Monitoring & Evaluation Policy

Madhya Pradesh Samaj Seva Sanstha Bhopal

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION POLICY

1. PREAMBLE:

This reader provides information on the backgrounds for increased attention for planning, monitoring & evaluation, gives some background theory on planning methodology and provides practical information, which organization can use in setting up a monitoring system for various Social Development Programmes

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Scope

This manual covers monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures. This represents the organization of Monitoring and Evaluation in MPSSS; the roles of MPSSS staff in Regional office and the partner Diocese of the Region offices; their responsibility to strengthen capacity to monitor and evaluate; and the place of monitoring and evaluation in MPSSS program cycle. It can be used for several projects, programmes and services rendered at the Regional and Diocesan level.

2.2 Definitions

In the opinion of "The National Literacy Mission" of India, "Monitoring and evaluation of any scheme, especially in the social sector, has great significance as it helps one to know whether the scheme is on the right track".

Monitoring: Monitoring is the periodic oversight of the implementation of an activity which seeks to establish the extent to which input deliveries, work schedules, other requires actions and targeted outputs are proceeding according to the plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct deficiencies detected. "Monitoring" is also useful for the systematic checking on a condition or set of conditions such as following the development. Monitoring is a continuous process of collecting, analyzing, and documenting information in order to report on progress towards achieving agreed project objectives. It provides an ongoing opportunity for learning. Top-quality monitoring information assists timely decision-making, ensures accountability, and provides the basis for evaluation and learning. Monitoring provides early indications of change thereby enabling projections to be made about future project success.

Monitoring is concerned with whether project Activities are being undertaken, Outputs delivered, and the project is leading to the initial behavior change outcomes that were anticipated in its underlying theory of change. It is an internal Project activity. It is an essential part of good management practice. Monitoring is generally focused on the question **"Are we doing things right?"**

Evaluation: Evaluation is a periodic, systematic assessment of a project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability on a defined population. Evaluation draws from data collected

via the monitoring system, as well as any other more detailed data (e.g., from additional surveys or studies) gathered to understand specific aspects of the project in greater depth. It is learning and action oriented management tool and organizational process for improving current activities and future planning, programming and decision making. It is concerned with an assessment of achievements— both anticipated and unanticipated. It is often an externally-led event, though should involve the active participation of project staff.

Evaluation can occur at discrete points in time during implementation, but is more commonly thought of as taking place at project mid-term and completion. When it occurs at project start-up, it is often referred to as "the baseline."It is generally focused on the question **"Are we doing the right thing?"**

2.3 Need of M & E Policy:

There is an increased pressure on Government and Non-Government organizations in development co-operation to improve monitoring and evaluation of activities, with an emphasis on measuring the effects they have on the beneficiaries.

Three main reasons for improving Monitoring & Evaluation are given below:

a. **Accountability** towards the stakeholders: On the one hand the beneficiaries (communities) demand an explanation on the benefits or effects of work done, especially when they are formally organized in one way or another. On the other hand, the funding agencies demand an explanation on financial aspects especially on the efficiency of the work done.
b. **Learning** from experiences: there is a need to improve the learning effects and improve the effectiveness and efficiency within the implementing organizations and within the sector.
c. **Sustainability** of activities: In the view of limited resources and limited time span of projects, there is a need to understand when activities can be handed over to local authorities and can be sustained at local level.

3. PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Monitoring & Evaluation are closely related to planning of programmes and activities. In this phase relevant indicators are selected and monitoring mechanisms are formulated. In the different non-government organizations a variety of planning methodologies are used. In this document some of these methodologies are discussed and their similarities are explained.

3.1 Terminology

Before going into details of planning models, some frequently used terms are defined below: -

Implementing Organization	The organization that is executing or implementing a project or a programme
Funding agency	The organization that is providing financial assistance for the proper execution and implementation of the programme

Project	The total of inter-related activities, which have been agreed upon for a very specific time period on the basis of a project agreement, often with specific targets and end terms
Beneficiaries	The group within the population that is meant to benefit from the interventions
Target Group	The group that an intervention is directed to. This group can either consist of the beneficiaries or the group that may contribute to improvement of the situation of the end beneficiaries, such as intermediate organizations or service providers
Policy Environment, Context	This consists of NGO's government, political, cultural aspects, public opinion and in effect the general discourse in a society that co-determines the space that an organization has for its interventions in a specific field (health, agriculture, livelihood etc.). The relations between the interventions of an organization and the policy environment is interactive, since the interventions are themselves are part of the policy environment. Changes takes place in a "policy subsystem" consists of "all those who play a part in the generation, dissemination and evaluation of policy ideas".
Monitoring	The function of following the implementation of an intervention along the lines of pre-set procedures and indicators in such a way that the results of these interventions can be analyzed and used to validate the process and results of the intervention over time. This valuation can lead to changes in the project and/or influence future policies and actions in the field of the interventions.
Evaluation	Assessment of the process and effects of a project or programme in retrospect (ex-post)
Intervention	An activity that is undertaken within a project or programme with a view to addressing or solving one of the causes of a problem that has been identified, and that helps to achieve the project purpose
Objective	Future improved situation to which the project or programme contributes (together with others)
Purpose	Future improved situation characterized by sustainable benefits for the project's target group, benefits which start to appear during the project
Input	The means that an organization uses to implement its interventions (human resources, finance, material)
Output	The production of a project or programme in terms of deliverables: (people trained, services rendered etc.
Outcome	The immediate effects of an intervention in terms of changes in the beneficiaries or the target group, addressing (part of) the original problem that the intervention was designed to tackle
Impact	The lasting long-term effects of projects/and or programmes with respect to the root causes of the problems of the beneficiaries
Effect/result	The change resulting from an intervention, activity or programme. Effects may be intentional/foreseen (pre-set) or unintentional/unforeseen. Effects can take place at different level: the beneficiaries, the policy environment, the programme, the

implementing organization.

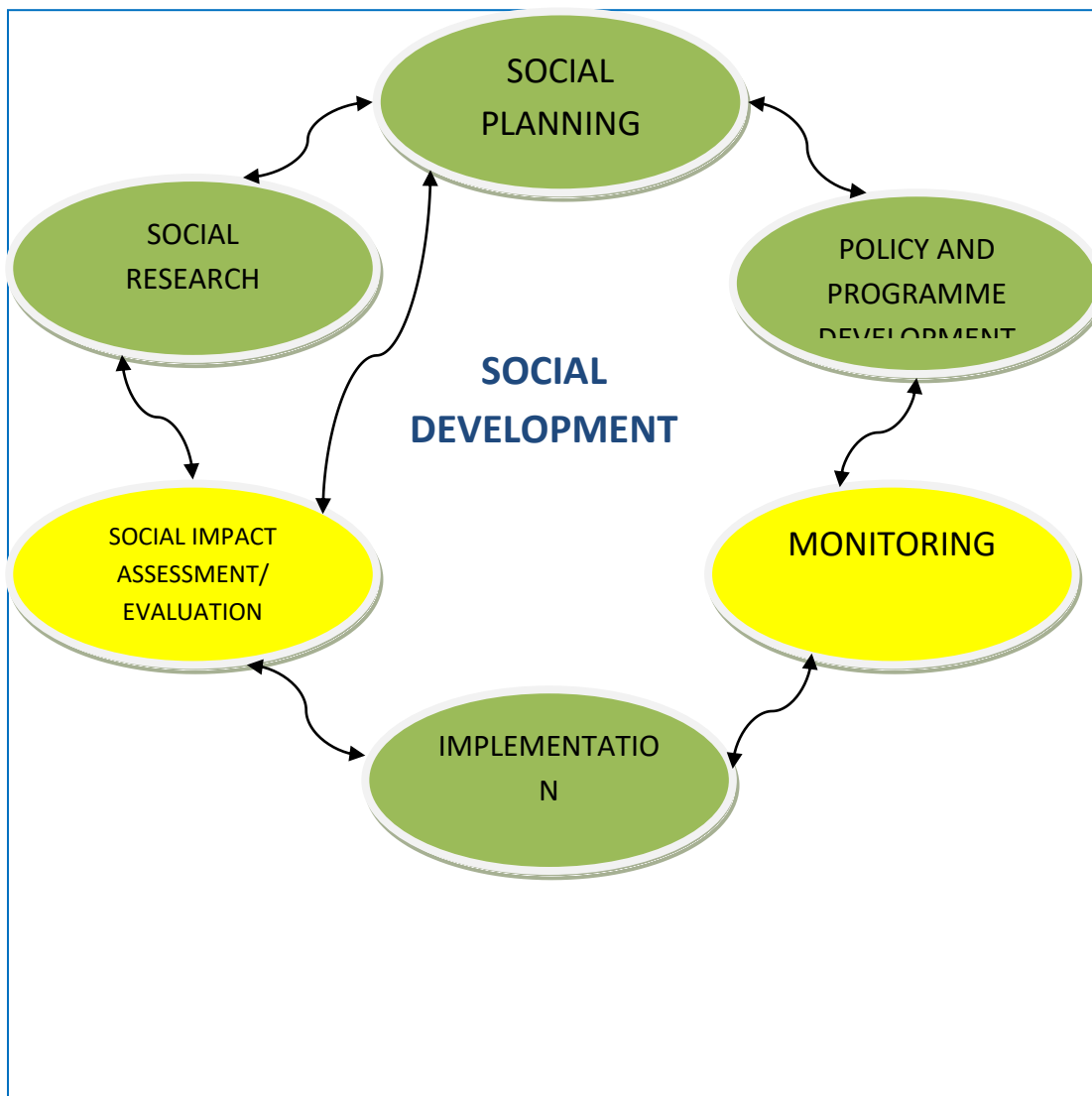## 3.2 The relationship between Monitoring & Evaluation

Both monitoring & evaluation are management tools. In the case of monitoring, information for tracking progress according to previously agreed on plans and schedules is routinely gathered. Discrepancies between actual and planned implementation are identified and corrective actions taken. When findings are used to monitor the development results (effects, impacts) it is sometimes referred to as ongoing evaluation.

Evaluation is more episodic than monitoring. It is facilitated by monitoring but utilizes additional sources of information. Many such sources are identified during project reviews when there is a need to understand why inputs did not lead to planned outputs. Evaluation focuses on specific questions related to effectiveness and impact in order to influence future programmes or services.

Impact assessment is often difficult because causality is difficult to determine, in addition to being costly and time-consuming. However Managers and Officers needs to know the effects of project activities on the intended beneficiaries during implementation. Community monitoring programmes can record impacts locally and use results to modify project activities. Impacts can be assessed informally, through conversations with beneficiaries, women's groups, village elders. This allows Managers/Officers to adjust strategies, if necessary, during implementation, rather than continue less than effective activities.

As a practical manner, MPSSS recommends that monitoring focus on project progress. While a few outcome indicators might be monitored, such as available livelihood options of project beneficiaries, formal assessment of overall impact and cost effectiveness is best handled by conducting evaluations.

3.3 As shown in Figure 1; Monitoring & Evaluation are critical to social development-a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development (Midgley 1994).

A circular diagram labeled "SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT" in the center, with connected ovals: SOCIAL PLANNING, POLICY AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, MONITORING, IMPLEMENTATION, SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT/ EVALUATION, SOCIAL RESEARCH.

4. PUPOSE OF MONITORING & EVALUATION

"Monitoring & evaluation is very important in project planning and implementation.

It is like watching where you are going while riding a bicycle; you can adjust as you go along and ensure that you are on the right track"...

Monitoring provides information that will be useful in:

- Analysing the situation in the community
- Determining whether the facilitation by the community facilitators are well utilized
- Identifying problems facing the community by the community itself
- Ensuring all activities are carried out properly by the right people and in time with using the resources available in the community
- Using lessons from one activity on to another; *and*
- Determining whether the way the the community has planned is the most appropriate way of solving the problem at hand or not.

5. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy seeks to place the practice of monitoring & evaluation within the broader management accountability framework & to clarify the roles & responsibilities of the Regional (Forum) office and the Diocesan Social Service Societies (DSSS) in this process. The policy underpins an integrated Monitoring & Evaluation system for the social sector, which is decentralized in approach; with DSSS undertaking most Monitoring & Evaluation functions for their respective interventions.

5.1 OVERALL GOAL

The overall goal of this policy is to establish common structures & standards that would govern the application of effective monitoring and evaluation in the social sector, thereby facilitating the attainment of maximum benefits from social interventions

5.2 PRINCIPLES

The policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

i. Managers/Officers of the Forum and DSSS have the primarily responsibility to ensure judicious use of resources with which they are entrusted;
ii. The resources allocated to the Forum and the DSSS for the social sector interventions should be effectively & efficiently utilized to achieve results that can quantitatively and qualitatively improve the lives of the beneficiaries; and
iii. The application of time-tested monitoring & evaluation tools should form an integral part of achieving results.

5.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The monitoring & evaluation policy framework has six main strategic objectives:

i. To promote the effective and efficient deployment of resources by Government for the provision of social services to targeted population in the working area;
ii. To facilitate accountability at all management levels in the provision of social services;
iii. To facilitate the utilization of reliable, timely and relevant information for the development of social policy and social programmes initiatives etc;
iv. To disseminate best practice findings for improved project and programme performance;
v. To strengthen evaluation capacity; and
vi. To standardize processes and procedures used to monitor and evaluate social interventions.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Managers/Officers at MPSSS, Bhopal

i. The setting of standards for monitoring and evaluation;
ii. The provision of guidance, advice on best practices and support to 9 DSSS in the effective implementation of various projects or programmes on social development;
iii. Assessment of monitoring and evaluation capacity at the MPSSS and DSSS level on a systematic basis;
iv. Conduct of periodic training with the 9 DSSS to build capacity in monitoring and evaluation;
v. Development of yearly and monthly monitoring plans for the project;
vi. Development of yearly evaluation plan for the successful implementation of the project;
vii. Promotion of the use of evaluation findings among DSSS to improve the quality of social interventions;
viii. Monitoring the implementation of monitoring and evaluation plans
ix. To compile and share the findings of the evaluation with all the partners.

6.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Managers/Officers/Coordinators at 9 DSSS

    i.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS should ensure that the resources deployed for social sector interventions are effectively and efficiently utilized to provide services for the intended beneficiaries;

    ii.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS should set up internal mechanisms to facilitate continuous monitoring of the social interventions for which they are responsible. These should include the use of self assessment tools, public feedback mechanisms, and performance management reporting structures;

    iii.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS are responsible for developing a mechanism for data storage and updating of information on new and existing programmes and projects relevant to the funding agency;

    iv.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS should, upon request, provide information to MPSSS to update existing profiles of social interventions;

    v.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS may request mid-term evaluation or yearly evaluation to the MPSSS, Bhopal and get the current status of achievement;

    vi.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS should prepare Project Completion Reports (PCRs) at the completion of an intervention;

    vii.   The Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS should prepare annual Project Status Reports (PSRs) for ongoing interventions, to monitor the achievement of objectives and determine overall outcomes;

    viii.   In carrying out evaluations on interventions under their purview, the Managers/Officers/Coordinators at DSSS should apply the evaluation standards attached to this policy document. (Appendix 1)

7. INITIATING THE MONITORING & EVALUATION PROCESS

7.1 Selection of Interventions

A concept note will be prepared by the Forum Office and the 9 DSSS and submitted initially to the respective funding agency for consideration and subsequently a proposal on the same will also be developed to get approval. It will be timely reviewed and adjusted if need arises. A template for the yearly evaluation plan is attached as Appendix 2.

7.2 Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation

1. **Monitoring & evaluation indicators for Climate Change**

Main Input/activity indicators :

- No of farmers supplied with drought resistant crops
- No of community awareness meetings conducted
- Distribution of IEC materials
- No of farmers enrolled in crop insurance
- No. of irrigation systems constructed

Main output indicators :

- Soil quality improved and water storage increased
- Increased coping methods

Main outcome indicators :

- Proportion of food secure households
- Decreased Percentage of malnourished children under-5
- Increased capacity to improve crop yield during droughts

2. **Monitoring & evaluation indicators for Organic Agriculture:**

Main Input/activity indicators :

- Use of alternative crop and crop rotation
- Conservational tillage and increase in microbial biomass in the soil
- Integrated pest management system
- Improved water resource management
- Use of animal or organic manure

Main output indicators :

- Increased percentage of farmers following alternative crop and crop rotation
- Increased use of integrated pest management system

- Number of farmers using organic manure or pesticides

- Changes in profitability I agricultural production

- Increased in nutritional food for all

Main outcome indicators :

- Increase in biodiversity and high nature value farming/forestry

- Improved water quality

- Number of communities have adopted methods in mitigating climate change

- Improved soil quality

- Steady decline in malnutrition level

3. Monitoring & evaluation indicators for education

Main Input/activity indicators :

- Village-wise no. of primary and middle schools.

- Kinds of CBOs formed and/or enabled to looking into issues of child education.

Main output indicators :

- No. of boys and girls aged 6-14 years in each class of the schools

- No. of boys and girls aged 6-14 years with 80% and attendance

Main outcome indicators :

- No. of boys and girls aged 6-14 years promoted to the next class

- No. of boys and girls aged 6-14 years with increased confidence

- No. of boys and girls aged 6-14 years with increased communication skill

- No. of parents attending parent teachers meeting

- Enhanced participatory discussions in SMC.

4. Monitoring & evaluation indicators for health and nutrition

Main output indicators :

➢ No. of boys and girls at the Anganwadi gaining weight

➢ Reduction in number of boys and girls with childhood illnesses

➢ Rise in immunization proportion

➢ Reduction in diarrhoea cases

➢ Better HB in women and children

➢ Retention in anganwadi, primary schools

➢ Full ANC,vaccination, institutional delivery

Main outcome indicators :

➢ Change in of infant deaths trends

➢ Change in child death trends

➢ Reduction in morbidity in community

➢ Improvement in health seeking behaviour.

5. Monitoring & Evaluation indicators for Livelihoods

Main Input/activity indicators :

➢ Number and proportion of the families trained for income generation activities (on-farm and off farm)

➢ Number and proportion of the target families started income generation activities (on-farm and off farm)

Main output indicators :

➢ Income generation activity-wise who started it (in %)

➢ Number of the community members enabled to access government schemes

➢ Number of the target community members with income increased by 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%

Main outcome indicators :

➢ Number and % of the community members acquired different kinds of assets including house, land

- ➢ Number and % of the target families started out of pocket expenses for health and education of their members and also contributing to community development work.

- ➢ Improvement in economic status and expenditure patterns.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation indicators of Community Organization

Main Input/activity indicators :

- ➢ Kinds of training received from govt. or any other organization

- ➢ Different kinds of activities undertaken for the development of their village as a whole

Main output indicators :

- ➢ Different community based groups formed and number of their members.
- ➢ No. of gram sabhas being held with number of the participants by sex and the kinds of questions they raised
- ➢ Decisions of the gram sabhas
- ➢ No. of men and women CBO members contested elections from reserved and open categories.
- ➢ CBO members participating in village development by voluntary contribution

Main outcome indicators :

- ➢ Sensitized community raises issues/ concerns without nybody's help at approprite pltform for apt service delivery in all institutions of education, health, nutrition of children; social, economic and political empowerment of the communities, individual and environmental sanitation in the village, drinking water, irrigation water, road transportation, electricity, school buildings, animals, trees, etc. Social conflicts, de addiction, etc.

All the above mentioned monitoring indicators under different categories would be discussed in the workshop and then decided so that the project partners should feel a sense of participation and ownership.

There are few tools of monitoring & evaluation which can help as a guide of reference for anyone who is involved or wanted to get in the evaluation procedure. The tools can be: -
  i.   Glossary of Monitoring & Evaluation Terms
 ii.   A training manual on Monitoring and Evaluation Concepts, Tools and Strategies for social sector programmes
iii.   Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of social sector interventions

7.3 Use of Consultants

The use of consultants is recognized as a valid alternative when comprehensive evaluations cannot be conducted using internal resources or when an independent external evaluation is specifically requested.

8. CONCLUSION

This policy establishes a framework for monitoring and evaluation in the social sector. It is anticipated that the field will continue to evolve, particularly in view of the emphasis being placed in value for money in all sectors. The policy should therefore be reviewed after the first three years of implementation and every five year subsequently.

The implementation of the policy will be managed by the MPSSS – Forum office, Bhopal. However, in order for implementation to be successful, the commitment and the active support of all stakeholders in the social sector, particularly the senior staff of DSSS would be required. It is intended that the formalization of the monitoring and evaluation function will contribute to further enhancing good implementation practice to all the DSSS along with the Forum.

Appendices:

Appendix I: EVALUATION STANDARDS

Technical Standards

1. Prior to undertaking an evaluation of a social sector intervention, the evaluator should develop an evaluation plan, describing the background to the evaluation, key questions/issues to be evaluated, the methodology to be applied, the costs to be incurred, the evaluation team and the evaluation schedule.
2. The terms of reference should be accepted by key stakeholders before commencements of an evaluation.
3. Evaluations should be based on high technical standards. Time-tested methods should be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.
4. Evaluation findings should be based on well-tested theories, values, assumptions and hypotheses.
5. The methods used in data collection should be described in detail.
6. When designing questionnaire, evaluators should avoid loaded, sensitive or embarrassing questions.
7. Evaluators should uphold the interest of beneficiaries and those of other stakeholders.

8. Evaluators should be gender and culture sensitive.
9. Facts should be crosschecked to eliminate personal biases. Evaluation information should withstand validity and credibility tests. Evaluator should not manipulate data to meet the desired outcome.
10. Multiple applications of data collection strategies is encourages (data triangulation) in order to achieve a high degree of validity.
11. Increases in accuracy or validity should be weighed against practicality and value gained in decisions to spend additional time or money on the evaluation.
12. Evaluators should record both the strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

Core Competency

1. Evaluators tasked for the evaluation should have the core competencies and/or the right mix of skills to carry out the assignment with maximum credibility and acceptance of findings. Where such skills are lacking, efforts should be made to make use of external consultants.
2. To stay at the cutting edge of their skills, evaluators should participate in continuous career development and training. They should undertake refresher courses or trainings organized at various levels inside or outside agencies.

Ethics

1. Evaluators must exhibit a high degree of integrity
2. When an evaluator has an embedded interest in a programme or in an outcome of an evaluation, such interest should be declared up front. And if possible, the evaluator should not participate in the exercise.
3. Evaluator should consider the public interest in the conduct of an evaluation, even if this does not appear to coincide with the clients' interest.

Reporting

1. Except in exceptional conditions, evaluation findings should be made available to all stakeholders for comments prior to releasing the final report.
2. The findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from an evaluation exercise should be presented to stakeholders in a clear and objective manner.
3. Findings should be communicated in a way that respects stakeholders' dignity, even when negative.

Appendix II: Broad Evaluation Questions

Focus of Evaluation	Evaluation question
Process	➢ How well was the project designed and implemented (i.e. its quality)
Outcome	➢ To what extent did the project meet the overall needs of the community? ➢ Was there any significant change in the community & in the organization and to what extent was it attributable to the project objectives? ➢ How valuable are the outcomes to the Community, organization, other stakeholders, and participants?
Learnings	➢ What worked and what did not? ➢ What were unintended consequences? ➢ What were emergent properties?
Investment	➢ Was the project cost effective? ➢ Was there another alternative that may have represented a better investment?
What next	➢ Can the project be scaled up? ➢ Can the project be replicated elsewhere? ➢ Is the change self-sustaining or does it require continued intervention?
Theory of change	➢ Does the project have a theory of change? ➢ Is the theory of change reflected in the program logic??

Another method to be followed is,

Relevance	➢ Are we doing the right things? ➢ To what extent is the intervention in line with the needs and priorities of the community?

Effectiveness	➢ Are we achieving the project objectives? ➢ To what extent was did the facilitation encourage the community members to take part in the developmental activities undertaken by them?
Efficiency	➢ Are the project objectives being achieved cost-efficiently? Usage of available local resources can be mentioned and how well the efficiency of the PLD staffs are utilized for the same. ➢ Have the more expensive engagement approaches led to better participation of the entire community than the less expensive engagement approaches?
Outcomes and impacts	➢ What has actually changed for the target groups as a result of the project? ➢ To what extent has the project led to more sustainable behaviors in the target group? ➢ Were there any other unintended positive or negative outcomes from the project?
Sustainability	➢ Are the achievements sustainable in the longer run? ➢ To what extent has the project led to the long-term behavior change?

Appendix: III – Focus group questions

➢ How did you first find out about the current Development initiative/project ?
➢ When did you first begin to attend meetings / get involved?
   o Did the meetings help define what current Development initiative/project is
   o Did you feel welcome at the meetings? If not why not
   o Were you able to participate at the meetings? If not why not
➢ How was the 'start-up' processes facilitated by the Organization / community facilitators?
   o What was the community facilitator's role at meetings?
   o To what extent was the community involved in making decisions about introducing current Development initiative/project to the community?
   o Did you have confidence in the organization's processes?
➢ What was good / effective about the facilitation and support provided by the Organization?
   o What was helpful about the work of the Organization?
   o What resources, processes or skills did they use to support current Development initiative/project ?
➢ What was ineffective about the facilitation and support provided by the Organization?
   o What was unhelpful or hindered community processes?
   o What resources or processes were not used by the Organization effectively?
   o Were there any missed opportunities?
➢ What could the Organization have done better to support the initial start-up of current Development initiative/project ?

- o What other resources, processes or skills could have been used to support current Development initiative/project
- What do you see the Organization's role being in supporting the current Development initiative/project in your community?

This Policy is recommended for approval by:

Bishop Gerald Almeida,   **Fr. Kiran Olakkengil**
Chairman – MPSSS   **Director – MPSSS**

This Policy is approved by:

<u>Members – Governing Body, MPSSS</u>