

# ***Mapping the Measures of Success – An Expert Round Table on Impact Evaluation for Strengthening Governance of WASH Services***

## ***Discussion Note***

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Typically, evaluation studies of development programmes, including programmes for water supply and sanitation services delivery, focus on implementation, but do not measure determinants of impact such as equity and sustainability at the level of ultimate objectives.

With the shift towards a sector wide policy-based approach to supporting a water services delivery approach, the demand from policy makers and politicians for reliable information on the (intended and unintended) impact of programmes on the target population at the micro-level, is increasing.

Evaluations in the water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH) sector tends to focus on tangible aspects such as infrastructure with some focus on health, economic, and social benefits. Typically, experimental methods, such as household level, randomized control trials, are most commonly used to assess specific interventions.

In recent years, however, interest from a variety of stakeholders, including donor agencies, private foundations, and NGOs, has increased around measuring less easily quantifiable institutional, economic and social impacts of interventions focusing on strengthening of WASH governance and services delivery in more rigorous ways.

### **CURRENT DISCOURSE**

Initiatives aiming to achieve improved services delivery through a focus on more inclusive and transparent, and thereby hopefully more effective policy, institutions and decision making processes that comprise WASH sector governance necessarily require other types of metrics and methods of information collection to capture impact.

The challenge for the sector and evaluation experts now is to ensure that the effort and resources spent on such evaluations result in rigorous, relevant and meaningful information from which to best learn about the impact of strengthening WASH sector governance in support of the shift from a project-approach to a demand-led, services-delivery approach.

The challenge of measuring not only quantifiable variables for Impact Evaluation studies has been analyzed in different sector and some important initiatives have been taken. NONIE – Network of networks on Impact Evaluation is an example.

[www.http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie](http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie)

On-going research, testing and documenting of such metrics and methods are taking place – within the WASH Sector as well as other sectors. Increasing attention and credence are

being given to methods such as outcome mapping, process documentation, social network analysis and self-evaluations and methods that seek to quantify qualitative information such as end-users perceptions of quality of services, or the nature and quality of interactions among sector stakeholders.

## About this event

In response to this identified gap in collective sector knowledge, the initiative to identify valid and rigorous impact evaluation methods and metrics was taken through the establishment of a platform in the format of a 2-day event entitled *Mapping the Measures of Success: An Expert Round Table on Impact Evaluation for Strengthening Governance of WASH Services* hosted by the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre in Delft, The Netherlands on 13 and 14 May 2008.

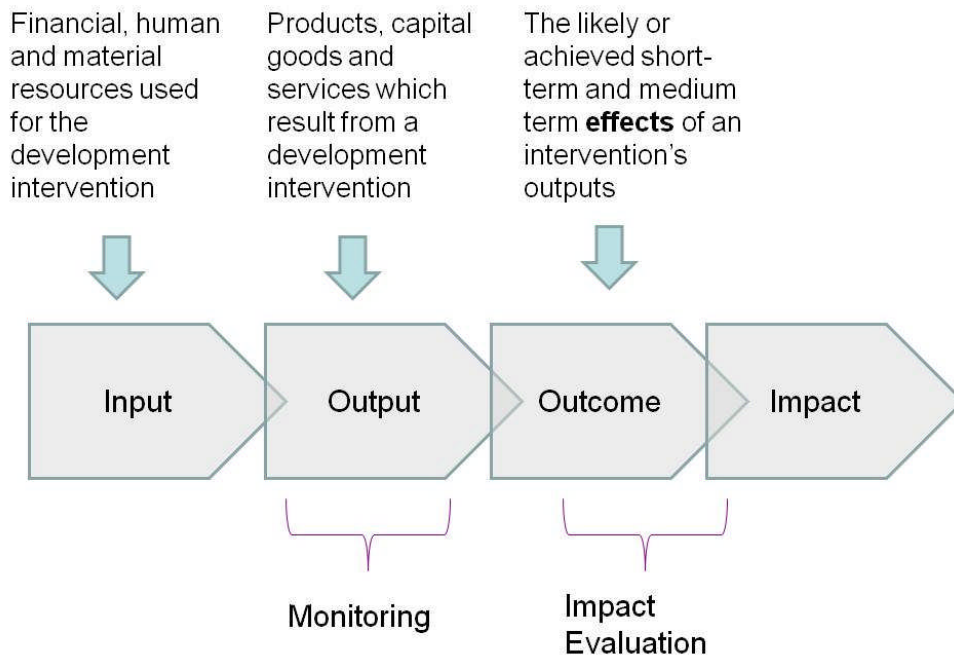
### Aims of the Round Table:

- a) peer-sharing among Impact Evaluation experts to inform an initial mapping of the knowledge, skills and methods available
- b) facilitate learning and sharing among WASH sector practitioners and Impact Evaluation experts from the South and North
- c) capture the prevailing needs and interests of these stakeholders for relevant and appropriate methods and tools for measuring the impact of interventions focused on Institutional Change

The outputs of the Round Table will be made available through an open discussion weblog, as well as a concise Round Table Report both of which will serve as inputs to the development of a Thematic Overview Paper to be published in late 2008 and made freely available electronically via IRC's website.

## General concepts and Glossary

### Intervention Chain



### Related to Impact Evaluation<sup>1</sup>

The set of concepts and terms that form the basis of the discussions are those used by the Network of Networks for Impact Evaluation (NONIE) as follows:

*Attribution:* The problem of attribution is the problem of assigning observed changes in outputs and outcomes to the intervention. This is done by constructing a counterfactual.

*Comparison group:* For project-level interventions, the counterfactual is often established by taking a comparison group (typically a geographic area) which is identical to the treatment group, except that it is not subject to the intervention. (The expression 'control group' is also commonly used, but strictly speaking only applies to experimental settings in which the conditions of the control group can be controlled).

*Control group:* a group of units in randomized evaluations that are randomly drawn from the eligible population and not to receive the program benefits.

*Counterfactual:* outputs and outcomes in the absence of the intervention. The counterfactual is necessary for comparing actual outputs and outcomes to what they would have been in the absence of the intervention, i.e. with versus without.

---

<sup>1</sup> Glossary adapted from: *NONIE: Impact Evaluation Guidance, Section 2, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Approaches to Impact Evaluation*, 2008.

*Experimental design:* In order to ensure comparability, an experimental design randomly assigns eligible households to the project and comparison groups. This approach can avoid selection bias, but the extent to which it can be applied to the types of intervention has been questioned.

*Impact Evaluation:* Positive and negative, primary or secondary, intended or unintended long – term effects produced by a development intervention

*Quasi-experimental design:* evaluation designs which address selection bias using statistical methods, such as propensity score matching, rather than randomization. These methods model the selection process and so control for these variables in the analysis of outcomes.

*Random assignment:* an assignment of the treatment and the control group based on a random draw.

*Selection bias:* The beneficiaries of an intervention may be selected by some criteria (or select themselves) which is correlated with the observed outcome. For example, entrepreneurs being selected for micro credit or for a business development scheme may have done better than those who did not bother to apply, even in the absence of the support. Hence comparing outcomes of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries can give misleading results. Where these criteria or not observed (i.e. there are no data on them), then there is a bias in the impact evaluation findings (this point is discussed further below). But where the determinants of participation are observed, then the bias can be removed using quasi-experimental methods.

*Treatment group:* a group of units in both randomized and nonrandomized evaluations that receive the program benefits.

## **Related to Local Governance/ Institutional Change<sup>2</sup>**

*Local Governance:* embraces a wider range of organisations, both local government and beyond. Services may be delivered by local government, the private sector, NGOs, community organisations, local cooperatives, universities, training institutes, etc.

*Institutional capacity:* it establishes who does what, and to what standards. Institutional development is not about new bodies, but about creating confidence in rules, structures, finance and systems of accountability. Change becomes “institutionalised” when it is a settled part of culture and practice.

*Organisational capacity:* a well – functioning organisation fulfils its mandates and meets its obligations. An organisation’s capacity rests on its structures, methods of functioning and on its decision making processes, as well as the skills and value of its staff. It is attuned to learning, transparency in its working and effective in its communication. It makes itself accountable, and involves communities in decision – making and monitoring. Organisations require resource to function with credibility.

Deirdre Casella (Casella@irc.nl)

Sandra Segura (segura@irc.nl)

www.irc.nl



---

<sup>2</sup> Briefing note from the Strengthening Capacity for Local WASH Governance symposium, held in Delft, The Netherlands, IRC 2006.