

Monitoring is the art of collecting the necessary information with minimum effort in order to make a steering decision at the right time. This information also constitutes an important and necessary data base for analysis, discussion, (self-) evaluation and reporting. As a regular and systematic process integrated in the cycle of projects/programmes, monitoring is different from evaluation. The aim is to see if programmes are «doing the right thing and are doing it right» in order to improve their quality.

Gender, as a transversal theme, needs to be integrated in all monitoring systems (engendering monitoring). It helps us to keep in touch with field reality and provides us with qualitative and quantitative data about:

a) the contribution and participation of women and men in the realisation of the objectives and b) the effects of the programme on gender relations and disparities. But a monitoring system can also put the focus on women and men equality in a programme/project (gender monitoring).

As for planning activities, beneficiaries and partners must be closely involved in the monitoring process. Programme officers carry the main responsibility to ensure that gender is part of monitoring, under the overall responsibility of the COOF coordinator.

Fields of observation

We can't observe everything at the same time. We have to choose what kind of information is relevant for the project/programme. We might need different tools for the different levels¹. The main involved actors (women and men beneficiaries, partners, programme/project staff) at all levels have to be made responsible to collect regularly the necessary data. It is to remind us that in a engendered monitoring system, it is not only women who are responsible for collecting information concerning gender issues.

¹ See «Monitoring – keeping in touch with reality», part II: Instruments and procedures and III: Indicators and key questions, SDC 1997.



Output monitoring

A monitoring system at this level has to remain simple and feasible. We have to check whether we have reached the expected gender results or not and whether we do control what is in our sphere of responsibility.

- What is the actual gender performance of the programme/project? What «is» compared with what «should be»?
- Do we have desegregated data for women and men?
- Have the contracts, the formal agreements been respected?
- Is there financial accountability?

If the difference between planned and expected gender results is too great, the course has to be corrected.

Outcome monitoring

For SDC and its partners, this is the critical and essential sphere to monitor. Here monitoring focuses on effectiveness, i.e. the achievement of programme objectives and medium term outcomes.

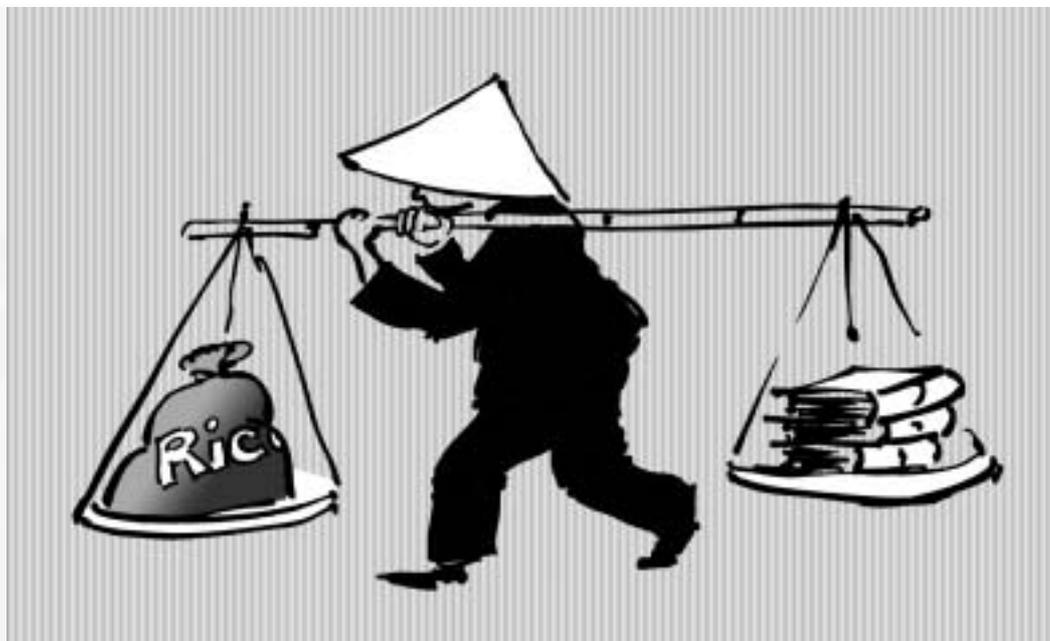
- Have the relevant groups to make things change, organisations or individuals, been involved and reached by the programme?
- Did the attitudes and behaviours, the capacities, the practices, the social position of women and men change?
- What were the desired/undesired effects of the project/programme on gender equality?
- Did the transfer activities bring the expected results (multiplication)?
- Did the project meet the practical as well as the strategic needs of women and men?

We might be interested too in knowing how we have achieved something or why we have – or have not – achieved the output or outcomes. Or why, with similar environmental conditions, we are successful in one place and not in another. At all levels (output/outcome or impact level), we need to understand the processes and try to correct what is in our sphere of responsibility/influence.

Process monitoring

Process monitoring can be done at each organisational level. Understanding what SDC and/or our partners do well/not well on gender is important for «learning».

- Are the form and dynamics of partnership satisfactory for all parties?
- Have the roles and tasks regarding the implementation of gender issues in the programme been defined?
- Have the agreements, contracts, procedures concerning gender been respected?
- Is there mutual commitment for gender issues? Are mutual expectations met?
- What were the furthering/hindering processes in the project/programme to reach the planned gender results?
- Has enough gender capacity building been done?
- Have the partners, women and men, been empowered?
- Is the team functioning in a satisfactory way?
- Have the dialogue and negotiation between the main partners, between women and men in the programme/project improved/deteriorated?
- Is there a capacity to focus on common interest of women and men?
- Is there sufficient trust, respect, consensus and conflict resolution capacity among the partners, among women and men in the programme/project?



Impact analysis

Impact analysis is too complex to answer with monitoring and should be the subject of a wider impact study or evaluation. It may take place every 5 – 10 years. It requires «before/ after» disaggregated indicators. At this level, we analyse the programme/project's contribution to changes in a given context, in the long term. This is the most difficult sphere to analyse because it is mainly out of SDC's «control», i.e. the achievement of long term development goals. We can only monitor what is observable during a programme, register desired and undesired effects. To analyse the relevance of a programme/project, we need impact hypotheses which should be formulated and verified by significant partners and the main key actors (e.g. women and men concerned by a health project, programme/project officers, Health ministry officers).

- Did the project/programme contribute to reducing gender inequalities?
- Could some changes of gender values be registered?
- What were the desired/undesired gender effects of the project/programme?
- Are the results consistent with SDC gender policy as well as the gender polity of the host country where we work?

At this global level, existing sources of information must be used. Responsibility to ensure analysis at this level lies with regional and sector officers and with COOF country directors, working closely together with partners at national/policy level.

We must distinguish between monitoring gender as a transversal theme in programmes within our sphere of competence and influence as a cooperation agency (medium term), and the results of this approach on social transformation. This takes time and has to be led by local «actors» over whom our influence is extremely limited. Social changes can be measured over longer periods (5 – 10 years) and our programmes can only make a modest contribution, at best facilitate the creation of favourable conditions for change. Results must therefore be observed primarily at the level of the systematisation of the (gender) approach in all actions of the Swiss Cooperation. Social change will come later.

SDC Madagascar, PDR

Context monitoring

Context monitoring shows risks and potentials. It is essential to follow the general context (economical, social, environmental...) in which the project/programme is implemented to a) check the evolution, the tendencies and changes which can influence gender in the programme/project, positively or negatively; b) try to measure how the programme/project has contributed to changes in a particular context. Context monitoring is important for the formulation of impact hypotheses.

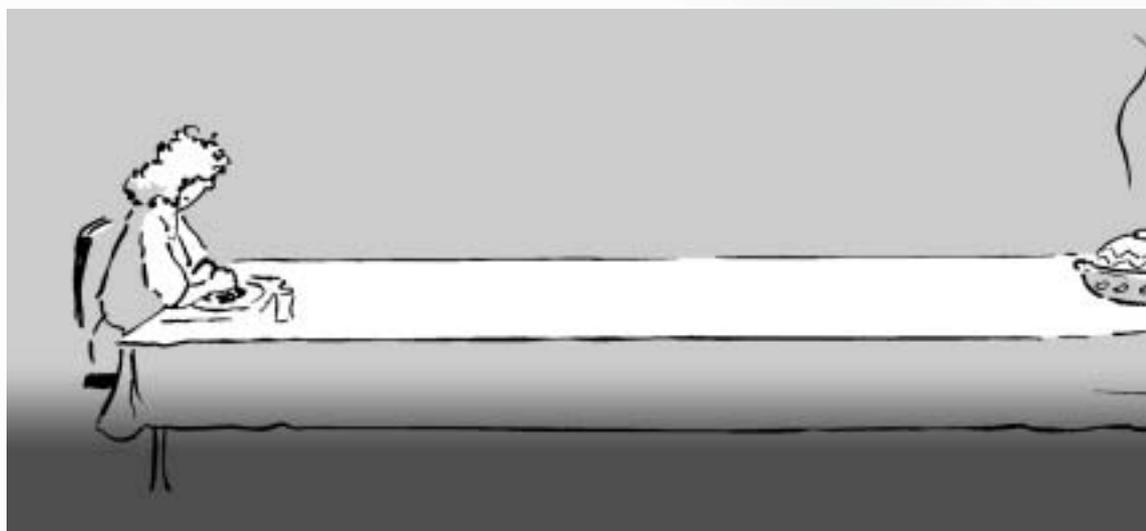
Information collected with the help of general macro-indicators developed for instance by UNDP gives us relevant information for the programme/project. But it should not be confounded with the indicators of the programme/project (see chapter key questions and indicators below).

Sustainability monitoring

The sustainability of gender results in a programme/project is an important issue. Momentarily attained benefits for specific groups, e.g. women's groups are not relevant if sustainable effects cannot be guaranteed. At each stage of a programme/project, strengths and weaknesses regarding ownership of a programme/project and its sustainability should be analysed with the partners and appropriate measures to be taken to sustain the results should be agreed on.

What can gender general macro-indicators measure in the general context?

- Mortality: Female/male, maternal mortality, infant (girls/boys)
- Rates of unemployment/employment/self-employment in different sectors
- Type/conditions of employment for female/male
- Access to basic services (education, health, water) women/men, girls/boys
- Access to productive assets (land, credit, vocational training)
- Participation in politics (women/men in elected posts at different levels)
- Inclusion of gender needs in macro policies and processes (e.g. decentralisation)
- Changes in substantive gender issues/gaps in key development sectors (+/-)
- Changes in legislation/policy framework affecting gender equality (+/-)
- Changes in national/sector budget allocation towards gender



Key questions and indicators

Gender aware key questions and indicators are needed from the very start of projects/programmes in order to compare evolutions of the situation of women and men.

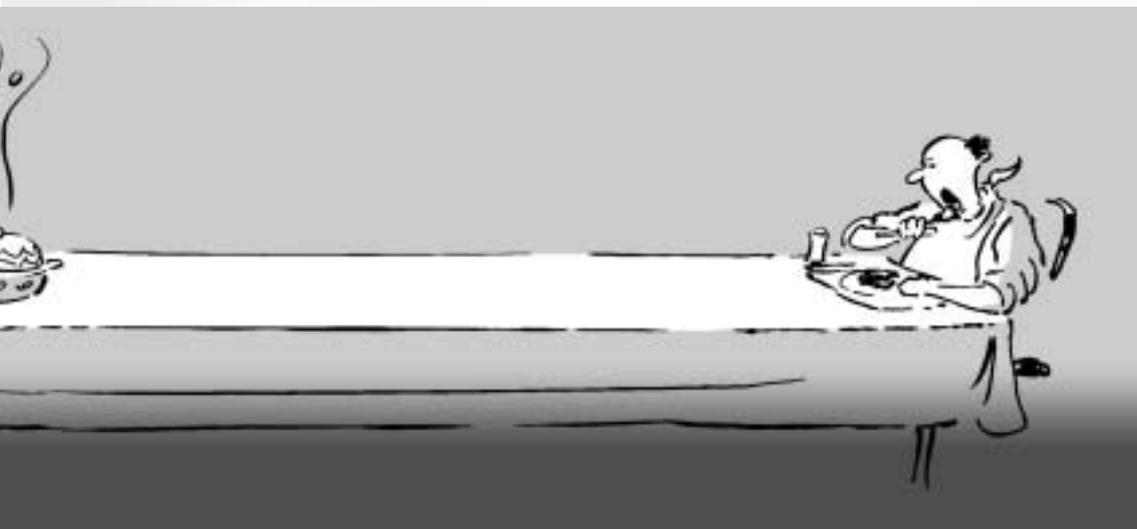
Formulating gender relevant key questions according to the chosen observation field is an important step. Often, we can observe, count or have a direct answer to the key-question. In that case, no indicator is necessary. If a direct answer to the key question is not possible, only then do we need an indicator, i.e. a variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure – quantitative or qualitative- achievements and/or processes as well as changes in the programme/project or the context.

General macro-indicators (box above) and programme/project relevant indicators should not be confounded. For instance, it is necessary to know, in a HIV/AIDS prevention programme, the prevalence rate at national level. But at programme/project level, other key questions or indicators need to be found out. Often, the beneficiaries know best what is relevant. During a discussion with beneficiary groups in Uganda, we found out that the number of early pregnancies among young girls is a very good indicator to measure the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for youth.

Key questions at Country Programme level are detailed in sheet 7. At programme level, the following key questions can be used:

- Do women/men benefit from the programme in the same way?
- Are some women/men negatively impacted by the programme?
- Have gender relations of women/men in the target group changed as a result of the programme? Have gender gaps been reduced?
- Do gender relations challenge working hypotheses and/or influence the efficiency/sustainability (+/-)?
- Are new gender issues emerging within the programme?
- Are there new external factors/actors affecting gender besides the programme (+ or -)?
- Are women/men supportive of the programme or do they wish to change it (partly/totally)? Who? Why? How?

To engender a monitoring system, it is essential to formulate desegregated key questions and indicators, in order to reflect differences and inequalities between women and men and correct them if necessary. Monitoring is easier if gender is included from the very beginning of a programme/project, e.g. in the logical framework and overall strategy from the start. But efforts must be made to monitor the gender dimension of results at all levels even when/if the original formulation and indicators are gender blind.



Spheres of responsibility/ influence and monitoring

We can distinguish two main spheres of responsibility or influence for monitoring:

- a sphere of SDC's direct responsibility
- a sphere of influence, partnership, cooperation and joint action.

Different monitoring matrices are needed to get information at the different levels and different persons will be responsible for collecting the information (e.g. user group level, partner organisations, programme officer, COOF country director).

It is not useful to have long lists of indicators. Data collected and monitoring indicators² need to be prioritised:

- What do we need to be able to document at different levels/in different spheres?
- What would we like to be able to document at different levels/in different spheres?
- What would we like to simply discuss between partners (no need to document)?
- Who needs what information?
- Of the information that is needed, which is already collected in monitoring?
- What method is the most appropriate to gather the needed data that is missing?

What can gender indicators measure in the sphere of direct responsibility?

- Quantity/quality of gender competent staff (women/men in SDC/partners)
- Changes to/creation of tools, methodologies, procedures to integrate gender
- Initiatives/partnerships to create synergies on gender
- Use/recruitment of gender skilled staff (w/m)
- Changes towards equal opportunities
- Budgets (financial/time) used for mainstreaming in the institution (e.g. % of total budget)

What can gender indicators measure in the sphere of influence?

- Participation (quantity/quality) of women and men in activities
- Access to decision-making by women/men (% , ratio)
- Access to programme resources/ services by women and men (benefits)
- Expected/unexpected outcomes for women/men (compared with objectives)
- Met/unmet gender needs of women and men (compared with expressed needs)
- Changes in gender relations and gender gaps (+/-)
- Capacity (including tools) for SDC and partners to work with gender
- Appropriation of gender by SDC staff, partners, women/men in target groups
- Changes in programme budget allocation towards gender

² Adapted from "Outcome Mapping", <http://www.idrc.ca/evaluation/OsummSheetsFinal.html> (dec. 2002)

What to do to integrate gender in monitoring...

- Convince yourself, and others, that it is not too late to integrate gender in monitoring, even in programmes that have already started. To begin, it may be sufficient to formulate key questions on gender at different levels.
- Review existing indicators in different spheres. Disaggregate them by gender (women/men of different age, household type, income level, ethnic groups, physical ability, etc.), as relevant, and/or create new ones if needed.
- (Re) formulate clear indicators for the gender mainstreaming strategy and plan how to review its progress as part and parcel of key moments.
- Review monitoring mechanisms (who/how is data collected?) and the use of data (how are gender lessons learned and applied?) in different spheres.
- Allocate clear responsibilities and resources for gendered and gender monitoring.
- Build the capacity of all partners to monitor in a gender aware manner.

In SDC–Tanzania, a gender training identified the need for integrating gender in monitoring. A workshop was held to develop gender tools and indicators for the rural roads and health sectors. This work fed into a parallel process of defining a poverty monitoring framework.

What do we want to know?

- (A)** In general, both *the communities* and *the project* (SDC) want to know what **difference the project makes** against the initial situation (before the project's interventions). This development focus concentrates on the positive changes, but we also need to check whether the project has unintended, negative effects. Both are necessary to learn whether the approach of the project is appropriate and effective.
- (B)** More specifically, *the project* (SDC) wants to see **how the project affects specific groups**, what changes it brings to these groups, i.e. the observation of the changes should be socially (poverty-related) and gender disaggregated. This part of the monitoring should provide evidence of the project's achievements related to SDC principles of poverty reduction and gender equality.

How to do it?

A feedback from the poverty and gender-focused monitoring to the community will support the communities in assessing their social interaction, which in turn may enhance development objectives. The monitoring of *outputs* and *results* of the project (e.g. improved roads, improved organisational capacity of community) is part of the implementation management (steering). Responsibility for it is with the *communities*, beneficiaries.

The monitoring of *objectives* and *impact* (e.g. improved accessibility, time saved, opportunity to participate in decisions) is done at longer intervals and is of interest for the beneficiaries and the project. Considering that (a) the monitoring of objectives and impact is likely to be more demanding (e.g. covering project area, define change assumptions) and (b) the project in addition has a poverty and gender focus, the project will be the main agent for this part of the monitoring. *Monitoring framework for poverty, SDC Tanzania, May 2002*

DIFFERENT SPHERES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND INFLUENCE : ENGENDERED MONITORING SYSTEMS OR GENDER MONITORING, KEY QUESTIONS AND INDICATORS ARE ADAPTED TO THOSE LEVELS

