

# GUIDE ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION FOR AVSF'S COOPERATION PROJECTS



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**COOPERATION  
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# GLOSSARY

- AFD** French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement)
- ARC** AVSF’s “Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate” program
- ESAP** AVSF’s “Livestock Farming, Animal Health and Veterinary Public Health” program
- CBI** Capacity Building Index – (in French: IRI - Indice de renforcement Institutionnel) Participative self-evaluation tool for tracking changes in an organization’s capacities over time
- M&E** Monitoring and evaluation
- MPA** Multi-year Partnership Agreement between AVSF and AFD (in French: CPP-Convention Pluriannuelle de Partenariat)
- OPM** AVSF’s “Producer Organization and Markets” program
- OVI** Objectively verifiable indicator
- IOV-AFD** OVIs included in the Multi-year Partnership Agreement with AFD
- SYME** **M**onitoring and **E**valuation **S**ystem (in French: SYSE - **S**ystème de **S**uivi-**E**valuation) – Excel document: i) describes the project’s M&E system; ii) used for monitoring activities and project indicators. It is a tool that is useful for managing projects and reporting to the head office about the status of the indicators.

# INTRODUCTION



## ***Monitoring and evaluation: a priority for AVSF***

This guide on AVSF’s monitoring and evaluation policy is in line with our organization’s long-standing desire to **place quality at the heart of our cooperation programs**.

The quality of our projects and our ability to show evidence of the outputs and impact of the work we do with our partners are essential when it comes to earning the trust of donors and public and private donors.

## ***Objectives and expectations***

The purpose of a monitoring and evaluation system is to **ensure the quality of our cooperation work and achieve the stated objectives of the projects we carry out with our partners throughout the world. The system also aims to fulfil the [general objectives](#)<sup>1</sup> of our organization.**

**For AVSF, the main objectives of an effective monitoring and evaluation system are:**

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1.6 on AVSF’s variables of change

1. **To ensure sound management of projects, programs and actions** by collecting and analyzing relevant quantitative and qualitative data in order to monitor the progress of our work and the output achieved, and evaluate the outcomes and impact of our work.

Data is collected to help develop and implement, in a timely manner and in conjunction with our partners and the beneficiaries of our work, changes in the project strategy and in the execution of the planned activities in order to achieve the objectives and expected outputs. That data should therefore be used to make our projects more effective<sup>2</sup> and efficient<sup>3</sup>.

2. **To supply accurate and objective information in a timely manner to our technical and financial partners** about our activities, the outputs and outcomes achieved, and the final impact of our actions and cooperation work in the South.
3. **To integrate data on the outputs and outcomes of our work at local, national and regional level, and globally throughout all of our cooperation work** in support of smallholder farming in order to:
  - **Improve experience-sharing for innovation and across disciplines;**
  - **Provide examples of our work and its impact,** particularly (but not exclusively) for communication;
  - **Support advocacy work in the North, and the advocacy work of our partners in the South;**
  - **Highlight the importance of AVSF's mission** (supporting smallholders is a path for the future for fair and sustainable development in the South) in the documents produced (reference texts, articles, activity reports, etc.).



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2 Effectiveness of a project: objectives vs results achieved  
3 Efficiency of a project: resources used vs results obtained

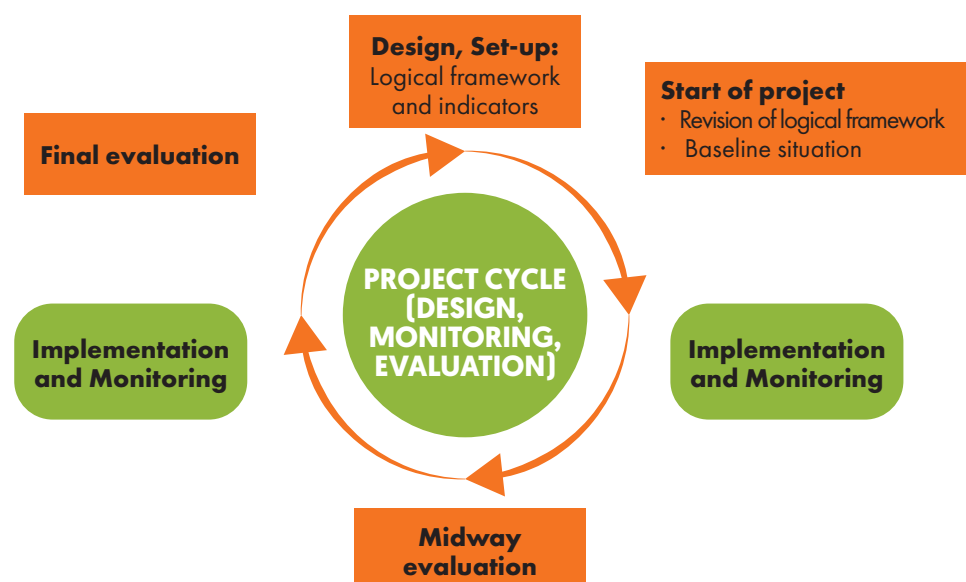
# 1 DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

This first part of the guide introduces the definitions and concepts that form the basis of an effective monitoring and evaluation system for development projects. It also presents the fundamental principles that underlie AVSF’s monitoring and evaluation work, and explains AVSF’s approach to monitoring and evaluation.

## /// 1.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Concept	Definition
Monitoring	<p><b>Routine process throughout a project</b>, where information about the project activities is collected while the project is being carried out.</p> <p>Monitoring provides information on how the project is progressing in relation to planning: <b>it focuses on the activities themselves, and on the expected outputs of the activities.</b></p>
Evaluation	<p><b>Occasional activity</b> to assess (quantitatively or qualitatively) whether the project’s general objective and specific objectives have been met. <b>Evaluation focuses on the project’s outcomes and impact, how the project is progressing</b>, and whether that progress is favorable or seen as an obstacle to making a positive impact. Evaluation utilizes data gathered during monitoring.</p>

## /// 1.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

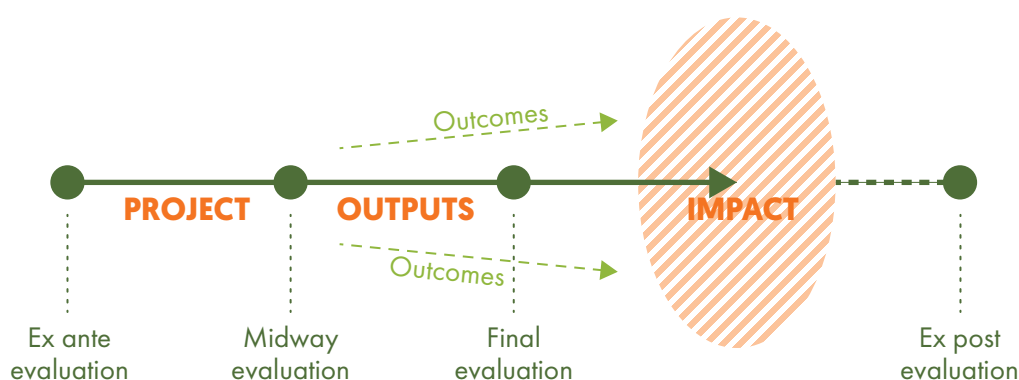


One of the first things to remember is that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of a project is not performed externally. *It is an integral part of the action and an essential tool for managing the project. That’s why M&E must be considered at all key stages of the project cycle, including the design/set-up stage.*

In Chapter II, we will see in detail how to integrate monitoring and evaluation into the key stages of a project.

## /// 1.3 OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Concept	Definition	Example
<b>Outputs</b>	These are the <b>qualitative and quantitative changes</b> in the lives of the «project-beneficiary» families, <b>produced directly by the project and activities.</b>	<i>320 families located at the end of a canal can count on irrigation water every 15 days, thanks to the physical renovation of the system and the definition of a new water tower.</i>
<b>Outcomes</b>	These are the consequences of the project on the surrounding physical and human environment.  <b>The outcomes are a combination of the project's outputs and other dynamics</b> or constraints linked to the environment in which the project is carried out. They cover a broader scope than that of the project itself.	<i>Nearly 650 families were able to boost their income by at least 25% after the introduction of new irrigated crops (avocados, fruit), thanks to the possibility of continuous irrigation every 15 days and a nearby urban market where producers can sell their produce.</i>
<b>Impact</b>	This includes all the significant changes, whether positive or negative, expected or unexpected, that occur in people's lives following a project or series of projects (Roche, 1999).  These changes may be social, economic or environmental. Impact may be observed even beyond completion of a project.	<i>A decline in immigration with more young farmers gradually settling in the area, following the renovation of irrigation systems and the development of channels for selling new products, with a warm welcome on local markets.</i>



At the end of the project, the outcomes that may contribute to the project's impact:

- cover a greater population than the population targeted by the project,
- cover more areas of activity than projected at the start.

The use of the word **impact** in the plural stems from confusion between «effect» and «impact». Many outcomes are often incorrectly referred to as «impacts». There is only one impact: the impact of the new situation taken in its entirety.



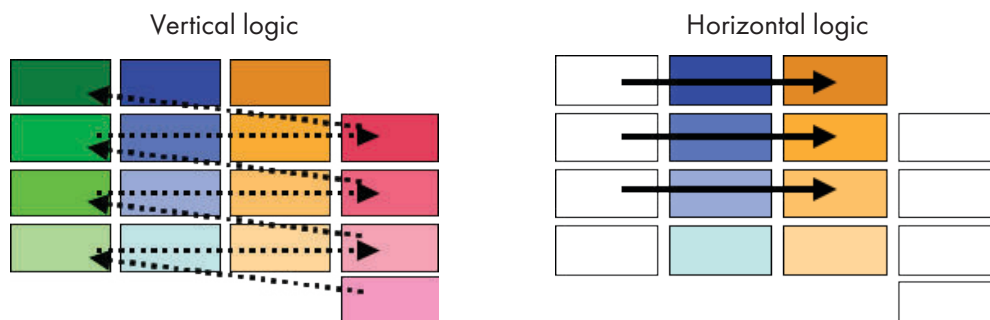
## /// 1.4 LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The logical framework is a planning tool used when setting up a project. It summarizes information relevant to the project and helps align the different components: description / means of verifying the outputs / resources and costs / assumptions on the project context.

The logical framework is a table where all the content of a project/program is organized in a way that is easy for everyone to decipher. The table has four columns and four rows:

	Description	Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
General objectives				
Specific objective				
Outputs				
Activities		Resources	Costs	
				Prerequisites

- The *vertical logic* identifies what the project aims to achieve, clarifies the causal links and outlines the assumptions and major uncertainties that are beyond the control of the person managing the project.
- The *horizontal logic* measures the outcomes and outputs of the project, and the resources mobilized by the project, by identifying key indicators and the sources that can be used to verify them.



The logical framework is a **dynamic tool** that must be reassessed and revised throughout the project depending on how the situation is progressing.

## /// 1.5 INDICATORS

Concept	Definition	Example
<b>Indicator</b>	Indicators are operational descriptions of the project's objectives and outputs. They outline the project's objectives in terms of quantity, quality, target group(s), time and location (source: European Union).	
	<b>The indicator, or OVI</b> (Objectively Verifiable Indicator), must be able to be accurately described and measured, quantitatively and/or qualitatively, at the start of the project ( <b>baseline situation</b> ), during the project and/or at the end of the project.	Rate of water loss for an irrigation canal (initial value: 60%; final value at end of project: 10%).
	A good indicator should meet the following five " <b>SMART</b> " criteria:	At the end of the project: Increase in gross annual income for families (target value: 15%)
	<b>Specific:</b> clearly define what is to be measured	
	<b>Measurable:</b> (or objectively observable): in terms of quantity and/or quality	
	<b>Accessible:</b> can be measured using available means and at a reasonable cost	
	<b>Reasonable:</b> relevant to the project and responds to users' needs	
	<b>Timely:</b> valid within the time frame of the project	

### Creating indicators to measure outputs and outcomes

- Indicators measuring OUTCOMES are defined based on the general and specific objectives
- Indicators measuring OUTPUTS must be defined for each expected result
- An Annual Operational Plan (AOP) and procedures for MONITORING ACTIVITIES (indicators for activities or achievements) are developed based on the activities announced

	Description	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
<b>General objectives</b>	GO1 ; GO2 ; ...	INDICATORS FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES		
<b>Specific objective</b>	SO	INDICATORS FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES		
<b>Outputs</b>	R1 ; R2 ; R3 ...	INDICATORS FOR MEASURING OUTPUTS		
<b>Activities</b>	A1.1 ... ; A2.2 ... ... A.3.3 ...	INDICATORS FOR MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT		

**AOP MONITORING OF ACTIVITIES**

## /// 1.6 AVSF'S VARIABLES OF CHANGE AND CROSS-CUTTING OUTCOME INDICATORS

AVSF's monitoring and evaluation system is unique because it has defined **nine common variables** that are representative of the progress and expected changes in AVSF's projects and programs, and that are in line with the organization's missions (general and cross-cutting objectives).

### AVSF variables of change

1. Changes in the production systems
2. Changes in the economic situation of smallholder families
3. Changes in lifestyle (beyond production systems)
4. Development of a fairer, more sustainable and more participative system for managing resources
5. Ability of smallholder farming to adapt to climate change and/or ability to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions
6. Social and economic changes in the situation of women
7. Progress by rural organizations (Capacity Building Index): *Legitimacy and representativeness; technical and operational capacities; administrative and financial capacities; influence (including ability to analyze, negotiate and form alliances); internal functioning; internal funding capacity*
8. Progress by partners (Capacity Building Index): *Technical and operational capacities; administrative and financial capacities; capacity to influence rural-development practices and policies (including experience-sharing); internal functioning, democracy and transparency; internal funding capacity; legitimacy and representativeness*
9. Impact on local and/or national policies

### Those variables can guide us when we have to create indicators for projects.

An AVSF project must aim to achieve outputs and outcomes with regard to one or more of those variables. It is unlikely that a single project will have an impact on all nine variables, so it is important to choose indicators that deal with variables that are relevant to the project, in order to be able to evaluate the progress/changes that the project is working towards.

Defining indicators for a project based on those variables makes it possible to **align the project's objectives (logical framework) with AVSF's missions.**

After a joint effort involving the program managers at headquarters and teams on the ground in Abengourou, Ivory Coast, in June 2019, **cross-cutting outcomes indicators** were proposed for some of those variables<sup>4</sup> of change. For each cross-cutting indicator, harmonized methods and tools for data collection and monitoring are offered in the methodological guides created by each program (ARC, ESAP, OPM) and available on the online **M&E sharing platform**. **Those cross-cutting outcome indicators** may therefore **appear in a number of projects** implemented by AVSF, depending on how close they are geographically and/or thematically.

If needed, it will be possible to consolidate data on the indicators measuring the outcomes of AVSF's work by country, region, or theme, and potentially for the organization as whole (when relevant).

4 The indicators, organized by program (ARC, ESAP, OPM), appear in Appendix 1 of this guide.

## 2 IMPLEMENTATION OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION – A PRACTICAL GUIDE

### *How to design and implement monitoring and evaluation work for a project so that it is effective and efficient, and in line with available financial resources and staff?*

This chapter offers a practical guide for the planning, set-up and implementation of monitoring and evaluation throughout four key stages of a project, namely:

- Design/set-up
- Start
- Implementation
- Midway and final project evaluations

For each of the above stages, an approach is outlined with best practices. AVSF has acquired a number of M&E tools in line with those best practices.



## /// 2.1 DESIGNING AND SETTING UP THE PROJECT



### PROCEDURE

M&E needs to be anticipated and planned when the project is being designed


Describe the M&E system in the project narrative

### BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLS<sup>5</sup>

**TOOL: 4. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING, ANALYZING AND VALIDATING PROJECTS<sup>6</sup>**

Make sure AVSF's institutional project is reflected in the projects, and in M&E, in order to:

- Strengthen AVSF's identity in the projects;
- Make it clear that M&E in AVSF's projects is tailored to our objectives and to the reality on the ground.

 **TOOL: Standard text on M&E** to be incorporated into the project narrative (adapted or added to depending on the specific context).

<sup>5</sup> The tools mentioned in this guide are available on the online M&E SHARING PLATFORM.

<sup>6</sup> See "Procedure for assessing AVSF's cooperation projects – December 2016" on the M/E SHARING PLATFORM.

## PROCEDURE

## BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLS<sup>5</sup>


### Create the logical framework


**Adjust ambitions to fit the project's available resources and staff.** Doing so will ensure that the logic and operations are realistic and feasible!

**Consider assumptions and risks:** When planning a project, there is often a tendency to be overly optimistic with regard to progress. When it comes to the progress of a project, the **assumptions** are the favorable conditions, and the **risks** are negative factors.

**Get partners to work together to create the logical framework.** Adapt each partner's role based on their abilities: *can the partner help set up a portion of the project?*

At minimum, take time to discuss and jointly identify the objectives and expected outputs of the project. *Always plan a workshop/working session for designing the project, and always have the documents approved once they are produced.*

 **TOOL:** Method: Problem tree – Solution tree

 **TOOL:** see 1.4 Logical framework

### Defining the right indicators and adapting them to the context of the project

**Have the indicators reviewed by the responsible of monitoring and evaluation at country level and by the program-manager at headquarters.**

**Don't forget the following:**

- **SMART indicators** (see definition under 1.5)
- Think about **incorporating AVSF's cross-cutting indicators for measuring outcomes**, depending on the AVSF variables of change relevant to the project and its objectives

 **TOOLS:**

See **1.5 Indicators**

See **1.6 AVSF's variables of change**

See **the list of cross-cutting outcome indicators** appended to this guide

### Plan M&E activities and include them in the timeline of project activities.

The timing of M&E activities needs to be in line with the timing of agricultural campaigns/crop years, or key moments in the life of producer organizations or local partners.





### Include M&E costs in the budget.

For example: gathering information for the baseline situation, surveys, studies and analyses, data-processing, intermediate and final evaluations, training for agricultural diagnostic assessments in new areas, types of operations, etc. Update data for the M&E system.

*When a project is being designed, it is important to anticipate what will need to be done in terms of monitoring and evaluation throughout the project!*

## /// 2.2 START OF THE PROJECT



PROCEDURE	BEST PRACTICES AND  TOOLS
<p>Review/adapt the logical framework and project indicators</p>	<p>Conditions when a project is being designed often differ from the conditions when the project starts. If a lot of time has elapsed, it is important to allow for time to review and then negotiate the logical framework with the donor. Doing so will help ensure that the project is realistic, feasible and high-quality.</p> <p><b>It is recommended that there be no more than 20 indicators in total – for measuring outputs and outcomes.</b> Instead of creating complex systems with too many indicators for measuring outputs or outcomes (which then become useless because they require too much work), it is better to have fewer indicators that are monitored more efficiently.</p>
<p>Include IOV AFD<sup>7</sup> and cross-cutting outcome indicators relevant to the project in the M&amp;E system (if they have not been already included in the logical framework)</p>	<p> <b>TOOL</b> <b>IOV AFD table</b></p> <p> <b>TOOL</b> <b>AVSF's variables of change</b> <b>List of cross-cutting indicators</b></p>
<p>Describe the method for monitoring each indicator</p>	<p>For each indicator, answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>who</b> is responsible for monitoring the indicator?</li> <li>• <b>when</b> and how often?</li> <li>• <b>how</b> (describe the method)?</li> <li>• <b>what</b> tools are available/need to be developed?</li> </ul> <p> <b>TOOL</b> Refer to the methodological guides of the ARC, ESAP and OPM programs</p> <p><b>The method must be realistic and feasible, and its cost must be in line with available resources</b> (some tools are available on the online sharing platform, others must be adapted or developed).</p>

7 OVIs included in the Multi-year Partnership Agreement with AFD (in French: CCP-Convention Pluriannuelle de Partenariat)

## PROCEDURE

**Create and organize the M&E system**



**Create the SYME<sup>8</sup>**

**Plan M&E activities and incorporate them into the timeline of activities for the project**

**Establish the baseline situation, which must be clearly incorporated into the project schedule and planning of activities (generally activity no. 1).**

**Improve M&E capacities within teams: make sure the team has the necessary skills (AVSF and partner)**

## BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLS

**Describe the monitoring system:**

- for activities,
- for indicators (for measuring outputs and outcomes): when/how often, each person's responsibilities, methods for monitoring, tools, etc.
- essential documents for the implementation of the project

 **TOOL: SYME<sup>9</sup>**

It is important to be able to refer to data/elements from the initial diagnostic assessment (usually initiated before project draft). The baseline situation must take into account the indicators of the logical framework, as well as the IOV AFD and relevant cross-cutting indicators.

 **TOOLS**

Baseline-situation examples on the online sharing platform  
Enter the baseline situation in SYME

*In many cases, because the monitoring and evaluation systems are developed late, the baseline situation is not always established at the start of the project.*

*It is therefore vital to subsequently re-establish the situation through (a) existing studies or studies carried out before the project was developed (b) the project document that was presented (c) interviews with resource persons (d) the knowledge of the project team and partners.*

**Outputs and outcomes can only be compared and justified in comparison with a baseline situation at the very start of the project!**

**Organize training sessions on the use of tools and on the usefulness and purpose of M&E**

so that the different actors involved (the project team comprising project head/instructors/technicians/collectors, as well as partners, smallholders benefiting from the project, etc.) have a better understanding and learn the skills they need.

*When it comes to monitoring complex indicators that are more time-consuming (e.g. surveys among families), it may be better to use an external service provider.*

8 **SYME:** tool that describes the monitoring and evaluation system and that is used to track indicators (for measuring effects, results and achievements) throughout the project. It has two functions: 1) Tool for managing the project; 2) Tool for reporting to head office.

9 See summary table: SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT/UPDATE STAGES OF THE M/E SYSTEM AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SYME TOOL, page 18



## /// 2.3 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING



In practice, monitoring and evaluation involves:

- **Collecting and recording data**
- **Managing data: storing it, processing it and analyzing it to assess positive progress versus any difficulties encountered, and tailoring any actions performed to the objectives pursued in a changing context.**
- **Communicating clearly with, and reporting to, the different project stakeholders**

## PROCEDURE

## BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLS

### Collect and record data

Depending on what information you want to gather, you'll need to choose the **right methods** (quantitative/qualitative, surveys, measurements, observations, group discussions, other) and the **right tools/media** (paper forms, on-the-ground reports, tablets, photos, etc.). It is very important to designate who is in charge of each indicator and define how often data will be collected.

- ✓ **Simple and easy-to-understand tools:** make sure the data-collection tools (forms, monitoring reports, etc.) are as simple as possible. Keep only information that is useful and consistent with what you want to monitor.
- ✓ **Make sure the data collectors** (on-the-ground instructor, technician, partner, external service provider, etc.) are trained in the methods and tools proposed.

**Test the tools** with the users (data collectors, project beneficiaries), and adapt them if necessary.

### Manage data

- ✓ **Data storage and processing:** Decide where the raw data will be stored (database on Excel, Access, online platform). By whom? Who will have access to it? Then, what method will be used to consolidate the data and obtain a coherent and orderly overall view of the data?
- ✓ **Data analysis** (by the project coordinator, steering committee, other body designated by the project): To give meaning to the data, summarize it and obtain a coherent analysis of what happened and what needs to be done (project steering). The more this analysis is shared (with the project team, partners and project beneficiaries), the more the different actors will take ownership of the M&E work and will find the initiative meaningful.
- ✓ **UPDATE SYME REGULARLY:** (by the project coordinator) whenever data is updated - frequency depends on the type of activity, the rhythm of the project (e.g. outputs of agricultural campaigns, construction work, training, etc.), and the donor's reporting requirements.

### Communicate clearly and report to the different stakeholders

**Dissemination and feedback** – After being gathered, processed and analyzed, the information is sent to the different stakeholders:

- ✓ If the analysis of the data was not shared, provide **feedback on a regular basis** to the team (at a meeting of the project team, for instance), partners and project beneficiaries at a frequency and in a format and medium that are tailored to the different actors involved.
- ✓ Provide **reports to donors** according to the schedule defined in the funding agreements and noted in the SYME.
- ✓ **Send an updated version of the SYME to the headquarters' office once a year** (at the end of each calendar year). It is important to explain the data using a simple narrative that everyone will understand. Keep in mind that the people using the data are far removed from the realities on the ground and need simple explanations in order to make the data accessible and avoid any incorrect interpretations.

## /// 2.4 EVALUATIONS



An evaluation is an activity carried out from time to time to verify whether a project is successful, using various criteria to assess the intermediate results, specific objective and overall objectives of the project.

### /// EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria most commonly used are:

1. **Relevance:** Verification that the project's objectives are in line with the target group's priorities and with the donor's policy, and that the chosen project(s) is the best suited to meeting the project beneficiaries' needs.
2. **Effectiveness:** Extent to which the project's objectives have been completed. Effectiveness is measured by comparing what has been achieved (outputs, outcomes) with what was expected from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. This criterion measures the degree of completion.
3. **Efficiency:** Measurement of outputs achieved versus resources used (financial resources, staff, time, etc.). This criterion shows whether the right choices have been made to qualitatively and quantitatively optimize available resources.
4. **Sustainability/viability:** Will the project's achievements last, and under what conditions? / Project's ability to continue without external support.
5. **Outcomes:** Project's repercussions on the surrounding physical and human environment.
6. **Impact:** New situation arising from all the outcomes. This includes all the significant changes, whether positive or negative, expected or unexpected, that occur in people's lives after a project or series of projects.

Those “classic” criteria are not always sufficient in cases where a project essentially aims to build the capacities of an organization or social group. More and more now, projects are assessed using other criteria that focus more on **how the actors change** than on material or macroeconomic progress. Such criteria may include (non-exhaustive list):

- **Approach:** favoring social development, or best suited to changing actors and their environment
- **Participation:** not only the project beneficiaries’ contribution to the activities, but also their participation in strategic choices and decision-making during the different phases of the project
- **Satisfaction:** of the project beneficiaries; in line with the effectiveness criterion, but sometimes opposed, when priorities in problem-solving are different for the operators carrying out the project and for certain social groups
- **Taking ownership:** How do the project beneficiaries take ownership of the outputs/outcomes of the project? What are their abilities when it comes to integrating and managing them? Taking ownership involves learning how to manage a project, and then becoming aware of their organizational abilities and the resulting power.
- **Autonomy** and ability to take initiative to anticipate, decide, organize and carry out projects autonomously

*The purpose and expectations of the evaluation will determine the selection of criteria and their relative importance. This choice must be reflected in the terms of reference (ToR).*


## // TYPES OF EVALUATION

AVSF’s projects usually involve two types of evaluation:

1. **The intermediate evaluation**, or midway evaluation, assesses the project’s progress based on the classic criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and viability), and above all **provides relevant recommendations that are in line with the project’s resources** in order to guide the team as they implement the second part of the project and to anticipate exit strategies for the project. This **evaluation** is generally **internal** (unless the donor requires otherwise): The evaluator is known to AVSF and is selected based on his or her skills and expertise in the project activities under evaluation. He or she is therefore able to fulfill the terms of reference for the mission. The evaluator may be an expert well known to AVSF (within its network) or may even belong to a team from another project or country where AVSF carries out its work. The evaluator, however, does not belong to the team of the project under evaluation, but rather another project, and often even another country. In that case, it allows for communication and knowledge-sharing between AVSF’s project teams and helps improve internal skills on both sides.
2. **The final evaluation** (at the end of the project), whether required by the donor or not, is always performed by **external evaluators**. The accent is often placed on exit strategies for the project, on ensuring the longevity of acquired skills and sometimes on whether or not to plan a subsequent phase and under what conditions (forward vision).
3. Other types of evaluation exist and may be performed if needed: **ex-ante evaluation** or initial diagnostic assessment (before the launch of the project); **impact analysis, ex-post evaluation; theme-based evaluation**, etc.

## // ORGANIZING THE EVALUATION

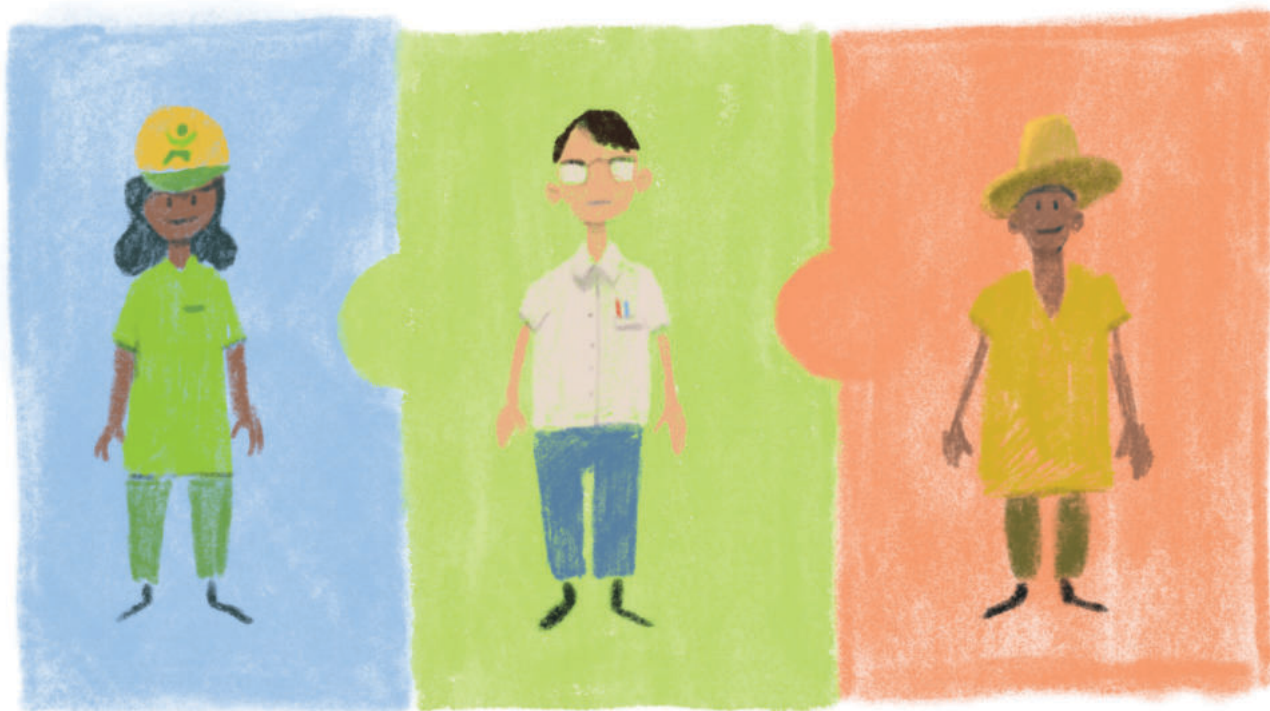
Evaluations, whether intermediate or final, internal or external, must be planned (included in the project timeline), accounted for in the budget, prepared in advance by the project head and national coordinator, and reviewed by the program coordinator. This includes preparing the terms of reference (and therefore defining objectives), choosing criteria and evaluative questions, and selecting an evaluator in accordance with AVSF’s procedures for purchasing services (see service-purchasing procedure).

 **TOOLS**  
**Examples of terms of reference (ToR) for evaluating projects**

## // SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT/UPDATE STAGES OF THE M&E SYSTEM AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SYME TOOL

The stages: Based on three fundamental documents for guiding the project: (i) detailed project document, (ii) logical framework and (iii) overall planning of the project	Correspondence with SYME
0. When <b>the project</b> is being set up, create the logical framework: define <b>indicators for measuring outputs and outcomes</b> following the <b>SMART method</b> and in line with <b>AVSF's variables of change!</b>	Tab 4, Columns B and C
1. Define <b>tools and procedures for permanently monitoring</b> the progress of the activities as a team compared with what was planned	Tab 2 Table 1
2. When the project is launched, clearly define the following for each of the <b>indicators for measuring outputs and outcomes</b> (which will be rectified, with the agreement of the donor, if they were poorly defined): (a) <b>Who</b> will be in charge of monitoring and measuring? (Someone from the team? A project beneficiary? An external evaluator at a given moment? A trainee? Etc.) (b) <b>How</b> will each indicator be monitored and measured? (E.g. surveys, etc.) (c) <b>When</b> will the monitoring and measuring be done for each indicator? (periodically? at a specific time?) (d) <b>The tools</b> currently available or to be developed  When the project is launched, <b>cross-cutting outcome indicators</b> that do not appear in the logical framework may be incorporated, and the monitoring method and resources may be described	Tab 2 Tables 2 and 3  Tab 3
3. Describe the output or outcome indicators <b>at the start of the project</b> (the " <b>baseline situation</b> "), including cross-cutting outcome indicators	Tab 4 Column D
4. Describe the indicators for measuring outputs or outcomes <b>periodically</b> (according to the established timeline) <b>and at the end of the project</b> , including cross-cutting outcome indicators  Update the <b>Table of IOV AFD once a year</b>	Tab 4 Tab 5
5. For better project steering, regularly update the table for monitoring activities	Tab 6

### 3 MANAGING THE GLOBAL M&E SYSTEM



#### **Reminder**

One of the top priorities of M&E is to report on the achievements of our projects, by theme and by location, **and the possibility of integrating/cross-checking the data collected** (outputs, outcomes) at local, national and regional level, and globally throughout all our cooperation work in support of smallholder farming.

M&E also addresses **the contractual commitment we have undertaken with some of our donors**, particularly AFD, to have effective monitoring and evaluation systems that allow us to report on outputs and outcomes, and on the final impact of our projects and cooperation work in the South.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

**A project's M&E system** (tools, indicators, resources and responsibilities) **is defined when the project is being designed, and then outlined in more detail when the project starts.** That system is then used daily in **carrying out** and **managing** the project. It is used to establish **the baseline situation at the start of the project, and then to occasionally evaluate the indicators for measuring outputs and outcomes.**

Once implemented, the system is described in the **SYME** and sent to the headquarters' office. The SYME is then sent once a year to the headquarters' office to report on any changes in the indicators measuring outputs and outcomes.

Role	Responsibilities
<b>Project coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates implementation of the M&amp;E system and definition of indicators, including the baseline situation, with the project teams (AVSF, local partners)</li> <li>Adds information to SYME and sends it to the national coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>National coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists the project coordinators and teams with steering, revises and validates the systems (consistency, relevance of indicators and feasibility of monitoring, etc.), and sends to headquarter (Program-officers and M&amp;E coordinator at headquarters' office).</li> <li>Handles M&amp;E capacity-building for teams (assessment of needs, organization of training, support)</li> </ul>
<b>M&amp;E country coordinator (if the position exists)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The national coordinator may delegate all or some of his/her M&amp;E missions to an M&amp;E coordinator at national level.</li> <li>He/she coordinates the improvement of the M&amp;E system at country level (e.g. development of digital tools, definition of common indicators for the country)</li> <li>He/she is the headquarters' direct contact person for M&amp;E.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps set up the project, particularly by reviewing overall consistency (logical framework and indicators) and validating the new project</li> <li>When the project starts, the program officer verifies that the system has been set up properly and verifies its quality</li> <li>Assists with implementation and quality management, both remotely and during missions</li> </ul>
<b>M&amp;E coordinator at headquarters' office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes a work schedule for new and existing systems with program coordinators, national coordinators or M&amp;E country coordinator, and sometimes with project coordinators</li> <li>Collects and archives all M&amp;E systems created and recorded (in SYME) each year</li> <li>According to need, provides remote methodological support for a project or geographic area</li> <li>Carries out support/training missions in areas where need is expressed</li> <li>Manages efforts to improve the global M&amp;E system under the guidance of the Technical Department</li> </ul>



## 4 INCORPORATING GENDER ISSUES INTO M&E



*Far from being exhaustive on the subject, this guide offers a few guidelines for incorporating gender issues into development projects as part of monitoring and evaluation (variable 6 in the table of AVSF's variables of change).*



## **The way to incorporate gender issues into projects is by incorporating them into the monitoring and evaluation system**

Incorporating gender issues into the project cycle involves asking questions at each stage of the project, from initial contacts and preliminary studies, to design, implementation and evaluation<sup>10</sup>:

- about the participation, role and place of women and men in the project, and the interrelations between women and men
- about the project's outcomes and impact on the situation of women and men, and on the inequalities between women and men, as well as the processes for transforming social relationships between women and men

### **Best practices for incorporating gender issues into monitoring and evaluation**

#### **1. Before the project has been designed**

Perform a “**gendered**” **diagnostic assessment**: Collect data for each gender and analyze the situation of men and women (problems, needs, constraints, opportunities) and the relationships between women and men within families, organizations and communities. Doing so will help when it comes to creating specific indicators.

#### **2. While the project is being designed**

Define indicators for measuring outputs and outcomes based on the AVSF variable of change (see 1.6) that refers to “*social and economic changes in the situation of women*” and offers a number of indicators for monitoring the place of women within their families, organizations and communities<sup>11</sup>.

*This variable must be considered in all projects set up by AVSF.*

#### **3. While the project is being carried out**

- Collect data for each gender
- Analyze on a regular basis how needs, risks, limits and access change over time for each gender
- Use that information to tailor the response to the needs and capacities of each gender
- Take measures that will allow men and women to participate in the project activities and benefit from them

#### **4. At the time of evaluation (intermediate and final)**

- Analyze the outputs and outcomes of the project while taking into account the situation of men and women, including unexpected or undesired outcomes (counterproductive to gender equality)
- Define specific recommendations relating to gender
- Make good use of expertise and share any best practices learned during the project

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<sup>10</sup> See AVSF MEMO on Gender, 2018

<sup>11</sup> See indicators proposed in Appendix 2 of this guide, and in the AVSF MEMO on Gender, 2018

## 5 DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL TOOLS



One of the best ways to improve the performance and reliability of AVSF’s global M&E system is by gradually introducing digital tools for collecting, storing and processing data.

### Advantages:

- Data entry is much simpler for technicians/collectors and does not require special skills, just simple initial training on how the software works,
- Information is available and shared immediately (with internet connection), and there is less risk of a loss of information, which allows for more precise monitoring (practically from day to day),
- Each monitoring form is configured in the system just once and is accessible to everyone depending on their user rights (entry, read only, administration, etc.)
- Several other options are also possible, depending on need and software: for example, uploading photos of important events, GPS-tagging photos, etc.
- May simplify aggregation of “cross-cutting indicators” and IOV AFD by country, geographic area and theme.

**Important point:** the use of digital tools may, depending on the situation, require considerable resources

- Acquisition of equipment for data collection (tablets/smartphones for each collector)
- Platform for storing and processing data: the software has a cost, and even if free software is used (such as KOBO Collect), there’s still a cost for configuring the data-collection tools (forms, survey sheets, etc.)
- Configuration requires special skills, so either training must be provided for users or an external service provider must be hired.

**When adopting digital tools in M&E, the following must be done in advance:**

- Choose software that is relatively **simple to use** and that can be **upgraded**
- Beware of “turnkey” systems offered by certain service providers, as they are often expensive and offer no flexibility down the road; the project team may find themselves totally dependent on the service provider every time they need to upgrade the system
- Estimate the cost and add it to the project budget or to the national-coordination budget
- Train teams to use the software

# APPENDIX 1 CROSS-CUTTING INDICATORS BY PROGRAM

This appendix presents the cross-cutting indicators chosen jointly by the headquarters and the teams on the ground in order to better evaluate the outcomes of the projects carried out in all three AVSF programs: ARC (Agriculture, Resource Management and Climate Change), ESAP (Livestock Farming, Animal Health, Veterinary Public Health) and OPM (Producer Organizations and Market Integration).

These cross-cutting indicators respond to one evaluative question and several sub-questions specific to each program.

There is a methodological guide on monitoring outcomes<sup>12</sup> for each of the three programs, offering methods and tools for monitoring each indicator in a harmonized manner.

## ARC PROGRAM

**Main evaluative question: What are the effects of agroecology practices and systems on farms and territories?**

### Evaluative sub-questions

**SQ1:** To what extent are farmers expanding the application of agroecology practices on their farm?

**SQ2:** In what ways are natural resources being better managed/protected within farms (soil, water, trees) and in community areas at regional level (community forests, pasture, riverbanks)?

**SQ3:** What effects do agroecology practices have on the economic performance of a farm (from the point of view of the farmer and "society")?

### Cross-cutting indicators

1. **Total number of farmers who expanded the application of agroecology practices** on their farm (or "adopted at least two new agroecology practices")
2. **Total land area on which the application of agroecology practices** increased qualitatively (number of different practices) and/or quantitatively
3. **Soil surfaces are better protected from degradation and/or regaining fertility**
4. **Surfaces where natural vegetation has increased** (trees, bushes, buffer strips, hedges) allowing for better tree cover and/or better agrobiodiversity (favorable, particularly for pollinators and other beneficial organisms)
5. **Economic indicators** – (see the note by TERO on the method for recording these indicators)
6. Gross product/ha/year
7. Monetary costs for inputs/ha/year
8. Labor costs/ha/year
9. Gross added value /ha = Gross proceeds/ha – Monetary costs for inputs/ha/year
10. **Gross profit/ha/year** = Gross product/ha – Total monetary costs (inputs + labor)

<sup>12</sup> On the online M/E SHARING PLATFORM

<p><b>SQ4:</b> To what extent are agroecology farms building their capacities to adapt to variability and/or climate change?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <b>Number of farmers who have significantly increased</b> the diversity of their production (increase in the number of species and varieties cultivated, and in the number of animal species and breeds)</li> <li>12. <b>Land where the diversity of production has increased</b></li> <li>13. <b>Gross product/ha/year and Gross added value /ha</b> for agriculture land where agroecology practices have increased, versus control plots that have gone through a “bad year” (drought, excess precipitation)</li> <li>14. <b>Rate of survival for cacao trees planted</b> on agroforestry land</li> </ol>
<p><b>SQ5:</b> How is AVSF’s work (projects) contributing to the creation of local public policies and/or local agreements and rules favoring the development of agroecology practices?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Creation and application of <b>rules/agreements for the management</b> of natural resources</li> <li>16. <b>Number of incentive measures</b> put in place by the public authorities at local level</li> </ol>

## ESAP PROGRAM

**Main evaluative question:** To what extent is AVSF’s work in livestock farming and animal health helping improve the sustainability and performance of smallholders raising livestock?

### Evaluative sub-questions

### Cross-disciplinary indicators

<p><b>SQ1:</b> What have been the main improvements in terms of animal health and long-term capacity-building for veterinary services in the project areas?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Reduced mortality rate</b> on livestock farms receiving assistance</li> <li>2. <b>Proportion of livestock farmers with access to a local animal-health service</b> (at least one visit a year by a professional)</li> <li>3. <b>Percentage of CAHWs</b> (or paravets), having adopted <b>best practices in the use of veterinary drugs</b></li> <li>4. <b>Increase in the number of outbreaks of regulated diseases detected and reported</b> from a livestock farmer or a CAHW</li> </ol>
<p><b>SQ2:</b> To what extent have the technical conditions of smallholder livestock farms (feeding, habitat, genetics, etc.) and their levels of production improved?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>Changes in the quantity of fodder available</b> for the animals</li> <li>6. <b>Increase in the quantity of livestock products on farms</b> (number of animals, milk production, etc.)</li> <li>7. <b>Impact of the general improvement in livestock-farming techniques</b> (farmers feedback on feeding, habitat, genetics, general condition of the animals)</li> </ol>
<p><b>SQ3:</b> What has been the economic impact, for livestock farmers, of the improvements made in the management of livestock farms?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. <b>Increase in gross profit generated by household livestock activities</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>SQ4:</b> To what extent have the living conditions of livestock farmers sustainably improved (food and nutritional security, material comfort and/or access to basic services)?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. <b>Improvement in the level of family food security</b> (length of the hunger gap, percentage of families suffering from food insecurity, diversification of food produced on the farm)</li> <li>10. <b>Improvement of livestock farmers’ capacity to invest</b> over the medium term (investments in the farm)</li> </ol>

**SQ5:** What are the positive or negative impacts of livestock activities on the environment?

11. **Number of territorial concertation frameworks on collective pasture management** ensuring greater preservation of natural resources in an autonomous way
12. **Proportion of farmers and areas with sustainable livestock management practices** (sylvopastoralism, sustainable management of pastoral and water resources, etc.)

## OPM PROGRAM

**Main evaluative question:** To what extent do the value chains supported by AVSF help promote agroecological smallholder production on profitable markets for smallholder families?

### Evaluative sub-questions

**SQ1:** Has promoting the transition to agroecology and product certification improved the technical and environmental performance of producers?

**SQ2:** To what extent have the agroecology value chains supported by AVSF helped improve the economic performance of producers?

**SQ3:** Has AVSF's assistance helped improve the services offered by producer organizations to support small producers?

**SQ4:** Does AVSF's assistance help smallholders gain better and longer-lasting access to markets?

**SQ5:** Does AVSF's assistance help influence public policy in favor of producer organizations and fair and sustainable value chains?

### Cross-disciplinary indicators

1. **Improvement in technical capacities:** increase in yields
2. **Positive impact on the environment:** increase in the number of environmentally friendly practices adopted by producers and the organization in its territory (increase in cultivated biodiversity, crop association, protection of regeneration areas, buffer zones along waterways, composting and other organic fertilization methods, etc.)
3. **Increase in the number of producers and surfaces areas (ha)** in compliance with organic ("AB") or agroecology specifications
4. **Increase in the gross profit** of producers in the supported areas of production
5. **Price difference (%) between conventional and certified products** (organic, fair trade, other quality certifications) for the producer
6. **Evolution (%) in the volume of products sold** (local + export) by producers
7. **Types of investments producers have made** in their production systems after the project (technification, equipment and infrastructure, diversification of crop and livestock farming)
8. **Type, quality and coverage of technical services** developed by producer organizations for their members
9. **Type and amount of external funding canalized by producer organizations for their members:** pre-financing harvest, credit, public subsidies
10. **Increase (%) in sales turnover** for producer organizations
11. **Percentage of products exported** directly by the producer organization as a proportion of total sales
12. **Improvement in the longevity and quality of commercial relationships with buyers:** joint qualitative assessment (producers and cooperative)
13. **Number of national or local public policies** (regulations, laws, decrees, standards, etc.) that take into account proposals from AVSF's projects

## APPENDIX 2 CROSS-CUTTING INDICATORS FOR GENDER

The gender cross-cutting outcome indicators are a blend of earlier ideas and initiatives<sup>13</sup>, and are divided into three different criteria: economic, social, and working and living conditions.

### Criteria and indicators for measuring outcomes

1. **Economic empowerment of women** - improvement in managerial abilities and economic power:
  - x% of women boost their income by x%
  - x% of women develop and manage their own business
  - x% of women have access to and control credit/production or processing tools/resources such as land or water.
2. **Social empowerment** - improvement in women's participation in decision-making and committees:
  - x% increase in the number of women who are members of decision-making bodies in the (mixed) community/producer organizations with an actual role in decision-making
3. **Better working conditions and living conditions** for women
  - x% of women have reduced their workload/working time

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<sup>13</sup> Memento Genre 2018, Agroecology evaluation manual – GTAE, Workshop on monitoring and evaluation in Abengourou-2019

# REFERENCE MATERIALS

**Three reference documents are available for download on the F3E website:** [www.f3e.asso.fr](http://www.f3e.asso.fr), under "ressources / guides / guides méthodologie"

- L'évaluation, un outil au service de l'action (Evaluation: a useful tool for projects), IRAM, 1996
- Prise en compte de l'impact et construction d'indicateurs d'impact (Taking into account impact and developing indicators for measuring impact), CIEDEL, 1999
- Le suivi d'un projet de développement : démarche, dispositifs et indicateurs (Monitoring a development project: approach, systems and indicators), Europact, 2002

Practical guide on monitoring and evaluation for projects – For impact-oriented management – FIDA -8 modules <http://www.gestionorienteeverslimpact.org/resource/guide-pratique-de-se-des-projets-pour-une-gestion-orient%C3%A9e-vers-limpact>

AVSF MEMO on Gender – 2018

Gender concepts & practical tools - Online resources center: <http://www.adequations.org/spip.php?article478>

Adéquations – form 5. Integrating gender into the project cycle: <https://www.agencemicroprojets.org/wp-content/uploads/etudes54437/fiche-5-integrer-le-genre-das-le-cycle-de-projet.pdf>

Gender toolbox - Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity- AFD-2016: <https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/boite-outils-genre-agriculture-developpement-rural-et-biodiversite>



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