Rationale for M&E in the context of Qualification Frameworks

- Track progress and keep implementation on track.

- Identify what is working well/less well and why.

- Inform adjustments to policy, implementation and management.

- Assess results.

- Generate knowledge and share lessons that are relevant elsewhere.

Qualifications Frameworks are relatively new and there is limited documented evidence regarding their effectiveness and impact.

M&E results chain

| Input (resource) Human resources | Activity (action taken) Training | Output (deliverable) Trained individuals | Outcome (benefits of activities/ outputs) Enhanced knowledge and skills | Impact (long term effects) M&E systems developed, strengthened NQFs |

← **Monitoring** →

← **Evaluation** →

Assumptions (necessary conditions) Relevant individuals are interested and have time to participate

Different types of outcomes

- **Awareness:** Awareness of NQFs.
- **Attitude**: Attitudes towards RPL and enabling continuous and lifelong learning.
- **Knowledge**: Knowledge regarding NQF levels and their application to qualifications.
- **Behaviour**: Change in how different types of qualifications (GET, TVET, HET) are perceived and treated.
- **Skills**: Development of new qualifications to fill identified gaps addresses skills shortages.
- **Development conditions**: Enhanced mobility and labour market participation. Economic integration.

Outcomes may be short-term/immediate (occurring soon after implementation), medium-term/intermediate (occurring 1-3 years after implementation) and long-term (occurring 3+ years after implementation). Impact may occur 3-5 years or longer after implementation and is usually the culmination of a variety of interventions and factors and not just attributable to one intervention.

Key Features of Indicators

Signposts of change which describe how to track intended results, critical for M&E.

- (Proxy) measures of something that is not (typically) directly visible, observable or measurable.
- Can be direct (output) /and indirect (outcome).
- Can be quantitative (number of, %, frequency) and qualitative (level of participation & satisfaction, development of skills & competencies).
- Can be applied at different levels (input, activity, output, outcome, impact.
- Can be applied for different types of intervention (project, programme, policy).

Types of Indicators

Level	Description	Purpose
Impact	Long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly.	Measure the extent to which the overall goals are being met.
Outcome	Changes or benefits resulting from activities or outputs, changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills or understanding, behaviour, practice, decisions or condition.	Measure the extent to which anticipated changes are occurring and objectives are being achieved.
Output	Products, goods and services which result from an intervention.	Measure deliverables.
Activity	Work performed.	Measure what has been done in line with plans.
Input	Financial, human, and material resources used.	Measure the extent to which resources are being used.
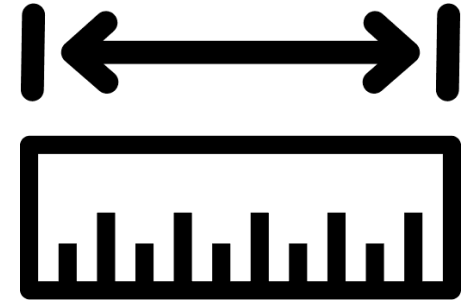
Characteristics of Good Indicators

CREAM indicators	
Clear	Precise and unambiguous
Relevant	Appropriate to what is being measured
Economic	Obtainable at reasonable cost
Adequate	Able to provide sufficient information on performance
Monitorable	Easily monitored and able to be independently validated

03

Considerations for establishing an M&E system

Key considerations when establishing an M&E system

- Establish **need & demand** for M&E
- Identify **users & uses**
- Identify where the M&E system will be **located**
- Available & required **resources**
- Build **organisational capacity**
- Develop a results framework & identify indicators
- Identify data sources
- Develop a data collection strategy
- Set targets
- Use M&E information to inform **decision-making**
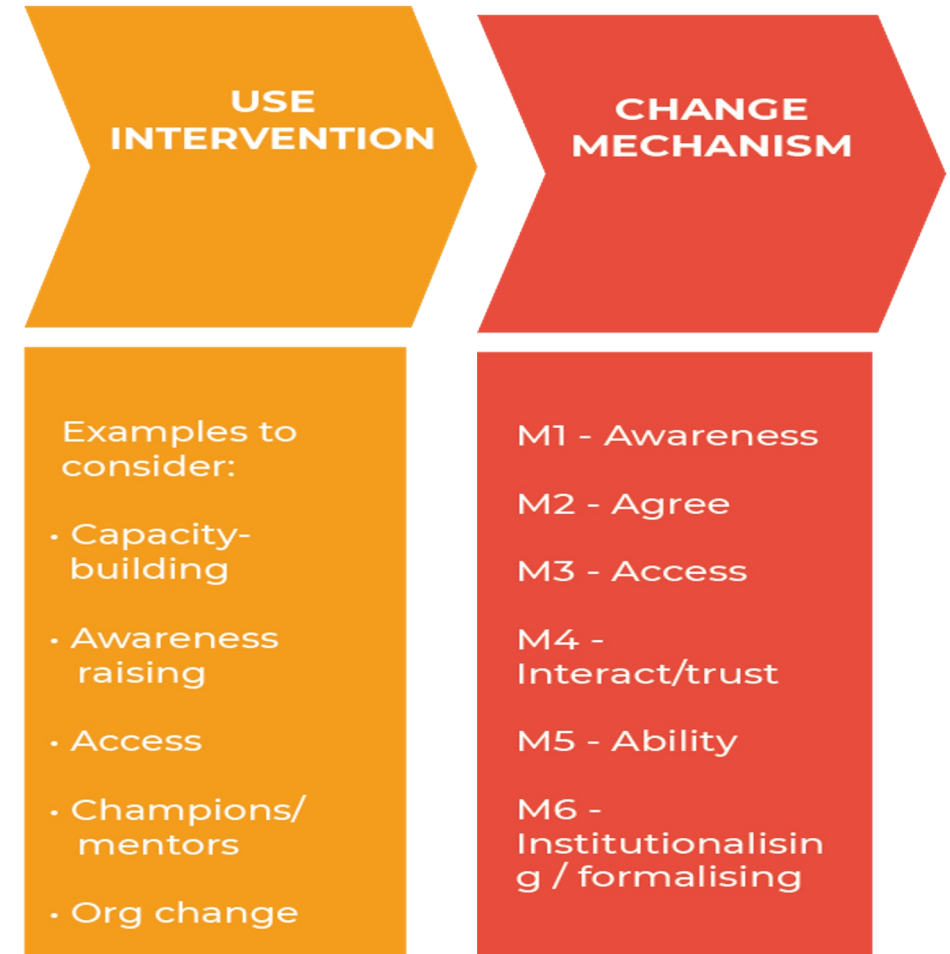
Poll 1: M&E users and uses

In your country/context who will be the primary and secondary users of M&E information and what do they use it for?

1. Who are your primary M&E users?

2. What will they use M&E information for?

Building organisational capacity to implement and use M&E

- Take stock of **existing capacities** which can be built on.

- Take stock of the **organisational culture** including barriers to the use of M&E evidence.

- Consider **interventions** to build capacity and enhance use.

- Leverage **mechanisms of change**.

USE INTERVENTION

Examples to consider:

- Capacity-building

- Awareness raising

- Access

- Champions/ mentors

- Org change

CHANGE MECHANISM

M1 - Awareness

M2 - Agree

M3 - Access

M4 - Interact/trust

M5 - Ability

M6 - Institutionalising / formalising

Source: Goldman, 2021

Results Framework and indicators: Building blocks of a M&E system for a qualifications framework
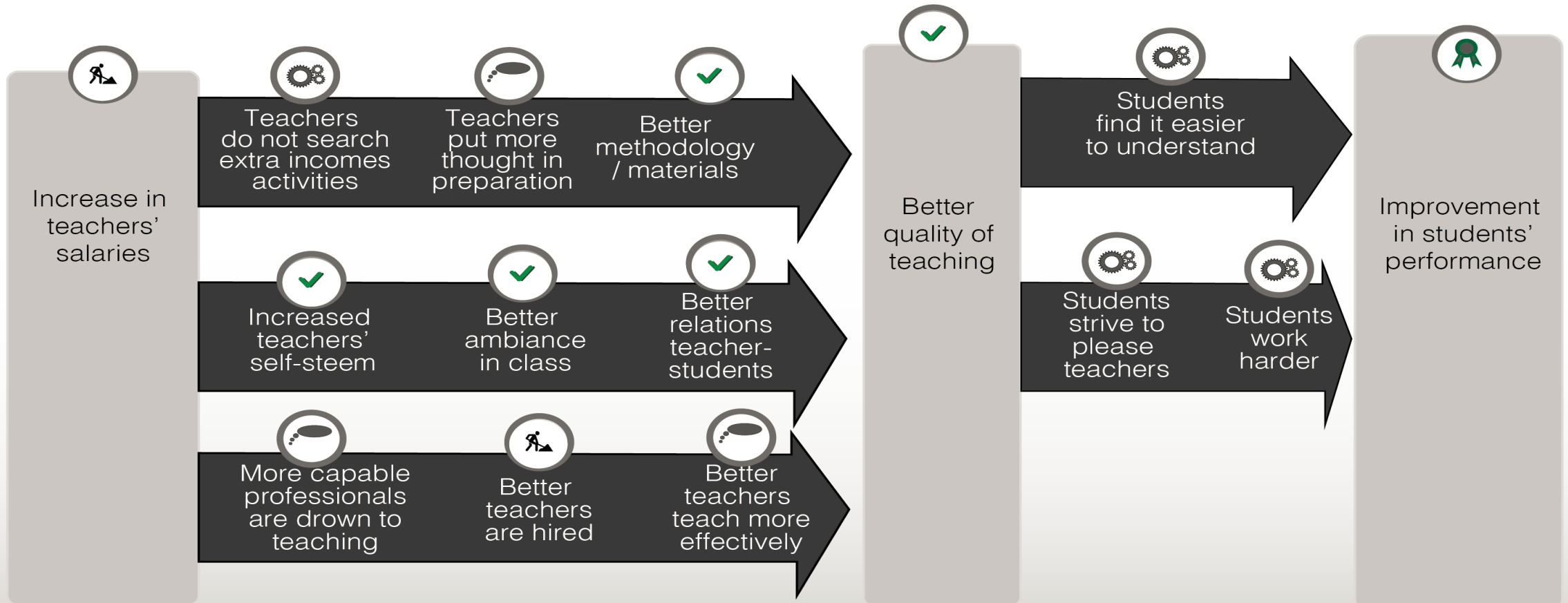
Putting components of the M&E system together

1. Planning
Developing a results framework
Identify and define indicators to measure progress
Determine baselines and targets

2. Data Collection and management
Who will collect the data?
How often?
Where will it be stored?
How will the data be compiled?

M&E System

4. Using data for decision-making
Identify/analyse successes
Identify areas that require attention
Develop and implement changes

3. Making data useable
Identifying the audience/users
Identify the purpose of the information
Establish how to analyse/present data

Example of a Results Framework

Legend:
- Activity
- Result
- Impact
- Mechanism
- Hypothesis, assumption

Increase in teachers' salaries

- Teachers do not search extra incomes activities → Teachers put more thought in preparation → Better methodology / materials
- Increased teachers' self-steem → Better ambiance in class → Better relations teacher-students
- More capable professionals are drown to teaching → Better teachers are hired → Better teachers teach more effectively

Better quality of teaching

- Students find it easier to understand
- Students strive to please teachers → Students work harder

Improvement in students' performance

Dhillon, L., Vaca, S. (2018)

Qualifications Framework Results Framework Proposal

IMPACT

Education and training system enables access, inclusion, labour market participation and mobility and contributes to economic development.

OUTCOMES

Trust and engagement ensures qualifications respond to industry needs

NQF revised based on recommendations

Trust established between NQF stakeholders

Enhanced transparency and comparability of qualifications

National and regional mobility, portability and recognition of qualifications

Recognition of multiple pathways for the acquisition of skills, competencies and mobility across education sub-sectors.

OUTPUTS

Review report including NQF design and implementation recommendations

Quality assured programmes and qualifications

Implementation of NQF including
- Adoption of legislation/policy
- NQF levels defined and applied to qualifications
- Qualifications registered with NQF
- Qualifications Quality Assured
- Recognition of RPL
- M&E system

ACTIVITIES

Review of NQF

Quality assurance of programmes and qualifications by accreditation bodies

NQF references to RQFs

Referencing of qualifications to NQF

Development of NQF including: Rationale; legislative/policy framework; technical document; levels and level descriptors; Learning Outcomes; articulation pathways; Qualifications Register, Learner Database; information management & M&E system; Quality Assurance process; governance structure.

Assumptions: Funding for development & implementation; political support; trust in quality assurance agencies; education and training service providers see value of participating in the NQF, Sufficient capacity exists to implement and monitor the NQF.

Poll 2: Outputs or outcomes?

Which of the following statements are possible outputs or outcomes of an NQF?

- Trust established between NQF stakeholders.

- Enhanced transparency & comparability of qualifications.

- Greater mobility, portability and recognition of qualifications.

- Adoption of NQF legislation and policy.

- NQF levels defined.

- Quality assurance undertaken by relevant bodies.

- Poverty reduction.

Indicator reference sheet

Indicator	Definition	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument	Frequency & timing of data collection	Individuals responsible for collecting data	Individuals responsible for analysis	Individuals responsible for quality control	Individuals responsible for use

Data sources

- **Primary data** is collected directly from an individual or system. It is raw data that is not yet analysed and has been collected via process which can be manual or electronic in the form of interviews, observations reports, workshop assessments or training questionnaires.

- **Secondary data** already exists and has likely been analysed for other purposes. This could be data collected as part of national monitoring surveys, a Population Census, education results or reports of other national surveys which collect relevant data. This information could be in the public domain or may have to be requested from relevant agencies.

Identifying existing data sources that can be used reduces the burden on individuals responsible for data collection, and the time required to collect information.

Homework task

1. Identify at least two **indicators** for monitoring the **development** or **implementation** of the NQF (activity/output level).
2. Identify at least two **outcome indicators** based on the NQF results framework.
3. Propose sources of **primary** or **secondary data** that could be collected to monitor the indicators you have identified.
4. Identify **data collection methods** and **instruments** to collect data for the indicators you have selected.
5. Populate the **Indicator Reference Sheet**.
6. Prepare to present back Friday April 22 morning.

05

Evaluating a qualifications framework

Different types of evaluation

- **Baseline study** undertaken at the start of an intervention to determine change over time.
- **Formative (interim) evaluation** undertaken during implementation, to assess progress and assist decision making about implementation and strategy going forward.
- **Mid-term (process/implementation) evaluation** considers implementation to date and identifies obstacles. Generates recommendations for the next phase of implementation.
- **Summative (final) evaluation** conducted at the end of an implementation cycle. May considers implementation since inception, whether the intervention is fit-for-purpose and the extent to which mid-term evaluation recommendations have been incorporated. progress towards intended outcomes, unintended effects, if results are sufficient given the cost and the extent to which impact has been achieved.
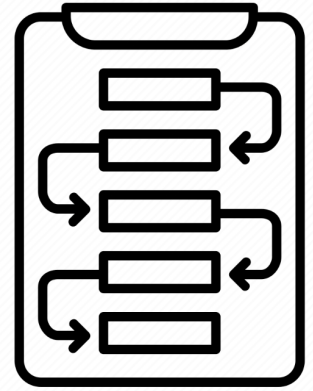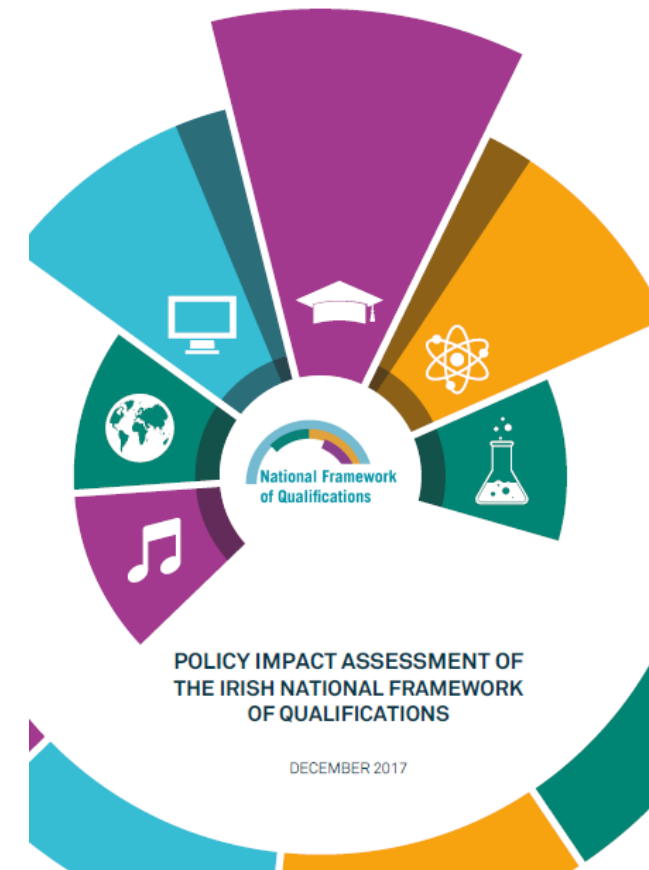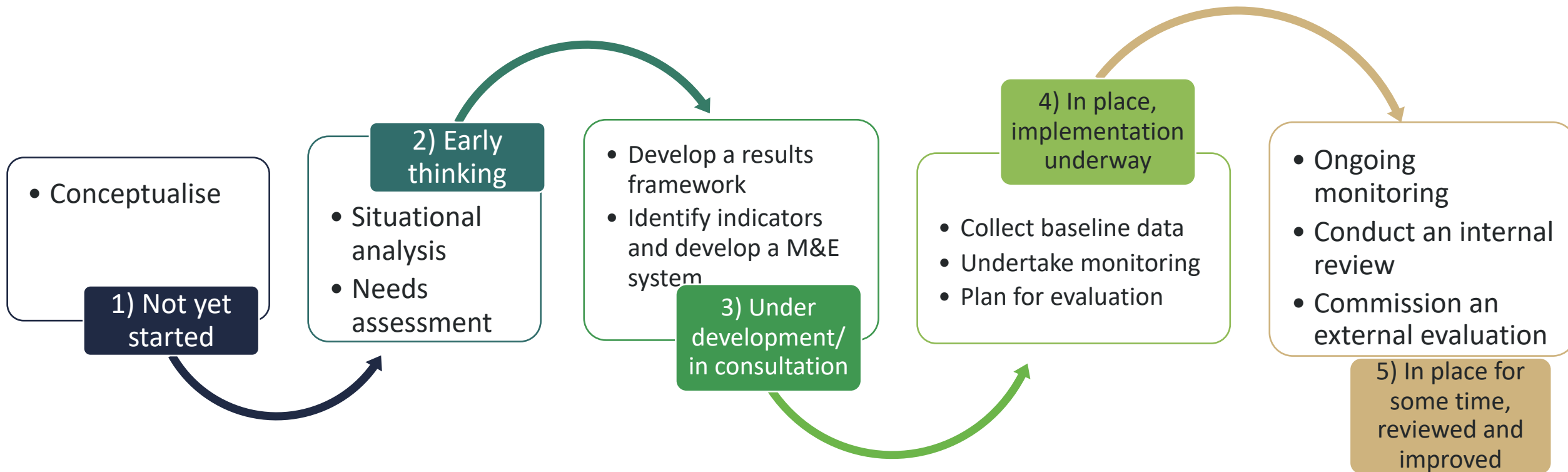
Steps in Evaluation Planning

1. Clarify the **results framework**.

2. Identify **evaluation questions**.

3. Identify **data collection methods** and **data sources**.

4. Establish **timeline** and a **workplan**.

5. Develop an **evaluation plan** (internal) or **Terms of Reference** for an independent evaluation (see Appendix C).

Case Example: Evaluation of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

- NFQ launched in 2003, establishing a ten-level system of knowledge, skill and competence for the recognition of all types of learning.

- Review commissioned in 2017 to inform future policy development, implementation and evaluation. It investigated : **Awareness of the NQF; Quality of teaching and learning; Qualification progression; Employability and employment; Future policy priorities.**

- Review entailed: an **online survey** of national stakeholders views on the impact of the NQF and future policy priorities; **interviews with key stakeholders** to examine to role and contribution of the NFQ to policy objectives.

- Key findings: high level of support for the NFQ and a positive assessment of it's **contribution** to change: **transparency & quality of qualifications, progression, mobility, alignment between skills & employment opportunities**.

- Identified a range of possible future priorities, initiated a process of consultation, review, reform.

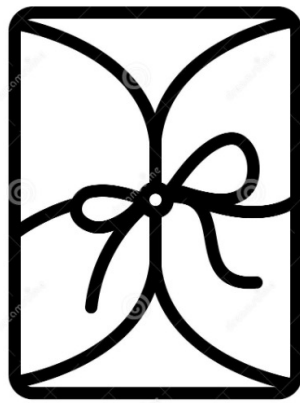- *NB: Challenging to ascertain impact given that the NQF is an enabler rather than a driver of change.*

National Framework of Qualifications

POLICY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE IRISH NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

DECEMBER 2017

M&E at different stages of development of an NQF (5 stages)

- Conceptualise

1) Not yet started

2) Early thinking
- Situational analysis
- Needs assessment

- Develop a results framework
- Identify indicators and develop a M&E system

3) Under development/ in consultation

4) In place, implementation underway
- Collect baseline data
- Undertake monitoring
- Plan for evaluation

- Ongoing monitoring
- Conduct an internal review
- Commission an external evaluation

5) In place for some time, reviewed and improved

06

Summary

Wrap-up

- Rationale & key concepts:
  - Monitoring, evaluation, M&E system, results framework, outcomes, indicators.
- Considerations:
  - Establish need & demand; identify users & uses; location of the M&E system; build organisational capacity to implement and use evidence;
- Building blocks:
  - Results framework & indicators.
- Planning for evaluation

Poll 1

Reminder: Homework task

1. Identify at least two **indicators** for monitoring the **development** or **implementation** of the NQF (activity/output level).

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