

A look inside development: What the monitoring and evaluation framework designs of foreign-funded urban development projects in Metro Manila, Philippines reveal?

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Abstract:

The study analyzed a number of selected urban development programs in Metro Manila that are supported by overseas development assistance (ODA) from donor countries and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)². It looked at the features of these development programs through the contents of each results framework, such as the targeted outputs, outcomes and impacts, physical development components, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism involved, and how sustainability issues are addressed. The purpose was to identify patterns that can describe the M&E structure based on the program components mentioned.

Review and analysis of the selected foreign-funded programs based on official publications and documents, evaluation reports, online publications, and many other public information materials from the donor countries, multilateral agencies and the Philippines were carried out. It conducted resource persons' interviews to validate information. Initial findings show patterns and features that are not entirely unique vis-à-vis the nature of the programs involved, whether grant or loan-led. Insights on the program proponents' approach or competence relative to M&E are deduced from the analysis made.

Keywords: donor or loan-led urban development projects, multilateral agencies, built-in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) structure, official development assistance (ODA), results-based assessment

1. Introduction

Development intervention is an instrument used by the international community to effect changes in the world's condition. Donor and recipient countries work together to reduce poverty, stave off hunger, and improve socio-economic well being by implementing development programs in many places. These programs are mostly socio-economic interventions and infrastructure development in nature, and commonly involve institutional capacity building initiatives. Funding of these projects comes through a package of either multilateral or bilateral soft loans, outright donations or aids termed as official development assistance (ODA).

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The graphics in **Figure 1** illustrates how ODAs can be from small to large individual projects, such as for instance, urban infrastructure rehabilitation; social and policy reforms; agricultural extension or capacity building; among many others, and these make up the elements of a development project. Development projects, on the other hand, are components of a bigger development intervention called program³. In a larger scale, which is national or regional in dimension, a collection of programs are designed to implement a policy, without which, no concrete manifestation of action toward achieving the objectives of the policy can be seen. A policy does not need to remain just an advocacy. It needs implementing programs to carry out its goals. Otherwise, no real development could be realized despite large amount of resources poured in by ODAs.

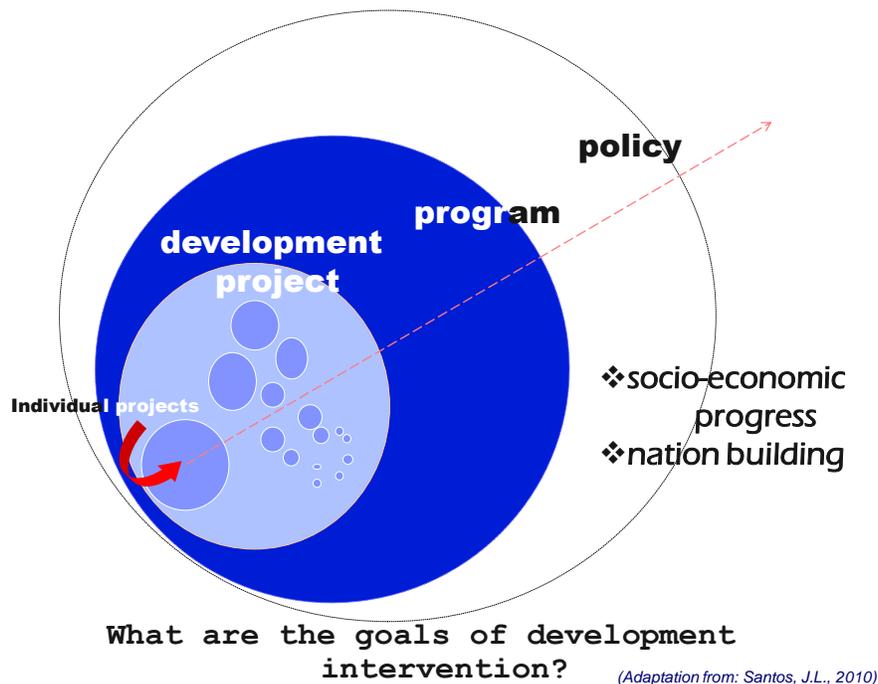


Fig. 1. Goals of development intervention

The Philippines is a recipient of ODAs from some donor and loan agencies, aimed at funding various socio-urban development programs in the country. This study analyzed a number of these ODA-funded projects that are classified as socio-urban development interventions in Metro Manila. It studied around six major development initiatives that were funded by grants or loans from ODAs and analysis of its evaluation components was made.

2. Determining performance of urban development programs

3. This paper uses the words project, program and policy interchangeably when referring to an intervention. While, technically, the terms project, programs and policies are three different concepts referring to varying scale of development intervention as illustrated in Figure 1, usage in general context does not dogmatically require a strict differentiation so as to achieve easy understanding and application.

2.1 The need for determining success and performance: results-based approach

In implementing development interventions, proponent countries put together a system of counter checks and balances to see that results of implementation are measured and whether programs are performing according to intended objectives set at the planning stage. The purpose is to give feedback to proponents and stakeholders about the programs' performance (Rist R. and Stame N. 2006, Zorzi et. al., 2002, 2003). This ensures that the use of resources is worthwhile and future interventions are planned with a certain measure of success based on what was learned from previous programs.

The use of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a requisite for most of these development initiatives. An M&E framework is part of the design and plan of interventions (Kusek, J. and Rist R. 2001), and recently a requirement in all policies, programs and projects of the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other international donor and lending institutions.

The results-based approach to assessing performance and success of interventions is a relatively new development in M&E. The illustration in **Figure 2** shows how results-based M&E differs from the conventional way of assessing programs. In traditional practice, the range of performance is measured from inputs-to-activities-to-outputs. This system is limited because the main concern of management is the production of deliverables (outputs) from the resources (inputs) that are acted upon by the processes (activities). The results that the interventions make, however, are not typically assessed, such that the measure of effectiveness and performance is not complete. The practice is deficient in determining whether the planned objectives are met and achieved.

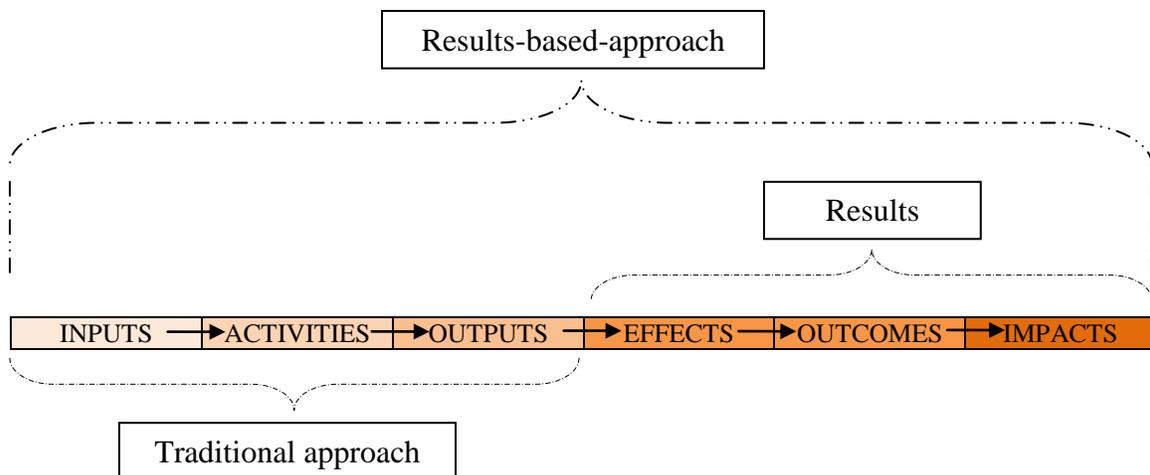


Fig. 2. Results-based approach to determining performance of development intervention programs compared to the traditional approach

The results-based approach takes care of assessing and determining performance and success of programs. It provides the framework for measuring the achievement of

objectives set forth during the design and planning stage. Results are analyzed and measured and compared with the set goals. This includes looking at the short term (effects), intermediate (outcomes), and long term (impacts) results of the intervention in the identified stakeholders, as well as the ‘environment’ where interventions are made.

For instance, in the design and planning of a disaster risk reduction (DRR) program, having a sustained level of safety from disasters for urban residents can be established as main goal (**Figure 3**). This can be the result (impact) that the intervention wants to attain. Results-based management principles require that assessment and measurement of indicators are made to show that a sustained level of safety is actually achieved. It does not just keep track of how many communities are trained in DRR; how many DRR seminars were conducted; or how many disaster shelters are constructed, but the system analyzes and evaluates, as well, the results of the program through measurable indicators involving stakeholders and the enabling environment brought about by it.

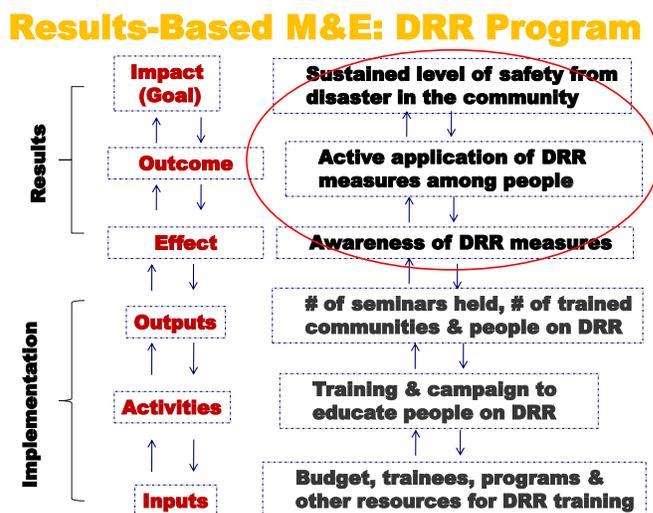


Fig. 3. Sample Results-framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Program

2.2 Looking inside ODA-funded intervention programs in Metro Manila: What frameworks for determining success and performance reveal?

The selected foreign-funded programs have varying scope and amount of ODA money involved. Many of these programs are classified as socio-urban development interventions aimed at improving the well-being of the Metro Manila community. Analysis was focused on the M&E component of the programs. It looked at the contents which include the set goal (impact), outputs, outcomes, physical development component, and sustainability requirement. The six major development projects are shown in **Table 1**.

PROGRAM TITLE/ CODE	FUND TYPE/ SOURCE/ AMOUNT/ DATE	SPONSOR
Metro Manila (MM) Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program L-1	LOAN/ Japan Special Fund/ US\$ 296M Dec 1998 - Dec 2008	ADB
Philippine Energy Efficiency Project/ LG-1	LOAN & GRANT Combination/ ADB LIBOR & Asia Clear Energy Fund/ US\$48.9M Aug 2008 - Apr 2011	ADB
GEF-Manila Third Sewerage Project/ LCI-1	LOAN & COUNTERPART INVESTMENT Combination/ Global Environment Facility Trust Fund/ US\$8.35M Aug 2006 - Nov 2012	WB
Pasig River (PR) Environmental Management and Rehabilitation/ L-2	LOAN / US\$175M Jul 2000 - Jul 2008	ADB
Metro Manila Development Authority EDSA Bus Reduction Project/ L-3	LOAN/ IBRD & Bank- Managed Carbon Fund/ US\$10M/ Jan 2010 - Nov 2012	WB
Preparing the Philippine Basic Urban Services/ LCI-2	LOAN & COUNTERPART INVESTMENT Combination/ US\$290M Aug 2009 - Apr 2019	ADB

Table 1: Development intervention programs in Metro Manila

In the six selected ODA programs received by Metro Manila, some are in the form of soft loan; others are loan & grant combination; and rest as loan & counterpart investment scheme. The programs, as well, come in different amounts of assistance provided by either ADB or WB. The period of implementation ranges from two years to ten years. A closer look at the nature of these programs reveals that most are tightly connected with intervention toward improving the urban environment. Detailed investigation shows that socio-economic components are incorporated in the programs, with physical infrastructure development and institutional capacity building aspects complementing each one.

With this range of variation among the selected programs, an interesting point to look into is how the M&E structure of each one compares with the others in terms of contents and the targeted results. This necessitates looking into its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism, and how physical infrastructure development components and sustainability issues are addressed. The purpose is to identify patterns that can describe the connection among the factors cited.

The study largely depended on the analysis of the results frame of each program. Results frame (**Table 2**) is a description of the project operation taking place from inputs-to-activities-to-outputs, and then to results (outcomes, impacts). This system description highlights the main goal of the proponents in carrying out the development intervention initiative. It indicates, as well, the short term (effect), intermediate (outcome) and long term (impact) that the intervention is targeted to achieve, such that a lead toward measuring the effectiveness and performance of the intervention is suggested. The framework serves as a simple guide in determining whether the planned objectives are being met and achieved.

PROGRAM CODE	RESULTS FRAMEWORK		
	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT (GOAL)
L-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + air pollution from mobile & stationary sources mitigated + comprehensive assessment of DRM status + fuel quality improved + emissions from vehicular used improved + traffic congestion reduced through improved traffic flow + air sector appropriately legislated, and its management monitored + capacity building and institutional development plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + public awareness for cleaner air and support to air quality-related activities + improved public health + monitoring of the effects of air quality + strengthened capacity of public health monitoring of regional offices of the DOH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + sustainable improvement in Metro Manila's air-shed quality
LG-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + retrofit of buildings + 13 million CFLs to consumers + energy efficient lighting programs + super ESCO + certification scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + certification process for energy and environmentally efficient commercial buildings + reduced cost of power generation + a viable ESCO industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + reduced cost of power generation
LCI-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + identification of essential adjustments to administrative, institutional, and regulatory practices and existing legislations in order to attract private investments in the GOP's wastewater sector + promotion of innovative, simple and effective wastewater treatment techniques + strengthened partnership among agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + increased coverage of sewerage and sanitation as a percentage of total coverage and the reduction of pollution load of the Manila Bay + enhanced inter-agency consultation and decision-making processes + improved policies, regulations, plans, and project + increased sustainability of pollution reduction activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + increased effectiveness of the agencies responsible for water pollution control through improved coordination
L-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + septage treatment plants + resettlement of informal settlers + parks, walkways and greenbelts along Environmental preservation Areas (EPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + improved water quality of the PR and upgraded urban environment along the riverbanks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + improved environmental management of the PR basin within MM/wastewater management + urban regeneration and renewal in the vicinity of the PR
L-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + installation and operation of Radio frequency Identification (RFID) Tagging and Detection System + improvements of existing terminals or dispatch points/queuing areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + reduced emissions from buses operating on Epifanio delos Santos (EDSA) by rationalizing the number of buses operated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + reduced greenhouse gas emission

LCI-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> urban infrastructure investments and services outside MM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased quality, coverage and reliability of basic urban services and infrastructure for about 560,000 urban residents in the participating cities and municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved standard of living, health and economic opportunities for an estimated 3.75 million urban residents in participating cities and municipalities outside MM
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Table 2: Results framework of the intervention programs

The results frames of the programs also provide the basis for the design of the detailed M&E system that can complement the programs themselves. An external evaluation of the programs, if later required, can be assisted by this results frame when recreating the program logic.

PROGRAM CODE	GOAL	PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OUTPUT	SUSTAINABILITY REQUIREMENT
L-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustainable improvement in Metro Manila's air-shed quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment of community-based early warning systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> preliminary assessment of sustainability
G-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced cost of power generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment of testing labs & mercury waste management plant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation of wide range of stakeholders for wide consultation to develop sense of ownership
LCI-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased effectiveness of the agencies responsible for water pollution control through improved coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> joint treatment plant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'learning by doing' design to ensure that all activities develop into a long-term partnership between key agencies
L-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved environmental management of the Pasig River basin within Metro Manila particularly for wastewater management urban regeneration and renewal promoted in the vicinity of the Pasig River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parks, walkways and greenbelts along Environmental preservation Areas (EPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technical and financial capability basis
L-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced greenhouse gas emission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> installation and operation of Radio frequency Identification (RFID) Tagging and Detection System improvements of existing terminals or dispatch points/queuing areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMDA's commitment to and ownership of the project is established as basic, as the bus reduction scheme was implemented by it.
LCI-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved standard of living, health and economic opportunities for an estimated 3.75 million urban residents in participating cities and municipalities outside Metro Manila 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> urban infrastructure through private-public partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> capacity for sustainable urban management systems strengthened policy reforms for sustainable urban services delivery implemented

Table 3: Program impact, physical output and sustainability requirement

Based on the tabulated contents of the selected programs' results frame, there are variations or lapses in the manner by which proponents and designers identify the outputs,

outcomes and impacts of the development intervention. A tendency to mix up the output with outcomes, or outcomes with impacts is evident in **Table 2**⁴. Some even went to the extent of identifying indicators of outcome for outcome itself, or indicators for output as output itself. In the M&E parlance, outcomes (or even impacts) are basically not measured, but the indicators are.

This suggests three possibilities; one is that the level of competence and capability in applying M&E principles by program designers varies, such that gaps and deficiencies can occur during the planning stage when identification of these essential elements are crucial. The second one is that the extent by which designers apply M&E techniques and principles in a particular design of a program can vary as well. This may result from the nature and breadth of the program designers' experience relative to M&E. The last one is that because of the existence of different approaches and methodologies in M&E practice, program designers must have been influenced and therefore were inclined to adopt mixed approaches or styles in planning development interventions.

Table 3 shows the set goal in parallel with the contents of the physical development component and the sustainability requirement of each program. The main idea in this part of the analysis is to see how each entry relates to each other. The absence or presence of logical coherence among the entries can tell much on the soundness of the design of the development intervention. It can, as well, provide insights on the program designers' characteristics relative to M&E. As the table shows, while mostly, the physical development requirements appropriately correspond to a large extent with the set goal of the programs, the sustainability requirement statements appeared either ambiguous or insufficient in substance. This may suggest that the sustainability issues were just superficially incorporated to comply with the trend in practice, in which sustainability concept is more popularly used than being useful.

Approach, premise of evaluation and composition:

An interesting point to look into is how the evaluation of each program compares with the others in terms of format and contents, given the variation that is evident among the selected programs. This process necessitates interpreting the approaches and premises used in evaluating the programs. The purpose is to identify patterns that can describe the commonality and differences among the programs.

Evidently, all subject evaluations adopted the results-based approach that is currently popular in the evaluation field, although mixed with the conventional to some extent. Nevertheless, most programs adhered to the DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, which were already in use since 1991.

4. Table 2 & Table 3 show a tabulation from the six programs' results frames. The entries indicated are actually how outputs, outcomes, impacts and other aspects basically appeared in each program's results frame, although not necessarily quoted verbatim.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK applied to EX-POST EVALUATION in ONE of the PROGRAMS	
GOAL	Contribute to an increase in the facilitation and safety of...; expansion in the capacities of...; and increase in opportunities for...
PROJECT PURPOSE	Improve the quality of...
OUTPUTS	R... schools will be constructed in _____, _____, _____
INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Implementation of ... works (construction ofschools) ✚ Procurement of equipment for... ✚ Consulting services

Source: JICA Ex-Post Evaluation Publications

Table 4: Logical framework used in a sample intervention program

PROGRAM	RESULTS FRAMEWORK		
	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	IMPACT (GOAL)
Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ air sector's appropriate legislation and its monitoring system for management ✚ capacity building and institutional development plan ✚ (others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ public awareness for cleaner air and support to air quality-related activities ✚ strengthened capacity of public health monitoring of regional offices of the DOH ✚ improved public health ✚ (others) 	Sustainable improvement in Metro Manila's air-shed quality
	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ ODA loan, financial resources ✚ People ✚ Equipment, others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ <u>Drafting of laws</u> ✚ <u>Training for cap building</u> ✚ (others) 	

Source: ADB Publications

Table 5: Sample results framework of typical intervention program (Results-based approach)

Table 4 shows a sample of logical framework taken from one ex-post evaluation of the selected programs. It can be compared with the results-frame work of a development intervention using a results-based approach in **Table 5**. The logical framework and the results framework are evidently format adaptations.

Clearly, inaccuracies exist in the manner by which proponents or designers of the evaluation identified the outputs and activities of the development intervention. A tendency to mix up the outputs with activities is evident. In the M&E parlance, outputs are deliverables that are normally expressed in a way that does not imply action –but activities do. Evidently, the logical framework shown here does not effectively provide strong logic or coherence among the essential elements of the intervention.

In comparison, results frame (**Table 5**) can provide a clearer description of the project operation taking place from inputs-to-activities-to-outputs, and then to results (outcomes, impacts). This description highlights the main goal of the proponents in carrying out the development intervention initiative. The framework serves as a simple

guide in determining whether the planned goals tie in with the resources and actions set at the beginning. The results frame, in effect, can provide the basis for the design of the detailed M&E system, which can complement the program implementation. An external evaluation of the programs, if later made, can identify the program logic from the results frame. These essential elements of intervention logic appear to be ambiguous and disconnected in the selected programs.

Format-wise, the evaluation reports show a recurring pattern that borders on uniformity. The general contents of the evaluation report are comprised by, among others, the objective of the project, output, program's performance corresponding to the criteria set by DAC, and the feedback, conclusion, recommendation and lessons learnt.

3. Summary and Conclusion

Foreign-funded development programs that are extended to recipient countries come in varying scope and amount of ODA. In Metro Manila, Philippines, a number of ODA projects being implemented are socio-urban interventions in nature. In looking at the program components, this study identified commonality in features and approaches applied in the M&E structure of the projects.

The results-based approach in M&E design is common, and all of seven projects applied this technique in varying degrees. However, variation in the way details or components of the framework is established is observed. In identifying outcomes, for instance, some programs classified output elements as outcomes instead of putting these under the output category, and output entries are expressed as activities. This can have a bearing in the way M&E framework is carried out along the way. Indicators measuring outcomes can be very much different from indicators for outputs and therefore confusion can arise along the process and affect the credibility of the M&E system.

The study argues that due to differences in the level of understanding or competency in M&E practice, program designers and proponents showed variation in the application of principles and techniques that characterize the M&E of the projects. And because M&E is an emerging discipline, adaptation to the current progress in M&E techniques by proponents and planners of intervention varies. Many tend to apply techniques or concepts that are currently in use in the practice of Results-based M&E without having to comply with the logic of its application. This may explain why, to some extent, M&E techniques in development interventions take many faces. This is besides the fact that M&E application is characterized by the use of mixed methodologies and varying approaches.

The role of physical development as component of intervention is very much manifest in the design of intervention programs. The M&E techniques applied by planners in dealing with this component are a variation of approaches found in practice.

Sustainability issue consideration is found in some programs, albeit rhetorical. The study surmises that due to difficulty of identifying concretely what the word sustainability

requires when determining results of development intervention, the proponents have the tendency to superficially invoke the requirement for sustainability.

4. Lessons Learned

The study relied on the general description of the M&E structure of the programs as shown in its results-frame section. However, the available general program documents of the ODA projects do not necessarily provide details of the actual M&E framework that is specifically designed for a particular intervention. Evaluation reports submitted at the end of the projects are normally the ones describing in detail the M&E framework that is applied. However, these reports are not necessarily accessible unless an external evaluation or impact evaluation is done on the program and disseminated to the public. In designing and planning of development interventions, it is more beneficial if a complete and detailed M&E framework is put in place and made accessible to public information before implementation of the program is done. The basic reference to results framework, which is an essential part of the program design, can give a general direction on how tracking and assessment of the performance of the program is done. However, a more specific M&E framework, particularly for the project, can provide more meaningful advantage in managing for results, as well as in analyzing the merits of the M&E framework itself.

As main part of the program design, the results framework of the program normally identifies and describes the impact, which is the goal set to be achieved. Other program components such as inputs, activities, output and outcomes are identified as well. This gives a way of identifying the program logic. However, instances of mixing up the components under different headings can happen and this lapse emphasizes the need to establish some standards of competency in M&E practice among practitioners, both in evaluation and designs of development interventions.

5. Acknowledgement

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