ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF BUSINESS

ASSESSMENT ON PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM: THE CASE OF MEDA, "EDGET" PROJECT

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ST. MARRY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS FOR THE DEGEREEOF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of _____. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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Advisor   Signature

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

EDGET   Ethiopians Driving Growth, Entrepreneurship and Trade

E-FACE   Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation

IFRC   International Federation of Red Cross

M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation

MEDA   Mennonite Economic Development Associates

NGO   Non-Governmental Organization

UNDP   United Nations Development Program

RBM   Results-based Management

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to provide an in-depth understanding of the various Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities involved and their effect on the organization's productivity. The study has employed a qualitative research methodology by interviewing the key informants of the studied project called Ethiopians Driving Growth, and Entrepreneurship and Trade (EDGET), implemented by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). The findings from the key informants interview and M&E process document review of EDGET project tell that the project lacks some essential elements of an effective M&E system for evidence based decision making process. Receiving and processing complete and accurate data in a timely manner was one of the challenges that the project faces. In addition to that financial and human resources and insufficient technological systems hinder the effectiveness of the M&E activities of the project. In order to enhance productivity, hiring additional staff dedicated to check the quality of data and to work on the dissemination of information, provide appropriate trainings to all levels of the M&E staff, appropriate technological advancement, and sufficient allocation of funds, and decentralization of decision making on M&E results are some of the vital recommendations made in this research.

Key Words: Monitoring and Evaluation, Functional System, MEDA, EDGET

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the general overview of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system in an organization to support and verify the overall performance. It will also outline the profile of the project under study, statements of the problem, research questions, research objectives, as well as the significance and scope of the study. Lastly, the structure of the paper is highlighted.

1.1 General Overview of M&E

M&E is a management tool for those who manage anything from a small project component to an entire project. Setting up a good M&E system requires careful thinking about overall project management and, particularly, how to manage the linkages between different project elements and partners. While monitoring is a continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management with early indications of progress or lack thereof in the achievement project objectives, evaluation offers a concrete information on the relevance, performance and success of ongoing and completed projects. The main objective of conducting M&E activities in an organization is therefore to determine whether a project has achieved the desired outcomes which will facilitate the decision-making process in terms of the performance of the project (Mark et al, 2000).

Many organizations implement different projects in different times and they focus only on the planned activities of the actual work. Measuring the performance of these projects to have clear information for better decision-making to meet their objectives has not been seen as important as other project activities. Because of that many organization do not aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their project operation to improve or sustain the projects activities. They cannot also build greater transparency and accountability regarding the management of financial resources provided by donor agencies.

Aware of this, there are constant and growing pressures on organizations around the world to be more responsive to demands from internal and external stakeholders for good accountability and transparency, greater development effectiveness and delivery of tangible results (Görgens and Kusek, 2010). Non-Governmental organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), international aid agencies and donors are all stakeholders interested in better performance. As demands for greater accountability and results have grown, there is an accompanying need for useful and usable results-based (M&E) systems to support the management of programs and policies (Görgens and Kusek, 2010).

M&E can therefore be evident throughout the life cycle of a project by adding value at every stage from design through implementation and impact (Kusek and Rist 2001, p. 17). In light of this, many organizations in the world are aware of the importance of M&E systems to increase their performance and productivity. This study focuses on the assessment of the M&E systems of the EDGET Project (hereinafter called the Project), which is being implemented by MEDA, an international non-profit organization.

1.2 Profile of MEDA and EDGET

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) was established in 1956 to provide business solutions to poverty around the world. It is an international development organization established with the aim of creating sustainable business solutions that help alleviate poverty and spur economic growth for the poor. Founded by a small group of service-oriented business people, MEDA has grown to a large, dynamic international organization comprised of thousands of members and supporters across North America and Europe. It works with over 200 partners in almost 50 countries around the world. It values promoting justice for the poor by helping them develop entrepreneurial skills and seize economic opportunities regardless of gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. As part of its value system, it carefully manages human, financial and environmental resources by emphasizing accountability, discipline and sustainability.

MEDA has established its office in Ethiopia in 2010. It has implemented different projects since its establishment. Currently MEDA Ethiopia is implementing two projects, namely

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Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation (E-FACE) and Ethiopians Driving Growth, Entrepreneurship and Trade ("EDGET"), where the latter is the subject of this research work.

"EDGET" a five-year pro-poor value chain development project, aims to increase incomes to farmers and textile producers by facilitating access to growing markets. , Specifically, it is aiming at increasing incomes for 10,000 farmers and textile producers by facilitating enhanced production techniques, appropriate technologies, improved input supplies, and affordable support services, including finance. Project participants will benefit from commercial access to support services from local, sustainable providers with these services continuing to operate after the program ends.

MEDA/EDGET has established a functional M&E system to measure the effectiveness of project implementation. In light of this this research is meant to assess the M&E system EDGET project and to provide constructive recommendations with a view to strengthen its M&E system that foster evidence-based decision making.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to Jeffrey and Dennis (1987), a project is generally considered to be successfully implemented if it:

- Is on-schedule (time criterion),
- Comes in on-budget (monetary criterion),
- Achieves all the goals originally set for it (effectiveness criterion) and
- Accepted and used by the clients for whom the project is intended (client satisfaction criterion).

To get a satisfactory result on the project implementation, project technical and non-technical departments should play a significant role. One of the departments that contribute considerably for the success of projects is Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The information received from M&E immensely helps the organization to improve its

performance and at the end it facilitates the achievement of it objectives. As a substantial component, the proper functioning of any organization's M&E system is mandatory.

In light of this, MEDA has organized EDIGET's M&E function in a way that it supports project implementation. It deployed three permanent M&E staff who conduct data processing and engaged additional temporary M&E employees, who collect data from project site. . The data then processed in three hierarchically organized offices: country, regional as well as cluster. Based on the plan set at the beginning of the project and the guidance of the country office, the M&E team, gathers the data based on the tools that are adopted by the office. The collected data then provided to the cluster office then to the region and finally it reaches the country office for final analysis and reporting. In the case of using electronic data collecting system, the information comes directly to the country office.

The study has started by doing a preliminary assessment of the organization's M&E system based on a guideline published by UNAIDS entitled "*12 Components Monitoring and Evaluation System Strengthening Tool*". The guideline clearly put that the twelve elements that are listed as the components of M&E are the basis to conduct a standardized M&E system in one organization. If one of the items is not applicable in the organization, the M&E system of the organization is considered as defective. The study has started by doing a preliminary assessment of the organization's M&E system. Interviews and review of the organization's M&E document has been carried out to examine if the organization fulfills the 12 important components of the M&E system strengthening tool. Based on that, the study has found out that the major challenges of the project in matters of M&E are described as follows.

- The information produced by M&E staff of EDGET project found to be incomplete, inaccurate and untimely
- Insufficient fund is being allocated for the M&E activities of the project.
- Ambiguity on how technological facilities and trained staff contributed to the M&E function
- Insufficient contribution of the M&E data for evidence-based decision making
- Challenges exist to have the organization implementation the M&E activities

The study has, therefore, looked into the problems and came up with feasible recommendations.

1.4 Research Questions

In line with the problem statement of this research, the following research questions are formulated:

- Why is the information produced by M&E staff of EDGET project not complete, accurate and timely?
- Why sufficient fund is not being allocated for the M&E activities of the project?
- What are the technological facilities used for M&E activities of the project?
- What is the level of professionalism in doing M&E activities of the project?
- How is the information produced by M&E staff used for evidence-based decision making?
- What challenges have the organization encountered in the implementation of the M&E activities?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objectives of the Study

To assess the functionality of the M&E system of EDGET project, implemented by MEDA.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:
- To find out the reasons why the M&E data is in accurate, incomplete and untimely for effective decision making process.
- To assess the overall M&E challenges of the project that affects its performance
- To enable the project to identify some of the existing M&E problems, related to its M&E function
- To provide feasible recommendations to the prevailing challenges.
- To contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of M&E

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study help MEDA and EDGET to identify strengths and weaknesses of the M&E systems and consequently take corrective actions to improve the system. Similar projects may also benefit from the evidence generated from this study to improve their M&E system. As the study provides recommendations for technical and managerial interventions, relevant staff can understand the level of accountability that is expected from them in the production, provision and use of M&E information.   Finally, it also adds to exiting literature on the subject matter and serves as a basis for further research.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The research is specifically focused on the challenges of the M&E system of "EDGET" project, implemented by MEDA. The researcher does not extend its exploration to other sister projects of MEDA, as the other project doing completely a different activity which follows different M&E system based on its activity and donor's recommendations.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is presented in five Chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance, scope and limitations of the study.   Chapter two is dedicated to review of related literature, where various literatures relevant to the study are dealt with adequate depth. Chapter three focuses on the research methodology and provides explanations for the data collection techniques and analytic methods used in the study.   The fourth Chapter is on the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter five comprises conclusions, summary of the research findings as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section deals with the literature review of the study. It provides detail explanations on the concept of M&E, the differences between the two, the purposes of conducting M&E in light of a project lifetime. Apart from these, the basic principle, foundation, types, different models, features and challenges of M&E have been discussed thoroughly.

2.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E can help an organizations to identify problems and their causes; recommend possible solutions to problems; raise questions about project assumptions and strategies that were outlined in the initial project proposal; and reflect on where the project is going, and on how best to accomplish its aims and objectives.

It is increasingly recognized that M&E are indispensable management functions, and they are therefore set by donor agencies as preconditions for the allocation of funds to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Bamberger, 2009). M&E tend to be understood as one and the same thing. Though related, however, they are two different sets of organizational activities.

2.1.1 Monitoring

According to Patton (2008), Monitoring is the systematic collection and analysis of information as a project progresses. It is a valuable tool for good management. It helps organization staff members to determine whether financial resources are sufficient and are being well used, whether the human capacity in their organizations is adequate, and whether they are actually doing what they planned to do. Monitoring is the routine tracking and reporting of priority information about a project or program: its inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Monitoring gives information on where a policy, program or project is at any given time. It can provide a "snapshot" of the situation or program status. Evaluation provides

information on whether or not specific programs or interventions4 are "working" (i.e., achieving intended objectives or targets) and why objectives or targets are or are not achieved (Zall Kusek and Rist, 2004).

According to Milkovich (1991) and Olken (2007) large scale monitoring activities provide information that is useful in understanding the direction taken, in targeting resources and interventions, and in determining the degree of service coverage. Monitoring can also be useful on a smaller scale for tracking the implementation of specific services as well as their immediate effects (Patton, 1997).

2.1.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of a specific program to determine its merit or worth. If a program is judged to be of merit, it is also important to determine whether it is worth its cost. Evaluation provides credible information for improving programs, identifying lessons learned, and informing decisions about future resource allocation (Brown, 2000).

Evaluation complements monitoring: when a monitoring system observes that program efforts are off track, then good evaluative information can help clarify the realities and trends noted. Systematic evaluation activities are intended to build on the findings from monitoring activities. They do so by providing additional information to determine the scope, quality, intensity, efficiency, effectiveness, and overall impact of specific programs. Special evaluations can help policy-makers and program managers identify and understand factors that facilitate or hinder the achievement of the objectives or specific targets of prevention, treatment, and care programs.

Evaluation occurs at the termination of the project, but sometimes also at mid-term, when what was promised in the project proposal is compared with what has been accomplished, and actual project impacts are measured against the strategic plans agreed upon with donors at the project's outset (Asmelash, 2000) .

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) includes many different components, methods and activities, but in general can be defined as acquiring, analyzing and making use of relevant, accurate, timely and affordable information from multiple sources for the purpose of program improvement (DeLay et al, 2006). M&E is the cornerstone of an evidence-based approach to the decision-making required for designing and implementing effective projects. Monitoring and evaluation activities are inextricably linked but differ in purpose and design; monitoring and evaluation complement one another.

2.2 The Need for M&E

There are many reasons why we should undertake M&E. The main ones are to know whether our project meets its objectives and whether it is leading to the desired effects among its beneficiaries. Through data gathering, we generate detailed information about the project's progress and the results it has obtained. By doing M&E, we build greater transparency and accountability regarding the management of financial resources provided by donor agencies. Also the information we generate through M&E provides project managers with a clearer basis for decision-making. Through M&E, we can find out if the project is running as initially planned and inform us about the strengths and weaknesses of project implementation. M&E allow us to detect unexpected and unintended results and effects of projects to identify the internal and external factors that influence the performance of the project. M&E document and explain the reasons why project activities do succeed or fail and informs how project planning and implementation can be improved in the future (Ravallion, 2008; Robbins, 1996 and Seyum, 2003).

The first and perhaps the most important guiding principle for all M&E efforts is that information should be collected with the intention of being used for program improvement (Patton, 1997). Although data reporting for accountability remains an important priority to sustain funding, the capacity to collect pertinent, good quality, and timely data and to strategically use this information to improve programs is the cornerstone of an effective and efficient response. Program management is about making the correct decisions to achieve the program's goals and objectives. It involves good program planning (such as setting realistic goals and objectives and ensuring that program activities are in line with

these), good program implementation (such as meeting timelines and ensuring the quality of the program) as well as good resource management (such as monitoring the use of funds and ensuring value for money) (GAP 2008).

These management functions rely on the availability of the right kind of information about the program. There are many program aspects that one might like to collect data about. However, all data collection has costs in terms of time and often financial resources. It is important to decide what information is most needed to make necessary decisions about the program. M&E data are also collected to justify the use of program resources vis-à-vis progress made and objectives achieved. Funders of programs are particularly interested in these data; as there is often a requirement for the program to show certain levels of performance in order to maintain the funders' support. Program beneficiaries are also keenly interested in knowing that the program targeted at them is effective and good value for money (Shaw, 1995).

Resources are always limited and there are many competing demands. To avoid any duplication of effort and to reduce the data collection burden, data for accountability should be a sub-set of the data already collected for program management purposes (Zall and Rist, 2004). Sometimes, there may be a need for data serving a specific donor's needs, but those should be kept to a minimum so as not to overburden data collection resources. Finally, there is also a moral obligation to share information and lessons learned for broader use. Data can be shared with program staff, funders, program beneficiaries, community members, policy makers, and other stakeholders (or people who have an interest in the program). Again, this should not involve additional data collection, but simply the sharing of program data relevant to each stakeholder's interests.

According to World Bank (1997), M&E is an essential component of project design and implementation. M&E should be built in from the beginning, and used during all the implementation phases to assess: the extent to which the planned activities are being implemented (activity monitoring); the process followed to achieve the desired outcomes (process monitoring); the progress made in achieving the desired outcomes (progress monitoring); the impact of the project on its beneficiaries (impact evaluation).

M&E is also a management tool because it generates a large amount of vital information that allows project administrators to: identify the major problems, constraints and successes encountered during implementation, through analysis of the data collected; adjust project activities, plans and budgets according to data generated through the use of M&E tools and methodologies; provide information for accountability and advocacy to the targeted communities, and to the government agencies and national and international donors involved. M&E therefore plays a crucial role in enhancing a project's success (Rao, et al. 2003) and Olken, 2007).

2.3 Different Approaches to M&E

There exist various approaches that can be mentioned in M&E. According to Bamberger (2006), what M&E have in common is that they are both geared towards helping us to learn from what we are doing or have done, and from how we are doing it or have done it, by focusing on:

Efficiency: This tells us if the input into the project is appropriate in the light of the output. This could be in terms of, for example, money, time, staff or equipment.

Effectiveness: Here we measure the extent to which our project has achieved the objectives we set at the outset.

Impact: This tells us whether or not we have had an influence on the problem situation we were trying to address. We assess if our strategy was useful, and if it would be worthwhile to replicate the project elsewhere.

Relevance: This tells us the degree to which the objectives of the project remain valid as initially planned in our project proposal. It determines whether project interventions and objectives are still relevant, given the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries' priorities might change over time as a result of social, political, demographic or environmental changes. As a result, on conclusion, a project might not be deemed to be as important as it was when initiated.

Sustainability: This measures the prospects for the maintenance of a project's positive results after external support by donor agencies has been withdrawn. Many development

projects are not sustainable because neither the organization involved nor the beneficiaries themselves have the financial capacity or the motivation to provide the resources needed for the activities to continue. As a result, donor agencies are interested in the long-term improvements brought about by any given project. They want to know how long they will need to support a project before it can run with local resources.

2.4 Foundation of M&E

The foundation for conducting and collecting the needed data for M&E is paramount important. According to Morra and Ray (2009), a program Logic Model can be used to describe the main elements of a program and how these work together to reach the program's goals. This framework facilitates the planning and execution of the program, but also helps setting priorities for M&E. M&E data should be collected with the intention of being used. The primary use of M&E data is for program improvement; some of these data will also be used to satisfy accountability purposes and to share information and lessons learned for broader public use. Typically, the types of data needed are: inputs required for implementing the program's activities, describing the activities themselves, and their outputs. For some of the programs, these outputs are then intended to lead to outcomes that in turn are intended to lead to impacts.

Not all programs need to conduct all types of M&E activities that may be part of the national M&E system. First, the extent and cost of M&E activities should be commensurate to the size, reach, and cost of the program. Second, not all M&E activities are appropriate for a program or the stage of development at which the program happens to be at a given time. However, all programs are expected to conduct input and output monitoring, and most programs should also conduct some process evaluations, including quality assessments. Only some programs will be able to conduct outcome monitoring and rigorous outcome evaluations. Only in a few situations would impact evaluation be warranted and impact monitoring is the responsibility of the national level.

National governments are responsible for ensuring that routine monitoring as well as evaluation activities are adequately planned, budgeted and systematically implemented as

part of the national M&E system. As many different stakeholders are involved in M&E, it is important to foster coordination at all levels to minimize fragmentation and duplication of effort. Establishing a comprehensive national M&E system takes time; it is essential to use a strategic implementation approach guided by what data are needed to answer key questions (Dessler, 1998).

This investigative and analytic process requires a range of M&E methods for data gathering, analysis and interpretation. From a systems perspective, the different components of the national M&E system need to work to an acceptable standard for the system to function effectively and generate all the required data. These system components are not restricted to the technical functions of M&E (data collection, verification, analysis and use), but also include the equally important organizational structures (human resources, partnerships, plans). We refer to three levels in the national M&E system: the national, sub-national and service delivery (both facility and community-based) levels and indicate for which level each framework is most applicable. The first four frameworks are applicable to programs at all levels (Enos, 2000).

2.5 Types of Data Needed for M&E

According to Kusek and Rist (2004), to determine the types of data needed, it is important to find out what stakeholders want to know about the program and thus, how data are intended to be used. There is a logical progression for collecting and analyzing the required information. The process starts with examining the required inputs (for example, financial resources) for implementing activities; the activities themselves and then the resulting outputs. Outputs are then intended to lead to outcomes that in turn are intended to lead to impact,

According to Kusek and Rist (2004).The key program-relevant data are inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Inputs are the financial, human, and material resources used in a program or intervention. The activities are the actions taken or work performed through which inputs such as funds, technical assistance, and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs. Outputs, in the other hand are the immediate effects

of program or intervention activities; the direct products or deliverables of program or intervention activities. Outcomes are the intermediate effects of an intervention's outputs, such as change in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors. Impacts are the long-term, cumulative effects of programs or interventions over time on what they ultimately aim to change.

Sound evaluation logic dictates that it is essential to show that outputs have been achieved before starting to look for outcomes; and that adequate outcomes have been achieved before looking for impact. In addition to monitoring these types of data, select programs also conduct process and outcome evaluations and other special studies to complement the information obtained through monitoring data systems (Patton, 2008 and Morrisy, 1997).

2.6 Responsibilities in M&E

Not all programs and projects need to conduct all types of M&E activities that may be part of the national M&E system. However, all programs and projects are expected to participate in basic levels of M&E, including assessing needs and monitoring inputs and outputs once implementation begins.

Expectations to conduct additional levels of M&E vary by the nature, size and maturity of the program or project. First, programs need to use their resources wisely, so, the extent and costs of M&E activities should be commensurate to the size, reach, and cost of programs. In short, M&E should never compromise or overtake program implementation. Second, not all M&E activities are appropriate for programs or the stages of development at which programs happen to be at a given time. Evaluation logic suggests a staged approach. That is, most programs that conduct outcome evaluations should have implemented some level of process evaluation prior to this more rigorous assessment. Also, input and output monitoring data are essential for informing process evaluation, and outcome monitoring data are pre-requisite to outcome evaluation (Rugg and Mills, 2000; Rugg et al., 2004).

2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

A clear framework is essential to guide monitoring and evaluation. A framework should explain how the program is supposed to work by laying out the components of the initiative and the order or the steps needed to achieve the desired results. A framework increases understanding of the program's goals and objectives, defines the relationships between factors key to implementation, and articulates the internal and external elements that could affect the program's success (UN Women, unpublished).

Frameworks are useful in helping us understand the relationships between each element of the program; inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and between the program activities and the Sound implementation and M&E plans. The commonly used types of M&E Frameworks are Conceptual Frameworks, Results Frameworks, Logical Frameworks, and Logic Models (UN Women, unpublished).

2.8 The Features of Functional National M&E System

Understanding a complex problem and determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the programmatic response requires a sustainable, comprehensive, strategic, multi method M&E system. Such a system should effectively integrate the information from monitoring key indicators with findings from selected evaluation studies and qualitative methods to help us understand better the progress and success of the overall response. Establishing one national M&E system is challenging since the system needs to function across different sectors, different service delivery areas and different levels of implementation. Establishing such a system also takes time. It is important to build on what is already in existence, and to first address the necessary human capacity and partnerships to support the collection of good quality data. Most importantly, it is crucial not to lose sight of the ultimate purpose of M&E: using data for decision-making. Hence, data use should be the central element of any M&E system (Olken, 2007; Armstrong, and Baron, 2002).

The main components of the M&E system are 12 in number. However; they are not 12 steps intended to be implemented sequentially; rather, 12 components that are needed and working at an acceptable level for the national M&E system to function effectively. M&E

activities take place in an organizational context which includes factors that can inhibit or encourage sound practice. Therefore, the organizational structures (human resources, partnerships, plans) of the national M&E system are as important as the technical aspects of M&E.

However, not all components need to be implemented at all levels of the system; what is relevant at the national level, for example, may not be relevant at the service delivery level. Clearly, this is a blueprint for an ideal system and will take time to put in place; but even a partial system can generate important and useful information while a comprehensive system is under development (Olken, 2007; Armstrong and Baron, 2002). UNAIDS (2009), has put the following twelve components as the important components for the national M&E system.

2.8.1 Organizational Structures with M&E Functions

For the national M&E system to function effectively, a variety of organizations need to work together at different levels. Ideally, the system should be coordinated by one organization or its equivalent. In addition to human resources, there is also a need for financial resources, as well as basic infrastructure, equipment and supplies.

2.8.2. Human Capacity for M&E

Not only is it necessary to have dedicated and adequate numbers of M&E staff, it is essential for these staff to have the right skills for the work. Human capacity building should focus on all levels of the system. M&E capacity building should focus not only on the technical aspects of M&E, but also address skills in leadership, financial management, facilitation, supervision, advocacy and communication.

2.8.3. Partnerships to Plan, Coordinate, and Manage the M&E System

It is important that all stakeholders in each program work together and avoid duplication of effort. This requires establishing partnerships and formal communication and collaboration mechanisms.

2.8.4. National Multi-Sectoral M&E Plan

A wide variety of stakeholders should participate in the development and regular updating of the national M&E plan, including sub-national authorities and representatives from civil society. The objectives of the national M&E plan should be explicitly linked to the National Strategic Plan to ensure that relevant data are collected to measure the progress in the country's response. The national M&E plan should describe a 3-5 year implementation strategy for the components of the M&E systems, indicate resource requirement estimates and outline a strategy for resource mobilization. The national M&E plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to make adjustments in data collection needs associated with revisions of the National Strategic Plan, and to strengthen M&E system performance based on periodic M&E assessments.

2.8.5. Annual Cost of the M&E Work Plan

For the national M&E plan to be operationalized, an annual cost national M&E work plan needs to be developed that describes the priority M&E activities for the year with defined responsibilities for implementation, costs for each activity, identified funding, and a clear timeline for delivery of outputs. This work plan represents the joint work plan that integrates the M&E activities of all relevant stakeholders.

2.8.6. Advocacy, Communications, and Culture for M&E

It is important to simplify and demystify M&E, create a supportive M&E culture, and reduce any fear or negative connotations regarding M&E. A communication and advocacy strategy for M&E can help to achieve these objectives. The strategy needs to be multidimensional, with tailored messages for different audiences, including the general public.

2.8.7. Routine Program Monitoring

The national and sub-national authorities need a routine system to track the demand for and supply of services. Standardized data from all providers, including facility and community-based service providers should be collected on a routine basis. To guide

decision making at all levels, the data needs of different stakeholders should be determined and the data made available in a timely fashion.

2.8.8. Surveys and Surveillance

The need for surveys, as well as, the specific focus and content of each survey should be considered within the context of each country's level. Protocols and data collection tools should be based on international standards to obtain high-quality data and to ensure that results from repeated surveys can be compared over time within a given country, as well as across countries. This information should be complemented with data obtained from other social and behavioral science methods including rigorous qualitative data.

2.8.9. National and Sub-national Databases

An information system consists of the infrastructure (hardware), a database (software), and skilled individuals to use the databases to capture, verify, transfer, analyze, and share data. Clear roles and responsibilities need to be established at national, sub-national, and service-delivery levels to ensure an appropriate and timely data flow between the different levels. A national database is not a prerequisite for a functional national M&E system. However, an electronic data management system allows for the information to be captured in a way that facilitates data verification, data sharing, and data use.

2.8.10. Supportive Supervision and Data Auditing

For sound decision-making, it is important to be confident about data quality. Regular data quality checks and provision of feed-back are important mechanisms to improve or sustain data quality. Supportive supervision refers to overseeing and directing the performance of others and transferring the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are essential for successful M&E of activities. Data auditing is the process of verifying the completeness and accuracy of reported aggregate program data.

2.8.11. Evaluation and Research

Appropriate use of evaluation and research data ensures that the planning is based on the best available evidence and guides ongoing program improvement. Establishing a national

process for identifying evaluation and research gaps relevant to the National Strategic Plan and for coordinating partners helps ensure that evaluation studies are relevant to the country's needs and provide actionable results; that such efforts are coordinated to avoid duplication of effort; and that study results are shared widely and available for use in decision-making within the country of origin as well as beyond, where relevant (A National Evaluation Agenda in the UNAIDS M&E Fundamentals Series, 2009).

2.8.12. Data Dissemination and Use

The most important reason for conducting M&E is to provide the data needed for guiding policy formulation and program operations. A detailed data use plan should be included in the national M&E plan; this plan should link data needs and data collection efforts with specific information products for different audiences, as well as a timetable for dissemination. It should also include activities to encourage data use. A functional M&E system collates and presents the data in a way that facilitates data use at all levels, including the general public and beneficiaries of services.

2.9. Major Challenges of M&E

As it has been discussed under the previous themes, M&E is an important component of project design and implementation. It also a management tool because it generates a large amount of vital information that allows project administrators to: identify the major problems, constraints and successes encountered during implementation, through analysis of the data collected; adjust project activities, plans and budgets according to data generated through the use of M&E tools and methodologies; provide information for accountability and advocacy to the targeted communities, and to the government agencies and national and international donors involved. M&E therefore plays a crucial role in enhancing a project's success (Rao, 2003).

Due to this, better implementation and use of M &E benefits an organization that is mandated to design and execute a project. However; there are a number of constraints and challenges that hinder these benefits. The factors contributing to poor implementation and use of M&E in an organization are many in number. The major ones are the lack of

institutional capacity and attention, paucity of competent staff, misunderstanding on the role and utility of M&E, inadequate mandate of those charged with M&E responsibilities; no or little budget allocation for M&E activities, (FAO, 2010).

Different problems faced during conducting the M&E. According to UNAIDS (2008b); Ravallion (2008) and Bamberger (2009), the following challenges are the major ones identified in M&E activities.

2.9.1 Poor Organizational Capacity

Organizational processes might not support the use of data. For instance, officials might be reluctant to use data that has not been officially sanctioned. Perhaps the release of certain sensitive information, such as figures that reveal a measles outbreak, is tightly controlled. This information can be shared only by official protocol. More often, there are simply no channels or systematic processes to share data with people who could use it. In addition to this, organisations often lack data analysis skills, so collected information sometimes ends up unanalysed and unused. Lacking capacity, staff/communities shy away from monitoring. They perceive it as something mystical rather than an everyday activity. inadequate understanding of and attention to M&E in project design and subsequently inadequate resource allocation and hierarchical organization of decision-making and analysis; monitoring seen as an obligation imposed from outside, with project staff mechanically filling in forms for managers and the project managers seeing monitoring only as a form of data collection in the process of writing reports for donors; M&E documentation that does not address or resolve identified problems; irrelevant and poor quality information produced through monitoring that focused on physical and financial aspects and ignores project outreach, effect and impact; almost no attention to the monitoring and evaluation needs and potentials of other stakeholders such as beneficiaries and community-based and other local cooperating institutions. These situations happen in an organization that is mandated to design and implement a project lacks the benefits mentioned above.

2.9.2 Paucity of Competent Staff

Many information systems including those organizations that design and implement a project suffer from shortages of skilled people to manage, interpret, and use the data; and motivation and incentive to generate high quality of data for M&E purposes. Persons expected to carry out data collection are frequently expected to take this role as an additional task, to be worked in and around the more important service-oriented tasks. Thus; these organizations become unable to see the proper process of project implementation and its outcome.

2.9.3 Inadequate Budget Allocation

Most activities and systems of M&E of an organization suffer from budget constraints. "We wish we could gather survey data at the district level, but it would be prohibitively expensive to do so.", "Data analysis would show that more people should receive antiretroviral therapy, but funding is limited." The design and implementation of M&E of a project needs an adequate budget that is needed for data collection, organization, analysis and formal presentations that encompass all stakeholders.

2.9.4 Technology

Now days, data gathering tools require the implementation of an advanced technology in order to come up with an accurate, complete and timely report of M&E. The endemic shortage of computers is an obvious technical constraint, but there are other common technical issues that erode data quality. For instance, Inadequate computers and software for data capture hamper the proper design and implementation of M&E. Contributors, on the other hand, could be defining data variables indicators differently, or using different sources for the same data element or indicator, or using different algorithms to report it.

The first and perhaps the most important guiding principle for all M&E efforts is that information should be collected with the intention of being used for program improvement (Patton, 1997). Although data reporting for accountability remains an important priority to sustain funding, the capacity to collect pertinent, good quality, and timely data and to

strategically use this information to improve programs is the cornerstone of an effective and efficient response.

2.9.5 Lack of Integration

The proper design and implementation of M&E activities need the integration of the whole system of project owners. Lack of ownership of the M&E process or results: Most impact indicators may not be collected appropriately. Some directorates want their activities to be more visible in the report. Lack of consistency in some data collected at the district level damage the whole system and outcome of M&E.

Lack of commitment to monitoring by project staff and implementing partners may lead to delay in implementing monitoring systems. More often, lack of information use by project management; widespread lack of integration and cooperation between project M&E and project management with no clear, mutually agreed-upon guidelines; poor use of participatory and qualitative M&E methods, due to limited capacity and inability to see the need for such information are major problems of integration during the design and implementation of M&E.

2.9.6 Demystifying Monitoring and Evaluation

There is generally apprehension about the difficulty of monitoring. It has always been considered scientific and the domain of professionals. M&E systems have tended to be complicated, "scientific and objective" and thereby creating an exclusive group of users. Another challenge is the need to demystify the concept of "measurement": There has been over-reliance on quantitative measurements or information. Many donors and managers have principally requested numerical (quantitative) information about a piece of work. It looks more precise and leads one to believe that it is easier to compare and summarise than qualitative information.

2.9.7 Participation and Involvement

Low priority in Organisations for monitoring systems: persons expected to carry out data collection are frequently expected to take this role as an "additional" task, to be worked in

and around the more important service-oriented tasks. Capacity in monitoring (data analysis and weak data management systems): Organisations often lack data analysis skills, so collected information sometimes ends up unanalysed and unused. Lacking capacity, staff/communities shy away from monitoring. They perceive it as something mystical rather than an everyday activity. Information users: identification of information users and involving them in the whole process is not always thoroughly done. Involving potential users in the design of monitoring will not only help them clarify their information needs (*negotiating* them), but also ensure their support for the M&E system and utilisation of its findings.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this section is to explain how the research was conducted what kind of data was gathered, structured and analyzed. It also explains the research design, data collection processes and data sources.

3.1 Research Design

The study has employed a qualitative research method to explore the views and experiences of individuals and to get a deeper understanding of how the M&E systems support project implementations. social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods.

3.2 Sources of Data

Primary and secondary data was used for the study. The primary data was obtained directly from key informants by interviewing them. The secondary data, on the one hand, was collected by reviewing the M&E documents of MEDA and EDGET., which includes M&E plans, strategies, reviews and evaluations, and annual reports.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

A protocol consisting of written semi-structured open ended interview guide, document review guide and telephone interviews were used to obtain the data.

To collect data from key informants a semi-structured open ended interview guide consist of several key questions has been used to conduct the interview believing that it helps to define the areas to be explored and to allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. It is used also to allow for the discovery

or elaboration of information that is important to the interviewee but which may not have previously been thought of as pertinent.

For the desk review purpose, few questions were selected from the interview questions which were considered suitable to cross check the accuracy of the informants' response.

The semi-structured interview guide was developed by taking the research questions and the objectives of the study into considerations. All relevant variables have been included to help to identify as well as conclude the problems and to provide appropriate recommendations.

Interviews were conducted with the decision makers and information users of the organization to collect the information using the semi – structured open ended interview guide. Interviews were also conducted with the M&E officers who have a direct role on collecting, compiling, analyzing, producing and disseminating the information received from the data collectors. Most of the interviews were made face to face except with the few, who were not available during the data collection time, in that case telephone interviews were conducted. The necessary information was collected from the interviews conducted by using a semi-structured with an open-ended questions served as a guide for the discussion, leaving room to elaborate on whatever matters the interviewee felt appropriate..

3.4 Study Population

The population under study is the employees of MEDA, EDGET project. The project has a total of 47 employees, of which three are M&E officers and five are decision making staff.

3.5 Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used for the recruitment of participants for the study. The selection criteria for inclusion were professional who were working in the M&E unit, decision makers and who could articulate their experiences as it relates to the phenomena being investigated. From the total population, three M&E employees and five decisions

making staff of MEDA, EDGET project were taken to provide the information needed for this study.

Eight participants were selected out of the 47 employees. The eight participants were selected because they have direct and indirect role in the M&E activities of the organization. The rest have no clear knowledge and information on the organization's M&E activities. Thus, an assumption was made that including this staff in the study may lead to incorrect conclusion. Also including the beneficiaries in the study has also not been considered important since the information gathered from them.

3.6 Data Quality Assurance

During the interview process, note was taken (on what????) appropriately. And in order to make sure all questions were addressed well, the interviewer checked (how??) the questionnaire once again before finalized the interviews. Every day the notes taken during the interviews were expanded correctly not to miss necessary information and to check the consistency of data collection process.

3.7 Data Management and Analysis

First, the researcher read all participants questionnaires and transcribes the data collected from the interviews to get the general perceptions of the interviewees. Next, significant statements and phrases pertaining to the phenomenon being studied have been extracted from each transcript. Meanings are then formulated from the statements taken from the interviewees. Then the meanings are organized into themes, and these themes evolve into theme clusters, and eventually into theme categories. A color coded manual system (???) was used to highlight specific themes/categories to perform a preliminary analysis. Triangulation (???) from different data sources were used to build a coherent justification for the themes.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Fulfilling the ethical duty of confidentiality was essential to the trust relationship between researcher and participant, and to the integrity of the research project. Before the interview

was conducted the interviewees were asked their willingness to participate in this study. Also to protect the information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft, appropriate cautions have been taken. Each interview was also coded appropriately to increase the confidentiality of the responses of the interviewees.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

The data collecting tool was also pretested at Integrated Family Health Program (IFHP) before the actual data collection activities have started. IFHP is an organization that works development activities in different parts of Ethiopia. Since both IFHP and MEDA work on development activities, the M&E system of both organizations is similar. Thus the validity of the data collection instrument has been tested first on IFHP. Using the developed interview guide, two M&E staff of IFHP has been interviewed and some of the questions used to guide the interview have been modified, the irrelevant once were removed and few additional questions were added after evaluating the responses received from the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with detail of discussion and analysis of the study findings. The challenges that affect the functionality of M&E system of MEDA, "EDGET" Project is obtained by open ended questions as well as semi-structured in-depth interviews that was conducted with the M&E officers and decision makers of the EDGET project in MEDA. Desktop review was also conducted to obtain additional information. The information obtained from these key employees was thematically categorized, carefully analyzed and interpreted to get accurate result.

The organization under study is MEDA, EDGET project. The study is focused on the M&E activities of the organization, specifically on the project called EDGET. The participants of this study are the employees of MEDA, EDGET project placed in actual M&E activities and decision making positions. For this study data was collected from three M&E employees and five decision making and information users of EDGET project.

4.1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

As Table one clearly shows, out of the three M&E staff, one is male and the other two are females. All of them fall in the age between 29-38 years and earned university degree. One of them has worked for the organization between two to three years but the other two have worked more than three years in the same position.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

	Description	Frequency	%
Sex	Female	4	50
	Male	4	50
	Total	8	100
Age	< 29 years Old	0	0
	29-38 Years Old	6	75
	39-48 Years Old	2	25
	> 49 Years Old	0	0
	Total	8	100
Educational Background	Diploma	0	0
	Degree	4	50
	Master's Degree	4	50
	Doctorial / Professional Degree	0	0
	Total	8	100
Work Experience in the Organization	< 1 year	1	12.5
	2-3 years	4	50
	> 3 years	3	37.5
	Total	8	100

Source: **Own survey, 2014**

Two of the decision makers are female and the three are men. The age of the three participants is between 29-38 years and the two is between 39-48. Except one who has college degree all of them have master of degree. Regarding their work experience in the organization, three of them have worked more than three years and two of them have worked less than one year. This shows that the educational level of most respondents who are involved in the decision making process and who are responsible for the M&E activities is high. In addition to that, the length of stay in the organization can clearly tell their level of experience and knowledge in the organization's system. From their response, most of the informants have stayed more than three years in the organization, which is considered as sufficient to know about the organization. Their age also tells their decision making ability using information they are provided. In such case, only two of the decision makers are above 39 years but the three are under 39 years old.

4.2 Planning M&E Activities

According to key informants interview and secondary data analysis result, the MEDA, EDGET project has M&E plan that was prepared before starting the implementation of the project. All the interviewees said that during the panning, all technical as well as M&E staff has participated to share their valuable knowledge and opinions. As per the responses of the informants, the M&E plan has been updated quarterly, biannually and annually; from the secondary data, the researcher has also found out that the project's M&E plan has been revised regularly. From eight information users and decision makers, five of them confirmed that most of the time the M&E staffs do not comply with the M&E plan. As per their response, some of the M&E activities are performed out of the time frame set in the plan or sometimes not completed at all because of other activities that the M&E staff put as priority. Contrary to this idea, three of the respondents said that M&E staffs implement activities according to the plan. Monitoring the implementation of the M&E activities according to the plan is verified by the program staff during the field visits and by reviewing of reports received from the M&E office.

As per secondary data and the reply of most respondents, the project M&E plan indicated the detail activities to be performed in a monthly and weekly basis and by whom the activities would be performed. The study also found out that the project M&E plan is not linked to National M&E Plan to tie its activities with the national development strategy.

Defining the result chain that are impact, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs of the EDGET project, describing what needs to be monitored and evaluated, developing an M&E strategy, defining the indicators and bring it all together in an M&E plan with conditions and budget needed is the key for M&E and program integration activities (UNDP 2011). From document review all the above elements are fulfilled but budgeting against each activity has not been considered important in the document.

All respondents regarding the integration of M&E to other project activities said that, all M&E activities are properly integrated with all program activities.

4.3 M&E as a Component in the Organization

The position that the M&E department is given in the organization in the organogram can easily tell the organization's attitude towards the department. In the document review, the M&E program manager is positioned directly under the country director and in the same level with other decision making departments. The M&E program manager directly reports to the country director and the M&E officers directly reports to the M&E program manager. From the interview, except one informant, all said that the M&E department is well located in the organization. However, two of the M&E staff claimed that even though, the management considers M&E as a useful management tools and information source for program intervention, inputs for these activities, such as, financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for the program is not adequately capacitated to produce comprehensive information to add values to the program intervention activities.

4.4 M&E Data Quality Management

Data quality control should be implemented throughout the data life cycle. Reviewing the availability and completeness of all indicator source documents for the selected reporting period is important. Verifying the number and dates of reports received from all service sites contained all the required indicator data is one of the requirements done by M&E office before start processing the data analysis activities.

As per the M&E strategies of the organization, information flows from the M&E office of the country office to the regional program coordinators and then to cluster offices that exist near the project sites and vice versa when there is a monitoring and evaluation activities to take place. Each time when there are data collection activities, the cluster offices recruit data collectors from the people who work for the Kebeles in that Woreda. Then, they train them the data collection methods and familiarize them with formats and other data collecting instruments. To collect the data, the data collectors have to travel a long distance within their region where the actual project activities are taken place. After the data is collected from the sites of each Woreda, it is given to the cluster office

coordinators. Subsequently, each cluster officers forward the data to the regional program coordination office to be sent to the country office for analysis and information production. The data analyzed and the information produced by the M&E office in the country office finally would be provided to all information users and decision making group for program intervention. This is the process of the collection of data carried out manually. In the case of electronic data collecting system, the data reaches the country office M&E database the moment the data is entered on the electronic equipment by the data collector at the project site.

As per the respondents of the research, the M&E office of the organization has data quality ensuring system which is performed randomly by comparing the existing data with the newly collected data at the project sites made for this purpose. The long process of data gathering and transporting, producing accurate and complete information for the decision makers and data users in a timely manner is a challenge. In addition to that, the poor data quality insuring system of the organization supplements to the challenge. Familiarizing the newly recruited data collectors with the data collecting instruments, the remoteness of the project sites from the cluster offices, the distance that the collected data travels, the time that takes for analysis and information production is taken as a challenge.

4.4.1 Delivery of Data and Information Timeliness

The five decision makers and information users were requested if there have been times that they needed M&E information but they could not receive on time from M&E office. Three of them said that they always received information when they needed but two of the respondents informed that there were times that they wanted information but that information was not ready and they had to wait sometime to get it from the M&E office. As per their response, the reason behind this is, the collected data does not reach to office on time or the M&E office employees have other priorities that they could not produce the information on time. One of the informants said that the limited field level capacity of the organization is the core reason why the data does not reach to the country office on time.

The two informants responded for the question, what they usually do when they do not receive information on time and what they think are the causes for the dalliances of data

are captured as, the M&E officers carryout the data collection activities in the field when there is a delay. The M&E officers also provide capacity building trainings for the data collectors to get the activities done in timely bases as the limited human resources capacity of the field level employees is refereed as one of the causes for the data to reach the country office overdue. One informant also said that, he/she has been waited until the information he/she requested was processed and delivered to him/her which affects the decision making process.

The M&E officers also informed that there are times that M&E information is not ready on time for the users. The reason behind this problem is the time that takes to transport the data from the field offices to the country office.

4.4.2 Data and Information Delivery Completeness

The five decision makers were requested if there have been times that the M&E information they have received from the M&E officers for decision making and program intervention were incomplete. Out of the five, two of them said that there were times that the information provided by the M&E office was found to be incomplete. Not focusing on the lower level of the working force is the key constraints that bring this problem is the opinion given by these respondents. The M&E team also informed that there were times that incomplete information has been reaching the office from the field offices. These problems have been rarely created because of the shortage of human resources in all levels of the department. When those kinds of problems arise the program people in collaborating with the M&E team fill the gap.

4.4.3 Data Accuracy

Data accuracy means that the data measures what it is intended to measure. According to IFRC, 2011, Project M&E Guide, selection bias results from poor selection of the sample population to measure. It occurs when the people, place or time period measured is not representative of the larger population or condition being studied. As per the M&E program officer, because of limited sampling taken from the population, the organization cannot collect sufficient data to evaluate the performance of the project. Sometimes, the result was more than expected and sometimes it came very low. When expressing the

reason behind this problem, shortage of fund is the main cause. Hiring sufficient data collectors to cover the whole project sites with appropriate samples was a challenge.

In addition to that, sometimes the direct measurement may be done incorrectly, or the attitudes of the interviewer may influence how questions are asked and responses are recorded. Processing error results from the poor management of data which is common in quantitative data management because miscoding data, incorrect data entry, incorrect computer programming and inadequate checking of data (IFRC, 2011, Project M&E Guide).

All the respondents also informed that, there are no designated staffs responsible for reviewing the quality of data i.e., accuracy, completeness and timeliness, received from sub-reporting levels e.g., service points and regional offices. The secondary data also confirmed that the organization has not placed appropriate staff to check the quality of the M&E data.

Analytical bias results from the poor analysis of collected data. Different approaches to data analysis generate varying results e.g. the statistical methods employed, or how the data is separated and interpreted. A good practice to help reduce analytical bias is to carefully identify the rationale for the data analysis methods.

The five Decision makers and information users were requested if there have been times that they received inaccurate or inconsistent information from the M&E office. Out of the five respondents, two said, the information that they have received from M&E officers show irregularities and inaccuracy. One of the reasons for this is, the different methodologies that the staffs use in collecting and analyzing data.

Two third of the M&E staff said that the organization have faced data quality problem several times in the project's life. They have also been asked by the management to check the quality of the data they have submitted to the management because the management suspected that information was not correct. They supplemented the idea with, the organization has data quality measurement system and during this time data discrepancy

between the original data collected and the data collected during the data quality control activities was not minimal.

Contrary to what is informed on data accuracy by four decision makers and M&E officers, two of the decision makers and one M&E officer said, the office has not faced any data quality problem so far.

4.5 Data Collection, Analysis, Management and Reporting System

4.5.1 Data Collection Process

As per the M&E officers, clear instructions are provided to the newly recruited data collectors on the data collecting methods by the M&E officers. Familiarizing the data collectors with the data collecting formats and tools is also carried out before the data collection activities are started. The M&E unit also identifies standard reporting forms and tools to be used by all reporting levels and service delivery site.

As a standard, how, when and by whom the data is collected during the course of the project development need to be indicated in the project document. Also insuring how all relevant data has been collected is a key issue in the data collection process. Procedures should indicate at exactly what point each piece of data is to be collected and clearly describing who is responsible for collecting the data, entering it in the database, and transforming the raw data into the form the M&E office work is important. The MEDA EDGET project M&E strategy clearly shows what, how, when and by whom the data is collected during the course of the project development but in the project M&E plan, all these information is not included.

4.5.2 Data Management Processes

Data management refers to the processes and systems for how a project would systematically and reliably store, manage and access M&E data. Data management should be timely and secure, and in a format that is practical and user-friendly. It should be designed according to the project size and complexity. Typically, project data

management is part of an organization's larger data management system and should adhere to any established policies and requirements, according to IFRC, 2011.

According to the Project/Programme Monitoring and Evaluation M&E Guide of IFRC, the format in which data is recorded, stored and eventually reported is an important aspect of overall data management. A project needs to organize its information into logical, easily understood categories to increase its access and use. Data organization can depend on a variety of factors and should be tailored to the users' needs. Data should also be available to its intended users and secure from unauthorized use. In regard with security and legalities of data, projects need to identify any security considerations for confidential data, as well as any legal requirements with governments, donors and other partners. This can range from a lock on a filing cabinet to computer virus and firewall software programs.

The guideline also referred that, the use of computer technology to systematize the recording, storage and use of data is especially useful for projects/programs with considerable volumes of data, or as part of a larger program for which data needs to be collected and analyzed from multiple smaller projects. It is important to identify procedures for checking and cleaning data, and how to treat missing data. In data management, unreliable data can result from poor typing of data, duplication of data entries, inconsistent data, and accidental deletion and loss of data.

It is also important to identify the individuals or team responsible for developing and/or maintaining the data management system, assisting team members in its use and enforcing any policies and regulations.

MEDA's IT for data management in M&E includes handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs) to record survey findings, computers and internet connections. Software such as Excel spreadsheets for storing, organizing and analyzing data, and Microsoft Access to create user-friendly databases to enter and analyze data is also used by the organization. SharePoint, a web-based intranet to store and share the information is applicable; however, discussing M&E information within the information users and decision makers across the country is not considered as important platform for immediate actions.

An integrated planning management system with an internet platform for inputting, organizing, analyzing and sharing information is considered as beneficial as other instruments to manage M&E data in MEDA.

4.5.3 Data Analysis and Reporting System

Analyzing data will enable one to assess whether and how any program has achieved its objectives.

M&E officers of the organization were requested several questions on data delivery, analysis and data use among field staff and central office of the organization. According to the M&E officers' response, data is delivered from the field through hard copy mostly by using Ethiopian Mailing Services but in some districts the organization uses electronic method in which the information reaches the central office automatically when the data collectors enter the data in the device.

As per the M&E officers, the regional offices do not compile and analyze data for themselves to take actions before it reaches the central office. As a result, program intervention activities are ignored until the data is analyzed and information is produced by M&E officers, which is a challenge. As the main activity of the project is rural agriculture, it highly depends on the weather condition of that specific area. After the data collection activities are conducted, the data had to reach the central office for analysis and share. In this long process, the weather condition of the project sites could change before the intervention activities are carried out, which subsequently affect the project's productivity negatively. This problem happens from time to time and has seen as a challenge by the organization.

4.6 Information Use by Decision Makers and Program Staff

As per all respondents answer and the desk review conducted in the organization on M&E information access, information users receive this information by hard as well as electronic copies. The M&E officers put the information produced by them on a

networked computer so that any information user can easily access the information on his/her computer for immediate reference.

The Information obtained from M&E reports of MEDA is accessible to all decision makers for immediate program intervention activities and all the M&E reports are accessible to all information users with appropriate channel. The project makes data easily accessible to overall managers at the country office and regional levels once it is produced by the M&E officers.

As per all respondents, the information obtained from M&E is considered to be very important and the decision makers use the information to take appropriate majors to increase the effectiveness of the project. The managers meet regularly to make decisions based on the reports they receive from the M&E office of the organization.

4.7 Information Dissemination and Transparency

Several interview questions were raised to all key informants on the organization's M&E information dissemination and transparency and they have responded that the organization has not an organized information dissemination and transparency system. As per the replies of all respondents, the organization has not a knowledge management or communication officer to prepare, edit and share all information in relation to the project's performance. All the program activities information including success stories and case studies are prepared by M&E officers in collaboration with program staff. For that reason the project's information related to M&E activities have never been disseminated formally to its partners in a timely basis. In addition to that it does not reach to all partners and the government offices.

The organization also has not disseminated and shared success stories and other case studies with other organizations to share experience and to increase the organization's visibilities. Even though data dissemination plans are developed, preparing summary reports, newsletters, graphs, and maps are not implemented. Generally M&E reports related to the project activities are not available publicly.

4.8 M&E's Activities Resources Allocation

Different donors budget different amount of money to run the M&E activities of the project. Allocating sufficient amount of funds for M&E activities is beneficial to implement successful projects. From the depth interview with the decision makers and M&E officers, four of them said that the organization does not allocate adequate budget for M&E unit. And they admitted that there have been M&E activities that could not be done because of budget constraint. But the rest of the informants said that the organization has been allocating enough amount for M&E activities and they have never faced any budget constraint to implement M&E activities.

All the M&E officers inform that, even though all the M&E officers are educated and have no capacity problem, the organization has never planned to give trainings to its M&E staff to develop their capacity in the field and learn new methods and systems to handle the M&E activities easily. They also said that the M&E staff in the project is under staffed to do its routine activities properly, consecutively activities overlap and some activities left behind to meet declines.

4.9 The Main Challenges of M&E Activities

The final set of questions that the interviewees asked were to tell the possible challenges that they had felt the organization has faced so far in relation to its M&E activities listed below.

As listed in the table below (table two) five of the respondents said that inadequate human resources and lack of training in the M&E department in the organization the main challenge. But three said that the organization has sufficient man power for to perform the activities effectively.

In regard with M&E activities funding, ½ of the respondents informed that, the organization has enough funding for the M&E activities but the rest ½ replied that the activities have not been performed well because of budget constraint.

Table 2: The Main Challenges of M&E Activities

Sr. No.	Description	Yes	No
1	Inadequate human resource capacity/ people who trained in M&E	5	3
2	Lack of funding/ resources for M&E	4	4
3	Not viewed as a priority by senior government officials	1	7
4	M&E technology/ system to collect information easily and systematically not in place	3	5
5	Inappropriate M&E implementation strategies	2	6
6	Lack of capacity building training	4	4
7	Identification of agreed on priority areas for M&E	3	5
8	Lack of an effective communication strategy to inform policy development and planning	5	3
9	Consultants trained in M&E that are available to assist	2	6

Source: **Own survey, 2014**

M&E, not viewed as a priority by senior government officials is a concern of only one respondent but the seven said that management treats M&E as a priority for the program's intervention.

Regarding technology and system of the organization, three of them reported that collecting, analyzing and easily and systematically reporting M&E information in the organization is a challenge. But five of them said that the organization is well equipped in terms of technology and system for effective M&E activities.

The M&E implementation strategies of the organization are approved by six respondents; however, the two of them said that the organization strategy has gaps to implement M&E activities properly.

Identifying of agreed on priority areas for M&E has been a problem in the organization according to three respondents. But the five of them said that the organization has appropriate agreed priority areas for M&E.

Capacity building trainings to M&E staff is not given by the organization, which is considered to be a challenge by four respondents. But the rest said that it is not considered to be a challenge even though the organization has never planned and trained its M&E staff.

Lack of an effective communication strategy to inform changes in development and planning is one of the major challenges mentioned by the informants. Five of them said that the organization lacks to establish effective communication strategy but the rest said this is not a major challenge in the organization.

Consultants trained in M&E that is available to assist the M&E staff has not been seen as a challenge by most of them. Only two said that sometimes contracting M&E consultant to oversee the M&E department of the organization could contribute a lot for effective M&E activities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter has dealt with analysis of data collected and the interpretation of the findings. Use was made of primary data gathered through the use of key informants' interviews as well as secondary data.

5.1 Summary of the Major Findings

Notice must be taken of the fact that these findings are specific to this study. They may confirm or reject findings in similar studies in existing literature. In generalizing the findings of this study, care must be taken since different organizations may yield different results. Therefore, these results are expected to truly reflect that of the studied organization only.

For the objective number one (To assess if the information presented by M&E staff is accurate, complete and in timely manner for effective decision making process),

- the study shows that occasionally the M&E information has not been ready on time; it is also incomplete and inaccurate. In the interview, when asked why quality problem is a challenge for this organization, the interviewees respond that, one is there are no designated staff responsible for reviewing the quality of data i.e., the accuracy, completeness and timeliness that the M&E office received from sub-reporting levels.
- The use of different methodology in collecting and analyzing the data by different teams in the organization was the other reason mentioned by the respondents for data quality problem.
- Human resources shortage in the department and not focusing on the lower level of the work are the other two key constraints that bring data quality problems.
- In addition to that dalliance of the data is created while transporting of it from the field offices to the country office.

- Also the limited field level capacity of the organization is considered as one of the core reason why the data does not reach to the country office on time. From the interview, the M&E office employees have other departmental related priorities which hinder them from the production of M&E information on time.

Objective number two seeks to find out if sufficient fund is allocated for the M&E activities of the project.

- The research findings revealed that the organization does not allocate adequate budget for M&E unit and even there were M&E activities that could not be performed because of budget constraint. From the interviewees' response, one of the main reasons behind this is the government's policy that imposed all non-governmental organizations to use 70% of the donors' fund to the program and 30% to administrative activities. As the M&E activities are classified under administrative cost by the government, most NGOs face shortage of fund for their administrative activities.
- From document review, allocating appropriate fund against each M&E activity has not been realized.

Assessing the level of technology and equipment that is employed to facilitate the M&E activities of the project is the third objective of the study.

- More than 1/3 of the interviewees clearly informed that the M&E technology to collect information easily and systematically is not in place. The interviewees have also revealed that even though the organization have been using electronic data collecting instruments in some regions, using manual data collecting systems in other regions is still applicable which brings the delay of data to reach the country office of the organization.
- In the situation when internet connection is a challenge in the entire country, the use of electronic data collection method is also a challenge. In other words receiving the collected data automatically when the data is entered is not feasible all the time.

Assessing the capacity and availability of sufficient human resources to run the M&E activities of the organization is the fourth specific objective of this study.

- As per the interviews conducted with the M&E staff, the project is under staffed to carry out its routine as well as seasonal activities. For this reason, some activities overlap and some activities can lag behind to meet declines.

- Also from the in-depth interview, all M&E staff informed that even though all the M&E officers are educated and have no capacity problem, the organization has not any strategy to provide trainings to its M&E staff to develop their capacity in the field and learn new methods and systems to handle the M&E activities easily.

- Not appointing a staff in anther department that should work closely with the M&E staff to increase information dissemination and documentation has been a problem as well. The organization has not employed a staff to work closely with the M&E employees to prepare formal newsletters, information bulletins, success stories, case studies and other information to be disseminated and shared with stake holders, donors and other similar organizations. This information is produced poorly by the M&E officers and program staff and not properly shared to appropriate offices on time.

The last specific objective of the study is to assess the information use of the organization for decision making.

- As per the M&E officers responses, the regional offices do not compile and analyze data for themselves to take actions before it come to country office. And this hinders the regional offices from intervene for the problems seen regularly on program activities immediately. This shows that the decision making process is centralized that it does restrict the regional project coordinators to take immediate actions on problems. Considering the nature of the project that is highly depend on the weather condition of the project sites, taking immediate major is crucial. As per their response, but once the M&E office produces the report, all information users, including the regional office coordinators receive the information through appropriate channels. The organization uses emails and internal information and

document sharing intranet system that is used by the employees of MEDA throughout the world.

- The study also found out that the project M&E plan is not linked to National M&E Plan to tie its activities with the national development strategy, which may not allow the government to identify the level of social and economic development in the country.

5.2 Conclusion

MEDA has grown to become a large, dynamic international organization comprised of thousands of members and supporters across North America and Europe. In the meantime there is also a concern that the organization should consider and strive to improve for better performance, development and satisfaction of the stakeholders of the organization.

For the objective number one (To assess if the information presented by M&E staff is accurate, complete and in timely manner for effective decision making process), the study uncovered that the M&E information collected, analyzed and presented in the organization for the management decision has quality problem. Therefore, where there is no quality data collection, analysis and production system in the M&E unit of the organization, effective decision making process is unthinkable.

For objective number two, (to assess if sufficient fund is allocated for the M&E activities of the project), the finding evidently identified that the organization does not allocate enough amount of fund to the M&E activities. And without earmarking enough funds expecting functional M&E system is impossible.

The study also found out that the level of technology and equipment that is employed to facilitate the M&E activities of the project is minimal. Shortage of electronic equipment and advanced networking and communication system in the regional offices are not implemented fully to facilitate the M&E activities effectively. Inadequate equipment, poor technology and ineffective communication system within the entire offices of the organization cannot allow effective decision making.

It is clear that adequate and proficient human resources are the backbone of many institutions to meet the intended objectives of the organizations. In this case, the study found out that there is shortage of human resources and lack of appropriate trainings in all levels of M&E staff to carry out proper M&E activities of the organization. Likewise, employees working closely with M&E staff to publish and disseminate different M&E related reports are not carried out properly as the organization has no communication officers. These activities are produced poorly by the M&E officers with the expense of the M&E actual activities. For big projects like EDGET, without placing vibrant and sufficient employees, producing quality information for result based decision making process is impossible.

The last specific objective of the study is to assess the information use of the organization for decision making. The survey revealed that MEDA's decision making process is centralized that it does restrict the regional project coordinators to take immediate actions when they need to intervene program activities. Since the nature of the program activities depend on the weather condition of the project sites, centralized decision making hinders the regional program office from taking immediate measure actions. In such cases the seasons change without taking any actions while waiting the refined data sent from the country office. Hence, with the absence of decentralized method of data analysis, use and appropriate measures in all regional levels of the organization, effective program intervention activities would not be in place.

All the above paragraphs evidently pronounce what the M&E system of MEDA, EDGET project lacks. In general, the findings have exposed the M&E system of MEDA, EDGET project has not performing up to the standard which perhaps could affect accomplishment of the targeted objectives that were reflected at the beginning of the project.

This chapter adopts a format of presenting the totality of the study findings in terms of summary of key findings, conclusions of the study, recommendations and lessons for the organization as well as other organizations and further research.

5.3 Recommendation

From the above stated findings and conclusions,

- It is recommended that the management MEDA, EDGET project should put in place proper designated staff who is responsible for reviewing the quality of data (i.e., accuracy, completeness and timeliness) received from sub-reporting levels and from regional offices. The responsible staff should also able to check the quality of data in all levels of M&E activities like- during gathering, encoding, analysis, production and management.

- All the information collected by using electronic data collecting devices must also be sent to the regions and country office in hard copies in case the information does not reach to the country office due to internet connection problems.

- The organization should also hire additional M&E officers and provide appropriate M&E trainings for its staff to increase their dynamism and to boost their interest in the organization. Data collectors' capacity should also be examined before handling the activity and appropriate trainings on the data collecting tools and on the electronic data collecting instruments should be given.

- In addition to that it also recommended if the organization hires a communication officer to work closely with the M&E officers to produce and share the M&E information such as standardized newsletters, information bulletins, success stories and other M&E outputs with stakeholders and donors to update the progress and increase transparency. Other similar organizations can also be benefited by looking at the reported distributed from the organization.

- The organization should create a systematic way of decentralizing the decision making process. Each regional office program coordinators should be able to use the data collected for immediate intervention activities. In order to do this, the regional office program coordinators should obtain appropriate trainings.

- The organization should purchase additional electronic data collecting instruments and be able to use it in all project sites to collect data so that if the countries telecom system is workable, the raw data can reach the country office in a timely manner. In addition to that the information gathered using the electronic data

collection instruments should be able to reach the regional office as well for immediate intervention activities. In order to do that, considering putting a server (data base computers) in all regional offices establishing appropriate linkages with the country office and data collecting electronic instruments is important.

- The government should consider revising its policy on 70/30–program/administration cost respectively imposed on NGOs. The government has passed strict rule on the use of developmental funds to NGOs to use 70% of the fund to the program and 30% to administrative activities. The M&E activities of any organization are considered administrative by the government. Because of this, most organizations face shortage of fund in their administrative fund since M&E is one of their major activities. Thus in order to use the administrative fund for all administrate activities, allocating portions of the fund it cannot be carried out effectively if sufficient budget is allocated. Thus, I recommend the government to consider the M&E as a program activity.

- MEDA needs to work together with the Ministry of Agriculture to link its M&E system with the national M&E system to gauge the country's performance in agriculture.

5.4 Limitation of the Study

- The M&E by itself is one of the key components of the organizational activities that is expected to measures the performance of the organization. The donor's continuity in funding the projects activity and the opportunity of finding new donors for new projects is based on the organization's performance reputation. Because of these, studying the functionality of the M&E system of one organization is a challenge. In this study, even though, the organization allows the study to be conducted, providing documents for desk review and providing full and appropriate responses for the interview questions were a challenge. The interviewees felt that providing negative information about their organization to a researcher was not appropriate because it is considered as revealing its weakness which consecutively leads to loose of the organizations reputation.   So the employees were providing erroneous responses which have some discrepancies with the desk review.

- Another limitation of this research was the time and effort constraints on the part of the researcher, because of the busy schedule of the researcher and the nature of work of the respondents, which invariably limited the research in terms of its scope.

- Other studies on the functionality of the M&E system of other organizations' has not been found for a comparison purpose of the results, the researcher was obligated to site different M&E manuals and guidelines as basics for best M&E system.

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Annex 1- Semi - Structured Interview Question No. 1

Respondents have been informed about the study details and given assurance about ethical principles, such as anonymity and confidentiality to give them some idea of what to expect from the interview and to increases the likelihood of honesty. The following statement has been given before the interview as a process of informed consent.

You are invited to take part in this study entitled '' **An Assessment of the Functionality of M&E system: The Case of MEDA, "EDGET" Project**''. Before you agree to participate in this study, it is important that you understand the objective of the study. The objective of this study is to assess how the M&E system of MEDA's EDGET projects functions and draw important lessons to inform future directions. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the Masters of Business Administration (MBA). Participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw without giving any reason or being excluded from benefiting from the project.

Information about you will be coded by number. Your name will not appear on any of the documents. The information gathered will be accessible only by the investigators and it will be kept in a locked facility. You will not be identified by name in any publications that may result from this survey. Your responses will be treated as confidential, and we will ensure that any statements or comments you make cannot be linked either to you as an individual or to your organization.

Interview Questions for Decision Makers and Information Users

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1   How long you have been in this organization?

▭ < 1 year   ▭ 2-3 years   ▭ >3 years

1.2   What is your current position in the organization? _____

1.3   How long you have been in this position?

▭ < 1 year   ▭ 2-3 years   ▭ >3 years

1.4   Age

▭ < 29   ▭ 29-38   ▭ 39-48   ▭ 49 And

above

1.5   Sex

▭ Male   ▭ Female

1.6   Level of Education

▭ Diploma   ▭ Bachelor's degree   ▭ Master's degree

▭ Doctoral or professional degree

SECTION 2: PLANNING M&E ACTIVITIES

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Has the organization M&E Plan?	
2	If so, do you allow all relevant staff to participate during planning?	
3	If so, do you update your plan when there are changes of strategies?	
4	If so, how frequent do you modify the M&E and activities plan?	

5	If so, do the M&E staffs comply with the plan? Are there any irregularities. If Yes, what are the reasons?	
6	If so, do you share the organization M&E plan in your organization?	
7	If so, how do you monitor the implementation of M&E plan?	
8	If so, does the project M&E plan clearly indicate the person responsible to handle each M&E activities in specific period of time and place?	

SECTION 3: MONITORING &EVAUATION SYSTEM

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Does the M&E component add value to your work as a manager, in that it produces useful management tools and information?	
2	Is the M&E function within your organization well located and adequately capacitated?	
3	Does the M&E component is sufficiently integrate into the institutional management arrangements of the department to add value?	
4	Does your organization take M&E seriously, and sees M&E as a critical management tool?	
5	Has there been a time at work that you needed program information but you could not find on time?	
6	If 'YES' to question number 5, why?	

7	What do you do when you could not find information on time?	
8	Has there been a time that you could not find data from your M&E report when it should have been present? Incomplete information.	
9	If yes to question number 8, why?	
10	If reports are not complete what do you do? (complete means you get all the information that you need in the M&E report for decision making)	
11	Has there been a time in the M&E report that you did find inaccurate or inconsistent information?	
12	If "YES' to question number 11, why?	
13	If "NO' to question number 11, how do you check the inaccuracy or inconsistency of the information?	
14	Do you prepare an annual progress report, using the M&E plan as an input to the annual reviews?	
15	Do you meet regularly with partners to assess progress towards Monitoring results?	
16	Do you conduct joint field monitoring missions to gauge achievements and constraints?	
17	Do you identify capacity development needs among partners, particularly related to data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting?	
18	Do your regional offices compile and analyze data for themselves to take actions before it come to you?	

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Does the organization allocate adequate budget for M&E unit?	
2	Has there been any M&E activity that couldn't be done because of budget constraint?	
3	Do you think the M&E system in your project is under staffed to do its routine activities?	
4	Do you think the M&E staff in your team is well trained to do the job?	
5	Does you project has budget and give capacity building trainings to your M&E staff?	
6	The Information obtained from M&E reports are accessible to all decision makers for immediate program intervention activities.	
7	Are the M&E reports accessible to all information users with appropriate channel?	
8	Is the project's information related to M&E activities disseminated on time?	
9	Do you have knowledge management and communication officer in your organization?	
10	If "YES' is there a collaboration activities between knowledge management and communication officer and M&E activities for better information sharing and dissemination with stake holders	
11	If "NO" how do you document and disseminate information	

No.	Description	Tick
	regarding success stories & other M&E results?	
12	Do you disseminate and share success stories and other case studies with other organizations so that these organizations can learn from your knowledge and also know about your organization's activities?	

SECTION 5: CHALLENGES

What do you think are the main challenges relating to M&E in your Department?
(Multiple responses – you can tick as many statements as applies as well as add if need be)

No.	Description	Tick
1	Inadequate human resource capacity/ people who trained in M&E	
2	Lack of funding/ resources for M&E	
3	Not viewed as a priority by senior staff at HQ level	
4	M&E technology/ system to collect, analyze and report information easily and systematically not in place	
5	Inappropriate M&E implementation strategies	
6	Lack of M&E staff training	
7	Identification of agreed on priority areas for M&E	
8	Lack of an effective communication strategy to inform policy development and planning	
9	Consultants trained in M&E that are available to assist	

10	Other (specify)	

Annex 1- Semi - Structured Interview Question No. 2

Respondents have been informed about the study details and given assurance about ethical principles, such as anonymity and confidentiality to give them some idea of what to expect from the interview and to increases the likelihood of honesty. The following statement has been given before the interview as a process of informed consent.

You are invited to take part in this study entitled '' **An Assessment of the Functionality of M&E system: The Case of MEDA, "EDGET" Project**''. Before you agree to participate in this study, it is important that you understand the objective of the study. The objective of this study is to assess how the M&E system of MEDA's EDGET projects functions and draw important lessons to inform future directions. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the Masters of Business Administration (MBA). Participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw without giving any reason or being excluded from benefiting from the project.

Information about you will be coded by number. Your name will not appear on any of the documents. The information gathered will be accessible only by the investigators and it will be kept in a locked facility. You will not be identified by name in any publications that may result from this survey. Your responses will be treated as confidential, and we will ensure that any statements or comments you make cannot be linked either to you as an individual or to your organization.

Interview Questions for M&E Staff

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.7 How long you have been in this organization?

☐ < 1 year ☐ 2-3 years ☐ >3 years

1.8 What is your current position? _____

1.9 How long you have been in this position?

☐ < 1 year ☐ 2-3 years ☐ > 3 years

1.10 Age

☐ < 29 ☐ 29-38 ☐ 39-48 ☐ 49 And above

1.11 Sex

☐ Male ☐ Female

1.12 Level of Education

☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Master's degree

☐ Doctoral or professional degree

SECTION 2: PLANNING M&E ACTIVITIES

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Does your organization have an M&E plan? (Yes/No)	
2	How many times in a year your organization do M&E plan?	
3	Do all relevant staffs participate during planning?	
4	Is the annual M&E plan break down into quarterly, monthly and weekly?	
5	Is M&E plan shared with non-M&E staff in the organization?	

No.	Questions	Answers
6	How do you share your plan with non-M&E in your organization?	
7	How do you monitor the implementation of your plan?	
8	Do you update your plan when there are changes of strategies?	
9	Is the project plan indicate who is supposed to do what to collect which data and when it is collected" and how that data has changed over the course of a certain period?	
10	If Yes to Q9, are all the assumed processes have been carried out as per the plan? Please explain	
11	If No to Q9why?	
12	Is there a documented data management process that helps reporting requirements to be met (for example establishing responsibilities and timelines for data capture)?	
13	Are the roles and responsibilities of program staff in monitoring and evaluation clearly defined and documented?	

SECTION 3: MONITORING &EVAUATION IN ORGANIZATION

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Is the M&E function within your organization is well located and adequately capacitated?	
2	Does the M&E component is sufficiently integrate into the institutional management arrangements of the department to add value?	

No.	Questions	Answers
3	What are your views of the understanding that management has to M&E?	
4	What is the level of appropriateness of location of M&E within the management hierarchy?	
5	Do you receive sufficient support to undertake all M&E activities from the higher management body of your organization?	
6	Do you receive sufficient support for M&E activities from technical staff (non-M&E) of your organization?	
7	How data from the field reach M&E unit? What are the different channels that it passes? Please list them.	
8	Is there any problem or gap with the channel of reporting and with the reporting system?	
9	Do your regional offices compile and analyze data for themselves to take actions before it come to M&E unit?	

SECTION 4: SYSTEM

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Has the organization ever faced data quality problem in the project's life so far?	
2	Does the organization have a systematic process of ensuring data quality control at all levels of implementation?	
3	Have you ever been asked by managers to check the quality	

	of data of a certain activity in the project?	
4	Have you ever find data discrepancy between the original data collected by data collectors and the data collected during the data quality control?	
5	Have you ever been asked for information from managers for immediate action and the information requested was not ready / delayed from your end? If yes, what was the reason?	
6	Is the M&E system show a high level of readiness in providing need based information for users?	
10	Has there been a time at work that you have been requested to provide M&E information but you could not do it on time?	
11	If yes to question number 10, why?	
12	What do you do when you are requested to provide information but was not ready?	
13	Has there been a time that you have been requested to check the completeness of data from your M&E report when it should have been completed? (Incomplete information).	
14	If yes to question number 13, why?	
15	If no, how do you check the incompleteness/ completeness of the information?	
16	If reports are not complete what do you do? (complete means- all the information that is needed in the M&E report for decision making)	

17	Has there been a time that data users asked you to check for any incorrect or inconsistent information in the M &E report that you produced?	
18	If yes to question number 17, why?	
19	If no, how do you check the incorrectness or inconsistency of the information received from data collectors?	
20	Do you prepare an annual progress report, using the M&E plan as an input to the annual reviews?	
21	Do you meet regularly with partners to assess progress towards monitoring results?	
22	Do you conduct joint field monitoring missions to gauge achievements and constraints?	
23	Do you identify capacity development needs among partners, particularly related to data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting?	
24	How do the information users can access M&E information? (centrally/ networked)	
25	Does your organization have a system to ensure that lessons learned of 'good practice' are applied to future programs?	
26	Does your organization have a systemic way of sharing program/ project reports and evaluations with other external stakeholders?	
27	Is the information obtained from M&E reports are accessible	

	to all decision makers for immediate program intervention activities.	
28	Are the M&E reports accessible to all information users with appropriate channel?	
29	Is the project's information related to M&E activities disseminated on time?	
30	Is there a collaboration activities between knowledge management and communication officer and M&E activities for better information sharing and dissemination with stake holders	
31	Do you document success stories?	
32	Do you disseminate and share success stories and other case studies with other organizations so that these organizations can learn from your experience and also know about your organization's activities?	
33	How often do you go to the field to see how data is collected, recorded, analyzed and used?	
34	What data quality assurance system you have in place to ensure the quality of data that you get from the field?	
35	Do you also receive M&E reports on time from the field?	

SECTION 5: RESOURCES

No	Questions	Answers
1	Has there been any M&E activity that couldn't be done because of budget constraint?	
2	Do you think the M&E system in your project has appropriate number of staff?	
3	Do you think the M&E staff in your team is well trained to do the job?	
4	Does you project has budget and plan to provide capacity building trainings to your M&E staff?	
5	Does your organization provide M&E training and refresher trainings for M&E staff?	
6	Have you ever encountered shortage or insufficient supply of technical equipment/ technology to collect, analyze and disseminate information?	
7	Has the organization failed to establish a system (manual or computerized) that assists staff in capturing, managing and analyzing program data?	

SECTION 6: CHALLENGES

What do you think are the main challenges relating to M&E in your organization? (Multiple responses – you can tick as many statements as applies as well as add if need be)

No.	Description	Tick
1	Inadequate human resource capacity/ people who trained in M&E	
2	Lack of funding/ resources for M&E	
3	Not viewed as a priority by senior management	
4	M&E technology/ system to collect, analyze and report information easily and systematically not in place	
5	Inappropriate M&E implementation strategies	
6	Lack of training	
7	Identification of agreed on priority areas for M&E	
8	Lack of an effective communication strategy to inform policy development and planning	
9	Consultants trained in M&E that are available to assist	
10	Other (specify)	