

ON THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDER DECENTRALISATION

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This paper examines the objectives of, and constraints on, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of rural development projects under decentralised systems of project identification, planning and implementation. It also identifies criteria for the design of M&E systems under such conditions. Procedures for M&E under the District Focus strategy in Kenya are reviewed and it is concluded that, for the type of projects typically found under decentralisation, methodologies which are administratively and technically simple to operate are appropriate. It is also concluded that considerable gains can be expected from strengthening monitoring and evaluation at the level of the decentralised administrative unit but that generating evaluation findings for use in national and sectoral planning and policy-making presents difficulties.

Decentralisation can take a number of forms but, in broad terms, it involves a shift of executive power and administrative control from authorities in the capital city or major urban centres to smaller administrative units in rural areas. The degree of decentralisation will vary and, in practice, is unlikely to involve all power being passed to the decentralised administrative units. Instead, such units will typically be given a range of powers and an allocation of resources but with overall control of policy and resources being retained centrally. The decentralised units are then free to manage development activities in the area under their control in accordance with general policy guidelines and resource constraints decided at the central level.

The emergence of decentralised systems of planning and implementation places new demands on project monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The literature on the M&E of agricultural and rural development projects (which is mainly based on the experience of the so-called 'first generation' of M&E systems) has emphasised approaches appropriate to relatively large projects, planned and implemented under centralised systems of control and administration.¹ Only recently has attention been given to methods and procedures for small, locally-oriented projects of the type commonly found under decentralised planning systems.²

The objectives of this paper are, first, to examine constraints on the M&E of rural development projects under systems of decentralised project planning and implementation and, second, to identify criteria for the design of M&E systems under these conditions. Attention is given to the M&E of projects under the decentralisation strategy currently in operation in Kenya, but the conclusions of

the paper should find relevance in other countries seeking to decentralise the administration of rural development.

Objectives, Functions and Constraints on Monitoring and Evaluation under Decentralisation

THE ROLE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

There is now general agreement that monitoring is a management-oriented activity designed to provide project managers with information on project operations as a basis for decision-making.³ In other words it is an integral part of the project management information system. The term 'monitoring' is sometimes also used to mean a check on progress made from outside the project. Used in this sense, monitoring is part of an audit process designed to keep track of what is happening and to ensure that funds are being spent wisely and in accordance with specified objectives and constraints. (The term 'evaluation' is commonly agreed to mean the process of extracting lessons for the future from the experience of current and recent projects. This is done both in order to facilitate revision of the current project plan and to provide guidance for policy-making and project planning in the future. Evaluation is thus a formal process of learning from experience.⁴)

Until recently the literature on M&E has given emphasis to methodology and organisation appropriate to large-scale agricultural and rural development projects. In particular, attention has been given to the integration of monitoring in the project management structure.⁵ A widely adopted model is the specialist monitoring unit based at project headquarters and staffed by personnel recruited specifically for this task. Such a unit normally comprises one or more professional staff supported by others assigned to data collection and analysis. It supplies information to project management and may also report periodically to central ministries or other organisations with responsibility for the project.

Those evaluating projects report on the experience of the project and highlight aspects of particular relevance to policy and planning in the future. A common approach is to assign the evaluation function to the parent ministry or, in some cases, to create an institution specifically for the purpose. The latter model has been adopted in Nigeria where the Agricultural Projects Monitoring, Evaluation and Planning Unit (APMEPU) was created largely for evaluation activities. In some cases evaluation will also be undertaken by the donor agency.

The nature of the projects for which such systems have been designed suggests that the existing methodologies and organisational framework for monitoring and evaluation are based on three main assumptions:

- (a) that projects are of sufficient scale to justify a discrete management structure involving staff working solely or predominantly on the project concerned. In turn, the size and degree of autonomy of such projects justifies the inclusion in the organisational structure of a project monitoring unit with specialist staff;
- (b) that projects are relatively complex and multi-faceted in that they have a number of distinct technical dimensions and involve a range of line depart-

ments. As a result, the system is extensive; and (c) that projects are of a scale which have relevance to the future.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are the management of project operations in a decentralised system. The assumptions cited above are to be markedly different from the projects in a centralised system because their size is small, their unit and also because they are often identified and implemented by relatively small because of the needs of people in rural areas normally have taken their labour towards the project.

An independent monitoring unit can be justified for most projects managed by personnel from a separate administrative unit. In some cases a separate manager is required for more than one administrative unit.

In relation to the administrative unit, monitoring is restricted to relatively small projects which involve initiatives in rural development projects in fields of agricultural production. For simple projects it is often necessary, since, in general, a relatively large number of people (with special needs) rather than a small number result from restricted resources at the level of the decentralised implementation and the information system.

As regards the technical conditions and so on, it is intended that, in rural development projects, the priorities and constraints are of considerable difficulty.

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ments. As a result, information needs for management are complex and extensive; and

- (c) that projects are sufficiently large and representative as to yield lessons that have relevance to the design and implementation of similar projects in the future.

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Monitoring and evaluation is as important to the planning, implementation and management of projects under decentralisation as it is to projects under centralised systems. However, for projects under decentralised systems, the assumptions cited above are unlikely to hold since project characteristics will tend to be markedly different. First, as regards scale, it is likely that a large proportion of the projects in a single decentralised administrative unit will be small. This is because their size is limited by the boundaries of the decentralised administrative unit and also because decentralisation typically places emphasis on projects identified and implemented through local participation. Such projects are frequently small because they are oriented towards (and the benefits limited to) the needs of people in the immediate vicinity of the project. This target group will normally have taken a major role in project identification and will often contribute its labour towards implementation.

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An independent management structure or separate monitoring unit would not be justified for most projects because of their smallness. Instead, projects will be managed by personnel from the appropriate line ministry in the decentralised administrative unit. (There may, of course, be some larger projects justifying a separate management structure particularly amongst those projects involving more than one administrative unit.)

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In relation to the second assumption, most of the projects in a decentralised administrative unit are likely to be confined to a single sector or subsector and be restricted to relatively simple technology and approaches. They will probably not involve initiatives in more than one sector in the way that an integrated rural development project might, for example, seek to combine development in the fields of agriculture, water, housing, roads and health. Emphasis on relatively simple projects is partly a result of the importance given to local participation since, in general, a decentralised administrative unit will probably wish to address a relatively large number of development opportunities (involving a range of needs) rather than concentrating resources on fewer, larger projects. It will also result from restricted funds and shortage of experienced and trained staff at the level of the decentralised administrative unit. As a result of these characteristics, the implementation and management of such projects will tend to be less complex and the information needs for management more modest.

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As regards the third assumption (on evaluation), decentralisation emphasises rural development strategies (and hence projects) which accord with local conditions and so seeks to avoid the 'imposition' of projects designed centrally. It is intended that, in this way, projects will be designed for consistency with local priorities and constraints. However, this in turn means there are likely to be considerable difficulties in deriving lessons from the experience of such projects

which are relevant to project planning and implementation in other parts of the country or to policy-making and planning at the national, sector and subsector levels. In contrast, the lessons of evaluation will be highly relevant to other projects in the decentralised administrative unit concerned.

THE DESIGN OF PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS FOR DECENTRALISATION

M&E at the level of the decentralised administrative unit must, therefore, address large numbers of relatively simple projects, most of which are confined to a single subsector. The system design must also take account of the probable shortage of capable and well-trained staff and hence needs to be technically and administratively easy to operate. Shortage of trained and experienced staff is by no means confined to decentralisation, but is likely to be more severe for two reasons. These are, first, because the number of staff required will be greater under decentralised systems since posts in both line and support ministries will be replicated in each of the administrative units. Second, the more senior and better-trained staff are often unwilling to live and work in rural areas, preferring instead to remain in the capital city or urban centres. As a result, there is a tendency for younger, less-experienced staff (often recent graduates) with a limited range of job opportunities to be assigned to work in the decentralised administration.

A further design constraint is the need to limit the amount of data generated by M&E. This is because the decentralised administration is likely to have restricted capacity for data processing and analysis and because, with relatively weak staff resources, the generation of large amounts of information is unlikely to lead to significant improvements in project implementation and management. Keeping data production low also has the advantage of speeding analysis which, in turn, increases the chances of timely reports and, hence, timely action.

In line with these constraints, therefore, project monitoring at the level of the decentralised administrative unit should be confined to the following areas:

- (a) recording financial disbursement and comparing disbursement with planned expenditure;
- (b) recording procurement and use of physical inputs and comparing actual use with the quantities planned;
- (c) recording major achievements in the physical progress of the project (i.e. completion of buildings, installation of machinery) and comparing actual with planned time of completion; and
- (d) identifying problems inhibiting implementation which require action.

The objective of such a system would be to provide information (as a basis for decisions) and signals on the need for action. As such, it would be oriented towards the needs of those managing project implementation within the administration of the decentralised unit. This implies that responsibility for monitoring should be integrated in the management of the decentralised administration and that authority and responsibility for action should be clearly defined. Experience from the first generation of M&E systems suggests that, without this, the effectiveness of monitoring as a management tool is diminished. Indeed, without strong linkages

between monitoring and management, monitoring is simply a data collection exercise, with the person responsible for its

In the same way, the person responsible for the decentralised administrative unit must be project identification and evaluation. Project evaluation and experienced staff are essential for decentralisation to be successful. A particular concern is the lack of staff with strong reliability. Such reports would be of little use for monitoring purposes. The only way to overcome this is in the identification and

While the philosophy of the M&E system, the development of a system. There are two reasons for this and subsequent actions involve duplication of inputs which will prevent implementation. However, decentralised units must be in response to

A drawback of a system is the response of project implementation of beneficiary systems for the decentralised unit. Valuable information involves more coordination and generation of greater information to be outside the unit. It would also absorb

This latter point is that the administration will result, it is likely that professional functions and implementation also underpin M&E are, to some extent, responsibilities in more than one area for implementation might also be involved

between monitoring and management, there is a danger of monitoring becoming simply a data collection activity which commands little support from those responsible for its execution or receiving the findings.

In the same way, evaluation should be clearly oriented towards the needs of the decentralised administrative unit and aim to provide feedback (on aspects of project identification, design and implementation) relevant to that administrative unit. Project evaluation in first generation systems placed heavy reliance on trained and experienced analysts for this task. Without this resource, evaluation under decentralisation will probably need to be based on pro-forma reports on each project, although with opportunity for the evaluator to highlight aspects of particular concern or interest. Indeed, the restricted scope of investigations and the limitations on staff capability point to a need for a highly structured M&E system with strong reliance on pro-forma reports for monitoring as well as evaluation. Such reports would specify the information required about each project and, for monitoring purposes, would be completed at regular quarterly or half-yearly intervals. The only area requiring the judgement of the responsible officer would be in the identification and diagnosis of problems affecting the project.

While the philosophy of decentralisation suggests that each unit design its own M&E system, there are nevertheless likely to be substantial benefits from the development of a standard system for use in all decentralised administrative units. There are two reasons for this. First, that the initial design will require pre-testing and subsequent adaptation and to undertake this process in each unit would involve duplication of effort. Second, design of the system will require specialist inputs which will probably be outside the capability of the decentralised administration. However, while the system would initially be standardised across the decentralised units, it could subsequently be modified by individual administrative units in response to local needs or conditions.

A drawback of a system of this type would be the absence of capacity to monitor the response of project beneficiaries in terms of the uptake of technology and realisation of benefits. This area has been given considerable emphasis in M&E systems for the larger agricultural rural development projects and provides valuable information on the impact of the project. However, beneficiary monitoring involves more complex methodology (notably in the area of field surveys) and the generation of greater amounts of data. While beneficiary monitoring can certainly provide management with valuable information, its scope and complexity are likely to be outside the capability and resources of the decentralised administrative unit. It would also absorb substantial amounts of staff time.

This latter point is important since it is unlikely that the decentralised administration will have sufficient resources to create specialist M&E posts. As a result, it is likely that M&E tasks will be undertaken alongside other project-related professional functions with, for example, officers responsible for project implementation also undertaking M&E. This has the added advantage that the results of M&E are, to some extent, 'automatically' disseminated since staff have responsibilities in more than one part of the project cycle. For example, those responsible for implementation (and hence, under this scheme, for generating M&E findings) might also be involved in the preparation of project proposals. They would thus be

in a good position to take action on the basis of M&E findings in their project planning and implementation activities.

A further consequence of the strong orientation of M&E findings towards the work of the decentralised administrative unit is the difficulty of generating evaluation findings suitable for use at the central level. Even when, as under decentralisation, substantial decision-making authority is shifted from the central level to the decentralised administration, central government will still require feedback on the effects of national and sector policy, planning guidelines and resources allocations.

There are three ways of providing this feedback. The first is for each decentralised unit to report periodically (probably annually) to the central level administration. This could suitably be in the form of a structured report posing specific questions as well as inviting general conclusions. While this would yield some useful information, there are likely to be problems in aggregating the results to provide generalisable conclusions. It would also be analytically complex and administratively cumbersome with the central level administration faced annually with large numbers of these reports.

A second approach is to create a specialist institution with the purpose of obtaining evaluation findings from the decentralised administrative units. Such an institution could do this using findings from the evaluation carried out by the decentralised administrations and by carrying out its own evaluation studies of selected projects. While such institutions have been created for the purpose of evaluating large-scale agricultural and rural development projects (notably in Nigeria), there is as yet no example specifically for projects under decentralisation. A third approach is to allocate responsibility to an intermediate, probably regional, administration, which would aggregate and interpret the lessons of evaluation from the decentralised administrative units comprising that region. Again this could be done through a combination of reviewing evaluation undertaken by the various units and by undertaking specialist evaluation studies as appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluating Projects under Decentralisation in Kenya

DECENTRALISATION IN KENYA

Decentralisation in Kenya is by no means a new phenomenon and, as early as 1965, government policy made specific reference to the desirability of a participatory approach to planned change and the extension of planning to the provincial and district levels.⁶ A number of steps were taken to decentralise parts of the administration, including the District Planning Initiative launched in 1974.⁷ However, it was not until 1983 that the present strategy for decentralisation, the so-called 'District Focus for Rural Development' became operational.

The economic and political context within which the District Focus strategy was developed was of strained government capacity to maintain its existing services, a larger budget deficit and a growing balance of payments problem, especially in the period 1979-82.⁸ A working party on government expenditures was appointed in

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1982 to identify ways of reducing the budget deficit and increasing the efficiency of government operations. The resulting report (usually referred to as the 'Ndegwa Report') made a number of recommendations including some on the future role of the district administration.⁹ In particular, the report recommended that the district team, under the leadership of the District Commissioner (DC) and the guidance of the District Development Officer (DDO), should be established as the major force for the management of rural development. This was to include a number of measures, as follows:

- (a) reassignment of professional and technical staff to the districts from provincial headquarters;
- (b) designation of the DC as a professional appointment independent of politics;
- (c) strengthening planning and accounting capabilities at the district level;
- (d) strengthening the capability of the District Development Committee (DDC) in analysing plans, budgets and progress reports; and
- (e) transfer of Authorities to Incur Expenditure (AIE) from the provincial to district level with the primary responsibility for accounting being passed to the District Treasuries.

The District Focus strategy was formulated and made operational in response to these recommendations. It involves three levels of administration: central ministry, province and district. These levels were in place before District Focus, but were given new responsibilities under the strategy. Each of the seven provinces comprises a number of districts and is headed by a Provincial Commissioner. The central ministerial level is the overall government administration located in Nairobi and comprises line and coordinating ministries, including the Treasury, Ministry of Planning and National Development and the Office of the President.

In practice the main administrative and executive functions under District Focus are vested at the district and central ministerial levels with the district taking primary responsibilities for planning, implementing and administering development activities.

Each district, through its District Development Committee (DDC), is responsible for rural development planning and coordination, project implementation, management of financial and other resources, overseeing the local procurement of goods and services, management of personnel and provision of public information. The District Commissioner (DC) is the Chief Executive Officer for rural development activities in the district. It is the responsibility of the DC to ensure that the various officers in charge of the planning, coordination and implementation of projects execute their obligations in an effective and efficient manner.¹⁰

While the districts have been given a considerable degree of autonomy, national and sector policy and planning and overall budgetary control remain vested at the central ministerial level. Individual ministries are responsible for establishing policies for their respective sectors and are charged with preparing annual guidelines for use by the districts in selecting projects for financing. Furthermore, since not all rural development needs can be met through projects specific to single districts, central ministries also design, implement and manage any projects encompassing more than one district.

In contrast, the role of the provincial administration has not been well defined

and, in practice, has lost power under the District Focus. Broadly, it can be seen as an intermediate stage between the district and central ministerial levels. It acts both as a supervisory body in observing implementation of national and sectoral policy in the districts and as a channel for representing the views and interests of the districts at the central ministerial level.

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION UNDER THE DISTRICT FOCUS STRATEGY

Monitoring and evaluation are carried out at all levels of the administration. At the central ministerial level, monitoring is largely concerned with the overall control of financial and physical resources and evaluation with the adaptation of national and sectoral policy. Some of the information used at the central level is supplied by the provincial administration, where M&E is undertaken by the Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Committees (PMEC), whose terms of reference are as follows:

- (a) providing technical support to the District Development Committees and District Executive Committees (DEC);
- (b) coordinating the planning and implementation of inter-district projects and programmes;
- (c) monitoring all ministry, local authority, parastatal, regional development authority and non-governmental activities in the province, identifying projects and programmes with design, implementation or maintenance problems and evaluating these projects in order to find solutions to the problems;
- (d) promoting integration between sectors;
- (e) preparing briefs for distribution to operating ministries on the problems and successes of projects in the province; and
- (f) serving as a resource for district level training activities.

Reports prepared by the PMECs are sent to the operating ministries with copies to coordinating ministries, including the Secretary to the Cabinet, the Office of the President and the Planning Department of the Ministry of Planning and National Development. In addition reports are sent to chairmen of other PMECs in order to share experience.

In comparison with their terms of reference in the early years of the District Focus, the functions of the PMECs have shifted from concentration on monitoring activities towards the present emphasis on evaluation. Their current role can be seen as observing and analysing development in the districts, finding reasons for project success or failure and formulating general conclusions for use at the central ministerial level in national and sector planning and policy-making. In practice, however, PMECs still allocate a considerable amount of time to monitoring. In doing this, they act as a supervisory body overseeing development in the districts, ensuring that funds are being spent wisely and checking that projects are being implemented as intended and according to schedule. Such functions are oriented more towards audit and supervision than the provision of information for management purposes.

At the district level, primary responsibility for M&E is given to the DDC which is required to . . . review ongoing progress to ensure that current projects are rapidly implemented and that completed projects and existing infrastructure are effec-

tively operated and to the District Executive coordination and district. The DEC represented in the Officer (DDO) as Monitoring reports line ministries and minutes of DDC meetings at the central level.

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tively operated and maintained'.¹¹ In practice, the main responsibility for M&E falls to the District Executive Committee (DEC), which is charged with the day-to-day coordination and monitoring of all projects and development activities in the district. The DEC is mainly composed of heads of the various line ministries represented in the district and is chaired by the DC with the District Development Officer (DDO) as secretary (the DDO also leads the District Planning Unit). Monitoring reports by the DEC are primarily for use within the district by the DDC, line ministries and the District Planning Unit. They may, however, be appended to minutes of DDC meetings which are then forwarded to the PMEC and ministries at the central level.

The main difficulties facing both the district and provincial teams in carrying out these functions are associated with the scale and type of the projects involved. The District Focus Strategy has placed strong emphasis on local participation in planning and implementation and this has tended to generate large numbers of small, single-sector projects. Neither the districts nor the PMECs have been given operational guidelines for undertaking M&E under these circumstances and have been left to devise their own approach. Some general guidelines have recently been published but have yet to be widely adopted since they step back from providing basic guidance on appropriate procedures and approaches.¹²

The approach taken at the provincial level is for the PMEC to visit districts as a full committee or as a series of teams which are informally constituted as sub-committees of the PMEC. The team visits a district and studies a selection of projects. Given the number of projects in progress at any one time, it is clearly impossible for the team to see all the projects and, indeed, some might never be visited. Instead the PMEC or team see a cross-section. Some PMECs concentrate mainly on projects with problems while others also look at some successes. In all cases, the projects are chosen by the PMEC in order to prevent the districts choosing only those showing the best performance.

During such visits the PMECs review progress, try to find out why problems have emerged and make recommendations for corrective action. The investigation is not highly structured and relies on the analytical ability of the officers concerned. The approach is thus unsystematic and, while findings may well be accurate, they necessarily represent a somewhat impressionistic view. Sometimes the PMEC team will attempt to enforce implementation of recommendations generated through this process by making return visits (although they have no statutory authority to insist on changes since the districts retain responsibility for implementation). In the case of successful projects, the PMEC tries to find out what factors contributed to success as a basis for possible replication of the strategy or project design elsewhere. The teams report to a full meeting of the PMEC and, once agreed, these reports are appended to PMEC minutes. These composite reports are then forwarded to the various users of PMEC findings.

The approach at the district level shows strong similarities. The DEC either constitute a project monitoring sub-committee to visit projects in the districts or appoint small, sectorally-specific teams for this purpose. The sub-committee or team reports to the DEC which in turn reports to the DDC. Such reports are then appended to DDC minutes.

The clients of evaluation studies by the PMECs are the line and coordinating ministries at the central level. These organisations require general guidance on how policy and planning decisions have affected development in the country as a whole. In contrast, the clients of M&E undertaken by the district teams are based in the districts. Monitoring is intended to assist with the implementation of the district's current projects while the results of evaluation are designed to feed into project identification, selection, planning and implementation by the district administration in the future. Use of M&E findings outside the district is very much a secondary objective.

Some assessment of the comparative effectiveness of M&E at the district and provincial levels might be deduced from the use made of the findings by the intended clients. Experience so far suggests that evaluation findings originating from the PMECs have not found a ready audience at the central ministerial level and have had limited impact on planning or policy. This seems to be because such findings have often been inconclusive or so specific to the project or area that they have little general relevance. Furthermore, central level ministries have had difficulties reconciling the messages from seven provinces and deriving overall conclusions about national development priorities and strategy.

In contrast, M&E at the central level appears to have a more accessible audience which is better able to make use of findings. There are three reasons for this: first, the monitoring work of the districts is primarily oriented towards improving implementation rather than checking progress; it is concerned with management rather than audit. (Evidence from Malawi and Nigeria suggests that project monitoring systems work better and constitute a more effective aid to management when they are clearly shown to be a tool for assisting management rather than assessing or auditing it.)¹³ The second reason is that, given the size of the district administration, officers responsible for evaluation are also likely to work in other stages of the project cycle, including planning and implementation. District officers will thus have responsibility for a range of tasks which, in the parent ministry, would be divided between different sections of the ministry. In these circumstances, even without a formal system of reporting the results of evaluation, district officers can be expected to note, absorb and act on many of the lessons learned. So, for example, the DDO, who acts as secretary to the DEC (which has day-to-day responsibility for M&E) and leads the District Planning Unit, is in a strong position to ensure that evaluation findings are incorporated in the work of the District Planning Unit. A third reason is that the findings of evaluation are specific to the district. As a result, there seems a better chance that they will be relevant to local conditions and, hence, worthy of attention and relevant to planning and implementation in the future.

Conclusion

The widespread adoption of decentralisation as a strategy for the administration and management of rural development necessitates modifications to the methodology and organisation of monitoring and evaluation. Whereas the so-called 'first generation' of project monitoring and evaluation systems for agricultural and

rural development experienced problems in addressing large numbers of weak staff capital methodology of likely that M&E implies the limit

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¹³ I. Casley, D. J. and Evaluation of Agricultural Projects, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1982; Clayton, Monitoring Systems for Agricultural Development Projects, Rome, FAO

rural development projects were relatively sophisticated and were staffed with experienced personnel (often expatriates), M&E under decentralisation must address large numbers of small and generally simple projects under conditions of weak staff capability. As a result, there is a need for changes in the scope and methodology of project monitoring and evaluation systems and, in general, it is likely that M&E will need to be in a less complex form. In practice, this probably implies the limitation of monitoring to examination of project inputs and outputs.

Since decentralisation involves significant decisions being taken at the level of the decentralised administrative unit, it suggests that the main orientation of both monitoring and evaluation should be towards the needs of this unit. Thus, since monitoring is a management-oriented tool and the management of rural development is vested in the decentralised administration, it follows that monitoring should be integrated in that part of the organisational structure of the decentralised unit concerned with project management and so provide information for those responsible for project implementation. In the same way, the lessons from evaluation at the decentralised level are likely to be most pertinent to projects in that locality and, hence in the first instance, evaluation should be oriented towards the decentralised administration. This contrasts with 'first generation' systems where the evaluation needs of the central level were generally paramount.

There are, however, likely to be two problems with 'simple' systems of this type. These are, first, the absence of a capacity for monitoring the response of the target group and, second, the difficulty of generating evaluation findings for use at the central level. Potentially these problems could be alleviated by providing M&E support to the decentralised administrative units from a higher-level, possibly regional, administration (in the Kenyan case, from the provincial administration). Development of strong M&E capability at this level could provide a basis for support to the component decentralised administrative units (including capacity for surveys for beneficiary monitoring and specialised studies) and avoid the need for the units to build this capability themselves.

An intermediate administrative level of this type with M&E capability could also provide a channel for evaluation findings to the central level. In this case, the regional administration would sort and analyse the findings from the component decentralised administrative units and derive conclusions for the region as a whole. This scheme would avoid the central level being overwhelmed with large numbers of reports from the decentralised administrative units and would require only that the central level draw together the conclusions from the regional administrations. In some cases, the regional administration could also carry out ad hoc studies to investigate particular problems or phenomena in the region.

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