

## Briefing Note No. 1 : Monitoring and Evaluation

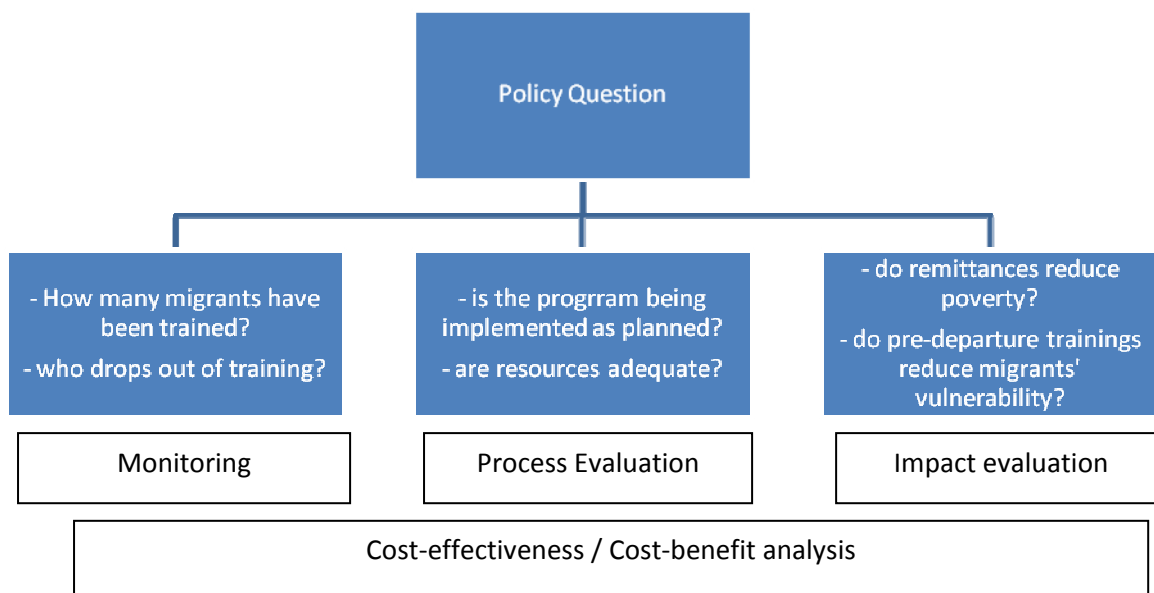
### Why Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)?

Policymaking entails continuous decision making. Examples include the allocation of budgets among different programs, the modification, elimination or scaling-up of existing programs, and the design and implementation of new ones. Any decision will be based on some form of assessment, but those assessments can be based upon anything from prior experience and personal judgement through to on systematic and empirical evidence. M&E is the systematic collection and analysis of information to provide decision makers with the relevant evidence for policy making.

The value of M&E is becoming increasingly evident. Limited resources force governments to promote results-based management and shift attention from program inputs to outcomes. The demand for accountability and transparency is rising everywhere, with civil society and program beneficiaries seeking evidence on program effectiveness. Finally, the development community places increasing importance on the knowledge of development effectiveness. In sum, M&E of development activities provide government officials, development managers, and civil society with better means for learning from past experiences, improving service delivery, planning and allocating resources, and demonstrating results as part of accountability to key stakeholders.

### Linking Policy Questions to M&E

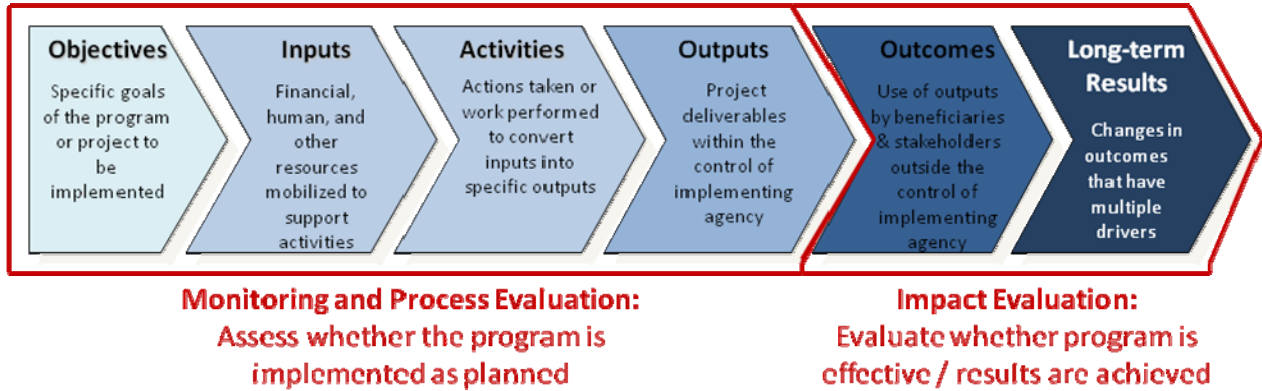
The decision about which kind of M&E tool to use depends on the policy question asked. Do we need to know how many participants have benefited from the program (*descriptive* question)? Do we care whether the program is being implemented as planned (*normative* question)? Do we seek to understand whether the program has changed the lives of program beneficiaries (*cause-and-effect* question)? The following graph links examples of policy questions with the appropriate M&E method, which are known as monitoring, evaluation, and impact evaluation respectively. A cost-benefit analysis should be integral part of any decision making process.



Policy makers typically consider additional issues that will determine the specifics of the M&E method to be used. Examples include: How quickly is the information needed? What resources are available? Has the project implementation already started?

## From Policy Objectives to Development Outcomes

M&E illuminates whether and how a policy or program is achieving its desired results. It does so by providing insight into each component of a policy or program.



**Monitoring and process evaluation:** Assessment of the use of resources and the implementation process as the project happens. It can be based both on qualitative and quantitative indicators of outputs. The key stakeholders involved in the project (such as project beneficiaries, officials running the program, etc.) can participate directly in the monitoring phase, for instance through interviews and questionnaires. While monitoring happens continuously throughout the project or program implementation, evaluation is more periodic and reflective.

**Impact evaluation:** A periodic assessment of causal effect of a project, program or policy. All impact evaluations ask the question “what would have happened if the program had not existed?” (a so called *counterfactual*). The idea is to estimate what the state of those affected by the program (known as *the treatment group*) would have been in its absence, by comparing their observed state with the situation of those who were not impacted by the program (*the control or comparison group*). This should allow the assessor to determine intermediate or final outcomes attributable to the intervention.

### References:

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Rubio, Gloria M. 2011. The Design and Implementation of a Menu of Evaluations. *PREM Notes Special Series on the Nuts & Bolts of M&E Systems*, No6, January. World Bank, Washington, DC. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/335642-1276521901256/premnoteME6.pdf>