

IAP Process Monitoring - purpose and methods

Integrated Action Plan (IAP) process monitoring here refers to keeping track of what is happening on the ground and how 'soft systems' are evolving in response to: project activities and interventions; locally facilitated action plan formulation and implementation activities; external influences and drivers. It may be possible to capture such information using a reflective journal type approach or structured records of meetings and conversations. Data obtained using such approaches may be difficult to analyse, however, and interpretations may be rather subjective. Possible means to visualise change might include Venn diagrams or flow charts for depicting evolving relationships between different stakeholder groups.

The purpose of process monitoring is to provide the IAP implementation team and relevant stakeholders the information and confidence to allow them to undertake critical reflection of the implementation process and identify potential corrective measures during the following evaluation stage.

Example - HighARCS project Buxa site participatory monitoring process

An example from the HighARCS project is how the Centre for the Development of Human Initiatives (CDHI) team in Buxa, India is following a very structured on-going participatory monitoring process, where local field workers make daily observations which are reported to local teams on a weekly basis and to larger CDHI meetings on a monthly basis. HighARCS project activities have been included in line with other activities in this procedure which is part of an existing monitoring and evaluation practice already existing at CDHI. Highlights from these monitoring activities are sent to the HighARCS Work Package leaders on a quarterly basis. The quarterly reports contain (1) entries stating the overall strategies followed; (2) objectives and planned activities of the whole project period and the last 3-month period; (3) and the outcomes achieved during the last quarter (activities, results (qualitative), future action plans, and lessons learned).

Example - East Kolkata Wetlands - discussion diary, meetings/workshops, activity report.

Another example is from the East Kolkata Wetlands where an approach to process monitoring based on proformas (see below) to be completed by project staff was developed to monitor the action planning process instigated as part of a DFID NRSP sponsored project in the East Kolkata Wetlands (see Lewins, 2004). Three formats were suggested: a discussion diary for team members; a proforma for major meetings or workshops; and a weekly activity report. Examples completed by Roger Lewins with hypothetical responses are presented below to

illustrate likely outcomes; further background and elaboration are provided by Lewins (2004).

Lewins, R. (2004) Evaluating action planning for enhanced NRM in PU Kolkata - developing the draft process monitoring tools. Oxford, UK.

Draft Researcher's Discussion Diary (source Lewins, 2004)

Name: Roger Lewins
Date: 1/6/04

Place: Fish Producer's Office

"Co-operation"

(Cite new evidence of collaboration within the stakeholder group and/or with other stakeholder groups. Or cite evidence of lacking co-operation.)

Comments:

(1) Fish Producer's Committee have agreed to meet project staff once a week - committee members will jointly allocate key spokesmen to project.

(2) The Fish Producers have made their own arrangement to discuss project with the Save the Wetlands NGO.

Why?:

(1) The group are enthusiastic about project are some members are too busy to meet with the project team.

(2) The Fish Producers and the NGO have identified some areas of mutual interest before the project workshop and want to discuss in private.

"Understanding"

(Cite new evidence of understanding within the stakeholder group with respect to the project, management issues and Ramsar. Or cite evidence of lacking understanding)

Comments:

The Fish Producers understand the purpose of the project but not Ramsar.

Why?:

Ramsar has not been properly communicated to them yet (fact-sheet not finished and Ramsar meeting still to be held).

"Decision-making"

(Cite new evidence of decision-making within the stakeholder group with respect to the project. Or cite evidence of lacking understanding)

Comments:

The Fish Producers have decided to make sluice gate rehabilitation their priority objective in future meetings with other stakeholders.

Why?:

They believe sluice gate management will benefit others as well as themselves (prevent siltation etc.).

Unusual Events and Outcomes

Observations

There is great enthusiasm for tackling sluice gate management now but there was no interest last week. The group are much more supportive of project than last week.

Explanations

Discussion between the group and the project team have highlighted the opportunity and benefits from better sluice gate management. They were also visited by government representatives in this regard.

Significance

Shows greater support and understanding of project and opportunities. Also shows linkage with other secondary stakeholders (in this case, government representatives responsible for irrigation and canals).

Major Meeting or Workshop Report (source Lewins, 2004)

Name: Roger Lewins

Venue:

Date:

Agenda: Future sluice gate management

Participants: 12 Fish Producers / 6 Save the Wetlands reps. including Chairman

Chair: Professor Ghosh

Discussion

(e.g. main points discussed, who said what, suggested activities or plans etc.)

The project activities & progress were highlighted by project team. Discussion centred on sluice gate management -especially future roles and responsibilities (government and beneficiaries). Alternative management arrangements were suggested - including a new role for Department of Irrigation etc.

Decisions

(e.g. any agreements on suggestions made, summing-up etc.)

Agreed that the appropriate GOs must be involved in next stages of discussion (in this case Dept. of Irrigation, etc.). It was agreed that operators should be responsible for day-to-day maintenance etc. but that government must provide greater support in training and resources/funding of gate operator.

Researcher's summary

Discussion quality:

Input from both groups was good and productive and Fish Producer and Save the Wetlands Chairmen were in agreement.

Hopes:

Agreement to involve GO stakeholders could release funds and support for improved sluice gate management.

Fears:

It will be difficult to build support from GOs and to encourage change in practice.

Recommendation:

Research team should act as brokers (intermediaries) on behalf of Fish Producers and Save the Wetlands.

This issue should be raised at next project meeting with the relevant GOs.

Researcher Weekly Activity Report (source Lewins, 2004)

Name: Roger Lewins

Date:

Meetings & other work undertaken:-

- Provisional meeting with Fish Producer's Organisation held at their office.
- Agreement reached with labour union and fish producers on site and date for Ramsar discussion.
- Workshop invitations sent to
- Private conversation with Fish Producer's Chairman regarding meals and costs at workshop.
- Presentation for workshop agreed with project team and finished.
- etc.

