

LFS 302B Summer Field Course, Indonesia, 2014

MAY 1st – 31st 2014

Syllabus for Project Monitoring & Evaluation for Timely Responses (METR)
LEARNING-BY-DOING

I. INTRODUCTION

This course on development project *monitoring & evaluation for timely responses* (METR) will be taught under real-world conditions of learning-by-doing on location, *measuring the right things in the right way at the right time*. It will increase students'

- practical understanding of one of the major reasons for failures of assistance interventions (development / aid projects and programs) namely inadequate evaluation of impacts and
- how to overcome these failures by identifying objectively-verifiable outcomes of development projects and accountability for them.

Students are provided with an analytical tool that will increase their value as employment candidates for,

- national and international donor agencies,
- consultancy companies,
- non-government organizations (NGO) operating in the development field
- specialist research agencies exploring improved monitoring and evaluation

Capacity is built for the design and implementation of *ex post* project and program evaluation (by effectively *measuring the right things in the right way at the right time*, hence "METR"), thereby,

- increasing the likelihood of **lasting beneficial changes** in development initiative outcomes,
- informing processes for **better design** of future projects, and,
- offering informed recommendations for **policy reform** to provide better enabling conditions for lasting equitable growth and development.

II. **LEARNING OUTCOMES** - Upon completion of this course, with a special focus on assistance interventions through (aid) development projects and programs for natural resource management / health & nutrition / education projects, students will be able to conduct,

❖ *EXTERNAL PROJECT EVALUATION*

Independently and credibly evaluate development projects' and programs' relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impacts

within and beyond the project's location, also,
identifying indications of development continuity beyond the lifetime of assistance interventions.

❖ *SHARED LEARNING PROCESSES*

Design shared learning processes to encourage,

- beneficial changes in behavior of the project implementers,

- improve the design of future projects, and,
- promote policy reform that creates more enabling conditions for growth and development

III. SPECIFIC TOPICS and APPROACH

1. Understanding the Nature of Successes and Failures of Conventional Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), primarily,

- over-reliance on internal or semi-independent evaluation of project inputs and outputs
- entrenched interests that are content with inadequate M&E, rather than a commitment to outcome/impact-based & more independent M&E
- potential for strengthening information feedback connections between Sources of project funds (e.g., taxpayers, foundations, charities) and Intended beneficiaries of projects.

2. Team Building among METR Specialists

- Terms of Reference (ToR) enhanced by METR
- Following the Trajectory of Trust (see below)

3. METR Engagement with Project

- Clarification of Purpose (derived from ToR)
- Appreciative Inquiry about the Project and METR itself, by asking, "*what was your best moment on the project?*"

4. Obtaining Data & Information in the time available

- Types of data & information sources. Handling excess / insufficiency.
- Field visits and interviews

5. Evaluation of the Role of a Broad Portfolio of Development Capital/Assets affected by the Project and the Institutions that Influence Them:

financial, physical (human-made), natural (sources and sinks), knowledge (codified and informal/traditional), human and social capital/ assets and the institutions that formally and informally manage these assets, as well as, *de facto* and *de jure* rights, roles, responsibilities and relationships (R4) of key stakeholders

To achieve the 3 E's –

Economic efficiency, Environmental management and Equity.

Assessment of the degree to which projects face any of the disabling 3 U's of,

- Uncertainty of Tenure,
- Undervaluation of Natural Resources, and
- Under-regulated Negative Externalities.

6. Measuring the Application of Key Good Governance Principles by project implementers, notably,

transparency, participation / inclusivity, accountability and timely responsiveness.

7. **Assessment of Mutual Stakeholder Understanding** among project donors and implementers as well as partners/beneficiaries to harness social capital through the **"Trajectory of Trust"** or *ToT* before starting to deliver project benefits,
 - *beginning with mutual **understanding*** (appreciation of stakeholder expectations and concerns (hopes and fears) about the project),
 - *in turn fostering mutual **respect**,*
 - *laying the foundation for mutual **trust**.*

8. **Appraisal of Project Logical Frameworks** (logframes) for project design, that should be,
 - underpinned by a schematic PROBLEM TREE: symptoms – core problem – proximate & root causes
 - for participative modificationincluding elements such as overall purpose, specific objectives, activities (outputs and inputs), development assumptions and risks, and objectively verifiable indicators for measurements that together effectively
 - *"track success and capture failure"*.In the absence of logframes, construction of rapid logframes for the project, with recommended improvements.

9. **Application of Core Criteria of Project Evaluation**
 - Conceptual integrity or core logic of the project approach
 - Relevance of specific project objectives / projected end results to purpose
 - Quality of design of implementation
 - Adequacy of implementation sequencing (starting with trust-building, see 6, above)
 - Efficiency of delivery of project outputs in terms of human, financial and time resources
 - Effectiveness of outputs, comparing with *ex ante* targets and cost-benefit analysis
 - Match of Outputs-to-purpose
 - Specific outcomes on targeted beneficiaries / partners and non-targeted neighbours,
 - Specific impacts after the end of the project on project beneficiaries and their neighbours, clearly answering the question,
 - *"what will happen on the first day after the last day of the project?"*
 - Validity of fundamental assumptions and risks
 - Appropriateness of Objectively Verifiable indicators, OVI (direct and proxies)

10. **Assuring Dynamic Internal Lessons-learned Processes** about fundamental assumptions
 - *"what we thought we knew but experience taught us otherwise"*.Distinguishing between lessons identified, learned / acted on, and remembered. The importance of initiating this process earlier than usual in the project implementation process.

11. **Promoting Shared Learning of Project Outcomes (successes and failures)** among relevant institutions *to*,
 - *encourage better future project design* as well as

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- *inform those who exert influence on,*
 - o *policy- and decision-makers to create enabling conditions for more sustainable development as well as*
 - o *vested interests that oppose policy reform for sustainable development*

12. Presentation of Findings & Recommendations Style

Analytical, Accessible and Readily Replicable

IV. COURSE INFORMATION RESOURCES

- METR Criteria & Indicators, including Problem Tree and Logical Framework Development
- Contextual Readings: "Best practices" for M&E from EuropAID, World Bank, USAID, FAO, IFAD, EU, CIDA, DfID, GIZ and other
- Bullet-point reporting style
- M&E Case Studies
- Development Project Site Reports

V. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS

Assuming adequate FRE background,

- .1. Introduction of methodology materials
- .2. Establishment of student METR teams consisting of allocated skills roles,
 - Economics / finance / accounting,
 - Technology / Science of interventions
 - Institutional /Governance
- .3. Design of METR for actual development projects
- .4. Implementation of METR for on-going development project, including presentation of findings to stakeholders for feedback
- .5. Final METR report for dissemination to project implementers, donors and other interested parties

VI. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

.A. Student METR Teams

(Confidential multiplier self & team member assessments, ranging from 0.7 to 1.1)

- METR-compliant M&E of an actual development project 65%

.B. Individual Student

- Participation performance in the course 15%
- Brief of policy implications of METR findings 20%

VII. STUDENT NUMBERS AND DEPLOYMENT

- o Student numbers → max 12

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- Students in teams including 3 skill sets: (1) economic/financial, (2) science/technology, (3) institutional/governance
- Up to 2 students per skill set
- Each team assigned part or all of the development project area

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

→ 31 days, approximately 4 weeks duration,

→ between 01 and 31 May 2014

Week 1:

- Depart for Indonesia;
- METR method instruction;
- METR design;
- Travel to development project site

Weeks 2-3:

- Implementation of work on site evaluating development project

Week 4:

- Presentation of findings to development project for feedback;
- Final report;
- Exit field site