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MONITORING AND EVALUATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

1. Ihorere Munyarwanda Organization(IMRO) is a national Non-Governmental Organization that was founded in 1999 and legally operating in Rwanda. We were granted legal personality No 03/11 and have fulfilled all requirements for compliance with the new Law number 04/2012 of 17th February 2012 governing the Organization and Functioning of National Non-Governmental Organizations/RGB-Rwandan Law.
2. IMRO is implementing interventions in the context of Human Rights, Poverty Alleviation, Gender Equality, SRHR, Nutrition, GBV, HIV, Education, Environment , Peace Building ,Health Promotion, accountability, Advocacy and Networking in order to improve lives of beneficiaries at individual, family and, community levels for sustainable social economic development with Human Right based approach.
3. As a training and research organization, the Institute naturally places much emphasis on delivering learning-related products and services, on transferring knowledge, imparting skills and raising awareness with the aim to bring about changes in behavior, to enhance on-the job performance and to develop other capacities of its beneficiaries, with a view to achieving or contributing to the achievement of higher order, longer-term objectives. Parallel to learning, the Institute also engages in programming aimed at achieving broader social and economic development outcomes, such as developing institutional capacities of learning centers, strengthening public participation in decision-making and improving relief coordination in the wake of humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.
4. The projects which seek to produce these results are highly diverse and range from the organization of short-term, small scale, stand-alone learning events to long-term, large-scale technical capacity development projects, many of which are implemented with partners and involve activities linked to multiple outputs and outcomes. The means of delivery are equally diverse and include face-to-face, technology-enhanced and blended forms of training, networking and knowledge sharing and analysis.
5. In the past, the Institute's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices have focused for the most part on the activity level of programming and have tended to reflect process- (as opposed to outcome-) based approaches. This has been largely due to the lack of an overarching result based M&E policy framework as well as limited institutional capacities, resources, guidance and tools on which to draw.

Definitions

6. The Institute defines monitoring as the routine process of collecting and recording data and information in order to track progress towards expected results. Evaluation is defined as “an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy topic, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results, chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as

relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.”¹ The intention of evaluation is to provide credible and useful information, in view of determining the worth or significance of the undertaking, incorporating lessons learned into decision-making and enhancing the overall quality of the Institute’s programming and operations.

7. Functions similar to evaluation include appraisal (an assessment of the potential value of an undertaking during the conception phase), audit (an assessment of management controls and compliance with administrative rules, regulations and policies), investigation (an examination or enquiry into irregularities or wrong doing) and review (a rapid assessment of the performance of a topic or undertaking in absence of evaluation criteria e.g. usually operational issues). The definitions of other terms used in this policy framework are found in Annex 1.

Complementary and Interdependent Roles

8. While monitoring and evaluation are distinct functions, IMRO recognizes their complementary and interdependent roles. Findings from prospective evaluation (or similar processes such as appraisal or baseline studies), for example, are useful in defining indicators for monitoring purposes. Moreover, results from monitoring progress towards results can help identify important evaluation questions. It is primarily for these reasons that M&E are integrated into the present policy framework.

Monitoring

9. The Institute has introduced various tools to monitor progress towards results from the corporate to the individual levels. These tools include medium-term strategic frameworks, results-based programme budgets, work planning and project logical frameworks.
 - a. **Medium-term strategic frameworks:** At the corporate level, medium-term plans shall be prepared every four years providing direction in areas of strategic priority.
 - b. **Results-based budgets:** Results-based programme budgets are prepared on a biennial basis outlining objectives and expected results. Institute divisions are required to monitor and report progress on achieving pre-defined performance indicators.
 - c. **Annual work plans:** Institute divisions are required to prepare and monitor annual work plans based on the approved budget.
 - d. **Individual work plans:** All regular staff members and remunerated training and research fellows are required to prepare and monitor individual work plans.

Logical Framework Requirement

10. The Institute recognizes the usefulness of logical frameworks or other results formulations/presentations as a tool to manage for results. Project documents or proposals should include logical frameworks or other appropriate formulations/presentations of results and specify major activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. ² Performance indicators and means of verification should be specified for output and outcome level results; for projects or other undertakings in which an impact evaluation is to be performed, indicators of achievement and means of verification should also be specified for intended impacts.

11. Performance indicators should include baseline and target measures for expected results. In the event baseline information may not be available in the design phase or at the submission time of a project document or proposal, managers should plan to obtain baseline or other relevant information within a reasonable period from project start-up (e.g. inception workshop) to ensure evaluability of results. When projects or undertakings are to be implemented jointly, logical frameworks should be discussed and agreed with respective partners.

Monitoring Criteria

12. For effective results-based monitoring and to ensure evaluability, indicators should be formulated using **SMART criteria** (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound):

a. Specific: The indicator is sufficiently clear as to what is being measured and specific enough to measure progress towards a result.

b. Measurable: The indicator is a reliable measure and is objectively verifiable. Qualitative measures should ideally be translated into some numeric form.

c. Attainable: The indicator can be realistically met.

d. Relevant: The indicator captures what is being measured (i.e. it is relevant to the activity/result).

e. Time-bound: The indicator is expected to be achieved within a defined period.

Risk Management

13. Risk management plans are to be developed and monitored for all projects budgeted. This requirement is discretionary (although recommended) for all projects budgeted.

Evaluation

Purposes

14. Evaluation serves the following purposes:

- a. **Organizational learning and quality improvement:** Perhaps more than other purposes, IMRO views evaluation as an opportunity to learn how to do things better, more effectively, with greater relevance, with more efficient utilization of resources and with greater and more sustaining impact. The results of evaluations need to contribute to knowledge management and serve as the basis for enhancing the quality of its products and services.
- b. **Accountability:** As an organization receiving funds in the form of voluntary contributions from public and private donors, in addition to funds from fee-based training services, the Institute is answerable to its sources of funding for delivering results.

- c. **Improved decision-making:** Results from evaluations provide the basis for informed, responsible decisions. Such decisions may include, for example, scaling up, replicating or phasing out a programme, project or undertaking; adjusting learning objectives; redesigning content, changing methodologies, assessment activities or modes of delivery; etc.

Guiding Norms and Standards

15. The international capacity development and evaluation communities have developed guiding principles and good-practice norms and standards to ensure that evaluations meet quality requirements. As a member of RNGOF, although it recognizes that the extent to which its evaluation function is aligned with the norms and standards depends on various factors, including the size and scale of projects, funding and other considerations.³

Criteria

16. The Organization adopts the all necessary details provided by any platform or coalition Assistance Committee:

a. Relevance: The degree to which an undertaking responds to the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries, a contextual situation to be addressed and donor priorities.

b. Effectiveness: The extent to which an undertaking has achieved its objectives.

c. Efficiency: The cost effectiveness of transferring inputs into outputs taking into consideration alternative approaches.

d. Impact: The cumulative and/or long-term effects of an undertaking or series of undertakings which may produce positive or negative, intended or unintended changes.

e. Sustainability: The likelihood that benefits derived from an undertaking will continue over time after its completion.

17. The Institute acknowledges that not all criteria may apply to all evaluations and that decisions on which criteria shall apply to a given undertaking should be based on the type of evaluation, the main evaluation questions and considerations related to methodology and feasibility.

Categories of Evaluation

18. The Institute undertakes two broad categories of evaluations: corporate and decentralized evaluations. Corporate evaluations are independent assessments conducted and/or managed by the Institute's Planning, Performance and Results Section (PPRS). They may be undertaken at the Section's own discretion within its approved budget, or at the request of the Executive Director or the Institute's divisions. ⁴ Corporate evaluations may also include independent midterm reviews of projects and independent peer reviews of decentralized evaluations for quality assurance purposes.

- 19.** Decentralized evaluations are self-assessments conducted by the Institute's divisional entities. While not considered to be in-depth evaluations, they should contain some degree of evaluative thinking. For the most part, decentralized evaluations are undertaken at the project level, but they may conceivably include any subject under an entity's purview. While self-evaluation has similarities with the monitoring function and is often integrated into narrative reporting, the assessment exercise should seek to ask and respond to key evaluation questions and include critical analysis and reflection based on the data collected.
- 20.** In addition to corporate and decentralized evaluations, external evaluations may also be undertaken by donors or other partners. External evaluations are managed entirely by entities outside the Institute, with the Planning, Performance and Results Section acting as the main institutional focal point.
- 21.** Given the characteristics of the Institute and the sources of funding for much of its programming, most evaluations will likely take the form of decentralized, self-assessments. The Institute recognizes that decentralized self-assessments and corporate independent evaluations are complementary, and that the evaluation of some undertakings may include both approaches.
- 22.** Corporate and decentralized evaluations may be undertaken individually (i.e. in the absence of any partners), jointly (with at least one other partner e.g. donors and/or implementing partners) and/or through participatory (i.e. involving stakeholders and/or beneficiaries) approaches.

Timing of Evaluations

- 23.** Evaluation may be performed at different times and address different elements of the results chain, from assessing needs or determining baseline conditions at project conception to evaluating the impacts of a project's contribution to development goals. Between these two points evaluations may include formative or other types of process-related assessments, evaluations of outputs, and/or summative evaluations focusing on different levels of outcomes.
- 24.** Given the Institute's high number of learning-related services, it is useful to distinguish between intermediate outcomes (e.g. enhanced knowledge and skills of beneficiaries) and institutional outcomes (e.g. strengthened organizational capacities as the result of applied knowledge/skills, increased policy coherence or efficiency, etc.).

Evaluation Requirement

25. The following evaluations are required:

Projects in which learning outcomes are sought

- a. Evaluation to obtain beneficiary reaction for all project training events of two days or more in duration.⁵
- b. Evaluation of learning outcomes (e.g. strengthened knowledge or skills) for all project training events of two days or more in duration.⁶
- c. Evaluation of institutional capacity outcomes (e.g. increased individual performance and/or organizational capacities resulting from the application of knowledge, skills, awareness) for all projects budgeted.

Projects in which broader economic and social development results are sought

- 26.** The requirements in paragraph 27 will be operationalized through a set of templates, guidance documents, checklists and other tools prepared or made available by the Planning, Performance and Results Section.
- 27.** The Institute acknowledges that not all undertakings necessarily merit evaluation and some may not be feasible for political or other reasons. Exceptions to evaluation requirements under paragraph 26 include high-level political or special events/projects as defined in Annex 1, as well as projects to which donors have expressed opposition to evaluation.
- 28.** The requirements and exceptions above shall not prejudice any evaluation requirements or preferences that a donor of a project or undertaking may have.

Discretionary Evaluations

- 29.** Apart from the requirements enumerated in paragraph 27, other evaluations may be desirable to provide information on a project or undertaking's implementation (e.g. formative evaluation, mid-term review, etc.) or contribution to higher-level achievements (e.g. impact evaluation, return on investment evaluation). Such evaluations are discretionary, unless specifically required by a donor. Given cost and methodological considerations, any decision to perform impact evaluation should be based on an evaluability assessment prior to project implementation.

Evaluation Planning, Costing and Management

Evaluation Planning

- 30.** All projects, activities and other undertakings should be conceived in a results-based manner to ensure evaluability, as outlined in paragraphs 11-13.
- 31.** All donor-funded projects or other undertakings subject to evaluation should include a clause in the project document/proposal specifying evaluation requirements and relevant modalities. In the absence of such a document, the relevant letter or memorandum of agreement should specify monitoring and evaluation modalities.
- 32.** For corporate evaluations, the Planning, Performance and Results Section shall formulate an annual evaluation work plan within the established budget appropriations
- 33.** For mandated independent project evaluations, terms of reference will be prepared using international standards and good practice, and include the following elements: the context and purpose of the evaluation, scope, main evaluation questions, methodology (data collection tools and analysis), work plan, learning products of the evaluation, intended use of results and qualifications.

Evaluation Costing

- 34.** The costs to carry out evaluation vary depending on the purpose/type/scope of the evaluation, evaluation questions to be addressed, data collection methods and other factors. Adequate resources should be identified and made available for both decentralized and corporate evaluations and be reflected in project budgets.
- 35.** Mandatory independent project evaluations (paragraph 27e) should be costed at 2.5 per cent of the project's budget, unless otherwise determined by the Planning, Performance and Results Section in consultation with the relevant divisional entity, and be identified on a separate budget line. These costs are distinct from project monitoring and narrative reporting costs.

Evaluation Management

- 36.** In conducting evaluations, the Institute acknowledges that different evaluation designs as well as quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods for data collection and analysis exist. The most appropriate design(s), method(s) and approach should be selected, taking into consideration the evaluation question(s), scope, criteria, human and financial resource requirements and availability, as well as guiding principles and good practice standards.
- 37.** All independent evaluations should include a peer review for quality assurance purposes prior to finalization.

38. All independent evaluations should include a response from management in relation to the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations and lessons-learned.
39. In managing mandatory independent project evaluations, the Planning, Performance and Results Section may access the expenditure account within the ledger account of the relevant project and raise obligations for expenditure.
40. In due consultation with the Executive Director and Management, the Planning, Performance and Results Section may issue and disclose final evaluation reports without prior clearance from other IMRO Management or functions.

Reporting

41. Results from the Institute's monitoring and evaluation exercises are to be recorded in the following formats: Programme Performance Reports, Results Summaries, Completion Reports, Independent Evaluation Reports, Corporate Evaluation Reports and Peer Reviews of Decentralized Evaluations. Other types of reporting formats, including inception reports, midterm reviews, annual progress reports, final narrative or implementation reports, etc. may also be used if required or preferred by donors.
 - a. Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) record programme performance based on expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures, as recorded in results-based budgets. PPRs should be prepared by all Institute entities, including both operational and programming divisions and submitted to the Planning, Performance and Results Section by the end of the first quarter of the subsequent biennium.
 - b. Results Summaries provide a narrative summary of the project, record results in relation to performance targets and integrate some degree of evaluative thinking. Results summaries are typically used for small scale projects budgeted.
 - c. Completion Reports provide a narrative summary of the project, record findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned (if relevant) and integrate some degree of evaluative thinking based on self-assessments. Completion Reports should be prepared by all divisional entities if an evaluation is required.
 - d. Independent Evaluation Reports are issued by the Planning, Performance and Results Section and record findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from independent evaluations.
 - e. Corporate Evaluation Reports (CERs) are issued by the Planning, Performance and Results Section at the end of each biennium based on a review and analysis of completed decentralized and corporate evaluations. The CER will highlight outcome-level results and summarize recommendations and lessons-learned, as well as provide an assessment of how evaluation processes have generated learning, quality improvement and enhanced decision-making.

f. Peer Reviews of Decentralized Evaluations are independent reviews conducted by the Planning, Performance and Results Section of decentralized self-evaluations, primarily for quality assurance purposes.

Dissemination and Disclosure

42. Reports from corporate and external evaluations will be accessible in a public depository with a view to ensure transparency and facilitate knowledge management and application of lessons learned. Selected narrative reports from divisional entities which include a significant evaluation component and meeting quality standards will be included in the public repository.

Evaluation Capacity Development

43. Evaluation is an important function in both national and international public service. The policy framework recognizes the importance of strengthening evaluation capacities within IMRO for an enhanced decentralized evaluation function, and the Planning, Performance and Results Section and the Human Resources Section should collaborate towards this objective through training and other appropriate means.

44. As recognized by the Rwandan Government and General Assembly, building national evaluation capacities at the country level is important for development activities, and the Planning, Performance and Results Section will contribute to such efforts upon request and in accordance with the principle of national ownership.

Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning

45. The creation, storage, management, dissemination and uptake of knowledge is essential, including knowledge produced from evaluative undertakings. To promote evaluation use, organizational learning and quality improvement of the Institute's products and services, a learning forum will be organized periodically to share lessons learned on evaluation processes and outcomes.

Role and Responsibilities

46. The Institute has a shared system of roles and responsibilities in performing monitoring and evaluation functions.

Executive Director

47. The Executive Director provides the overall direction, leadership and management of the Institute. The roles and responsibilities of the Executive Director are the following:

- a. Submits the Institute's results-based programme budget to the Board of Trustees for consideration and adoption;
- b. Submits the Institute's Strategic Frameworks, Programme Performance Reports, Corporate Evaluation Reports, and other relevant reports to the Board of Trustees for consideration; and
- c. Requests the Planning, Performance and Results Section to undertake corporate evaluations.

Planning, Performance and Results Section

48. Reporting directly to the Executive Director, the Planning, Performance and Results Section acts as the custodian of the monitoring and evaluation functions. The section's roles and responsibilities are the following:

- a. Oversees the application of the policy framework, identifies bottlenecks and constraints and makes recommendations for updating the requirements or other elements of the framework, in line with international good practice, lessons learned as well as the evolving programming and operational needs and characteristics of the Institute;
- b. Facilitates regular interaction in-house with managers and other staff, collects feedback and facilitates learning on the framework;
- c. Conducts research and engages in critical and analytical reflection as well as issues recommendations to management for compliance with the framework;
- d. Prepares and circulates guidelines, checklists, templates and other tools to facilitate the application of the framework;
- e. Develops and promotes standards for evaluation and quality assurance;
- f. In due consultation with the Executive Director and Management, formulates annual corporate evaluation plans within the established budgetary appropriations;
- g. In due consultation with the Executive Director and Management, issues and discloses final evaluation reports without prior clearance from other IMRO Management or functions;
- h. Acts as focal point for any external evaluation being undertaken by a donor or other partner;
- i. Undertakes periodic peer reviews of decentralized evaluations for quality assurance purposes;
- j. Prepares a biennial Programme Performance Report based on submissions from programme management;
- k. Prepares a biennial Corporate Evaluation Report based on a review of completed corporate and decentralized evaluations;

- l. Maintains a public repository of evaluation reports with a view to ensuring transparency and facilitating the integration of lessons learned and best practices into the broader concept of knowledge management;
- m. Oversees the development and maintenance of an intranet-based knowledge management tool to store, manage and disseminate lessons-learned from evaluations and performance reporting exercises;
- n. Promotes knowledge management, organizational learning and lessons learned by keeping abreast of innovative practices in the field of evaluation and monitoring, identifying relevant techniques, tools and methods, and providing divisional units with guidance on the use of respective tools and methods;
- o. Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned to enhance the quality of the Institute's products and services; and
- p. Collaborates and coordinates with IMRO divisional entities and other United Nations agencies and organizations on issues related to monitoring and evaluation, and contributes to efforts to strengthen national evaluation capacities.

Programme Management

- 49.** Programme management is a generic term comprising the manager-level posts of all entities, including programmes, sections, offices and units. Programme management's roles and responsibilities are the following:
- a. Undertakes monitoring and evaluation functions in accordance with the present policy framework, including monitoring progress towards results, as well as planning and conducting decentralized, self-evaluations/assessments;
 - b. Informs donors and implementing partners of the Institute's evaluation requirements when preparing and negotiating project agreements and modalities for cooperation, and ensures that monitoring and evaluation modalities are specified in project documents or related agreements;
 - c. Budgets and allocates resources for evaluations in accordance with applicable evaluation requirements;
 - d. Informs the Planning, Performance and Results Section of the scheduling of evaluations on a rolling basis;
 - e. Submits copies of narrative results and/or reports of decentralized, self-evaluations to the Planning, Performance and Results Section upon completion;
 - f. Follows-up on findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons-learned of independent evaluations in the form of a management response;
 - g. Implements accepted evaluation recommendations and informs the Planning, Performance and Results Section when implemented; and,

h. Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned with a view to further strengthening the quality of the Institute's products and services.

Coverage and Scope

50. The framework applies to the entirety of the Institute's operations and programming at headquarters and out-posted offices. Should the monitoring, evaluation or reporting requirements of donors deviate from the present policy framework, programme management should inform the Planning, Performance and Results Section accordingly.

Review

51. The application of the policy framework as revised in this present version will be reviewed in 2019 and amended to account for adjustments and other elements as required, based on the evolving nature of monitoring and evaluation functions and taking into consideration international good practices.

Annex 1- Glossary of Terms

Accomplishment

The achievement of specific results producing changes in behavior or developmental conditions. See outcome.

Activity

Any action undertaken or work performed with the objective of transforming inputs into measurable outputs.

Baseline

Data describing a situation to be addressed by an undertaking which serve as the starting point for measuring performance.

Beneficiaries

Individuals, entities or groups which may be targeted or not and which may benefit directly or indirectly from a programme, project or other undertaking.

Best practices

Planning, organizational and/or managerial methods, processes, techniques or other practices which have produced consistent superior results to those achieved by other means.

Corporate evaluation

Independent evaluations undertaken and/or managed by the Planning, Performance and Results Section.

Decentralized evaluation

Self-assessment evaluations conducted by programmes or other divisional entities of the Institute.

Divisional entities

A collective term that refers to the Institute's programmes, offices, sections, units and other administrative entities.

Effectiveness

The extent to which a programme, project or other undertaking achieves its planned results (outputs outcomes and/or goals).

Efficiency

The cost effectiveness of transforming actions into outputs, taking into consideration alternative paths.

Evaluability

The extent to which an activity, project, programme or other undertaking can be subject to evaluation in a credible and reliable manner.

Evaluation

“An assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy topic, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.”

Event

A major activity organized in the form of a briefing, conference, course, fellowship programme, lecture, meeting, seminar, workshop, side-event, webinar, etc. and announced on the Institute's online events management system.

Ex ante evaluation

An evaluation performed prior to the implementation of an undertaking. See baseline.

Ex post evaluation

An evaluation performed after the implementation of an undertaking.

Formative Evaluation

A type of evaluation conducted during the implementation of a project or other undertaking with the aim to provide information that will guide project improvement. This type of evaluation typically focuses on determining whether a programme is being implemented according to plan.

Impact

The totality and/or long-term effects of an undertaking. Effects may be positive or negative, intended or unintended.

Indicator

A quantitative or qualitative measure of programme performance that is used to demonstrate change and which details the extent to which results are being or have been achieved.

Institutional outcome

Effects produced as the result of intermediate outcomes. E.g. increased organizational effectiveness as the result of the application of knowledge or skills by beneficiaries or as the results of other intermediate outcomes.

Intermediate outcome

Subsequent effects of products and/or services (outputs) delivered. E.g. increased level of knowledge or skills, or knowledge and skills retained/applied on the job after training.

Knowledge management

The systematic processes, or range of practices, used by organizations to identify, capture, store, create, update, represent and distribute knowledge for use, awareness and learning across the organization.

Lessons learned

A generalization derived from an evaluation and applicable to a generic rather than a specific situation.

Logical framework

A results-based project framework design based on a causal relationship linking inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact, with objectively verifiably indicators to measure progress towards the achievement of results.

Monitoring

The routine process of collecting and recording information in order to track progress towards expected results.

Output

Final products or services delivered.

Outcome

Changes in behavior or development conditions.

Project

A set of planned and interrelated activities designed to achieve specific objectives within a given budget, period of time and operating framework.

Programme

A set of sub-programs, projects and/or activities producing outputs and accomplishments with a defined budget and under a set of specific objectives linked to the Institute's mandate and organizational goals.

Special event

An event organized at the corporate level with the participation of high-ranking personalities.

Summative Evaluation

A type of evaluation intended to provide information about the merit, worth and impact of a programme or project. Summative evaluation is usually conducted at the end of a programme or project to determine if anticipated results were achieved.

Undertaking

A general term for any programme, project, activity, policy, strategy, etc. which may be subject to evaluation.

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IMRO National Coordinator



Flavienne NDAYISHIMYE

Legal Representative