

Brief Communication

Monitoring and evaluation system of the Federal Ministry of Health: The current situation and future perspective

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Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is increasingly recognized as an absolutely critical aspect of interventions made pertaining to health system development. Although it has become standard practice to refer to monitoring and evaluation simultaneously, the two are complementary, but separate functions which often serve distinct purposes. On the other hand, M&E represents the cornerstone of the health system and it will ensure the achievement of the desired objectives with the available resources. The demand of the monitoring and evaluation system will increase after the comprehensive peace agreement where most of resources are expected to come to the Sudan.

Key concepts about M&E

Monitoring refers to the process of regularly checking on the status of a program or tasks by comparing the actual implementation against a pre-established work plan of a department or program, including whether the tasks or planned activities are being completed as intended, whether they are being conducted within the timeframe specified, whether the budget is being spent as planned, whether any changes are needed in the management or implementation of the given tasks, and whether the work plan should be revised based on an unexpected and valid circumstances.

Evaluation on the other hand, is primarily directed at measuring progress toward the achievement of pre-established objectives and the impact generated as a result (whether the intended changes have occurred). This includes measuring the extent to which the changes that have occurred are

attributable to the original objectives and anticipated results. Although there are differences between monitoring and evaluation, the two processes work together and lead to the same end result, which is to produce information that can be used to continuously improve the performance of a given department or program.

The Vision

The Federal ministry of health is intending to provide an evidence-based decision by establishing a sound monitoring and evaluation systems at different level (Federal, State and Locality).

The Mission

To improve the performance the health system by ensuring the continuous flow of reliable and quality information and regular reports based on agreed indicators at different levels.

Objectives of the M&E system

Goal and Objectives of the National M&E System

The goal of the National M&E is to provide timely and reliable information that will enable tracking of progress and to enhance informed decision-making at all levels in the implementation of interventions under the health sector mandate in Sudan. The specific objectives are:

- To establish reliable M&E system at Federal & state, to guide the program.
- Strengthen the M&E capacity of FMOH, SMOH, localities and Health facilities collect, analyze and use data for decision making and health system improvement.
- Promote importance of M&E, the need for systematic data collection and use of results in the further planning of health interventions by the government and its partners.

- Increase understanding of trends and explaining the changes in disease incidences or prevalence overtime as well as morbidity and mortality rates and ratios.
- To ensure accountability, transparency and the quality of information to achieve the desired results.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Effective M&E is based on a clear logical pathway of results, in which results at one level are expected to lead to results at the next level, leading to the achievement of the overall goal. Consequently, if there are gaps in the logic, the pathway will not lead to the required results.

Major levels for M&E framework

- • Inputs
- • Outputs
- • Outcomes
- • Impacts

Level description

Inputs are the people, training, equipment and resources that are put into a project in order to achieve outputs.

Outputs are the activities or services delivered, including preventive and curative services in order to achieve outcomes.

Processes associated with service delivery are very important and involve quality, unit costs, access and coverage.

Outcomes should occur through the provision of good-quality, economical, accessible, and widespread services. Outcomes are the changes in behavior or skills.

Impacts The above-mentioned outcomes are intended to lead to major measurable health impacts, e.g. mortality and morbidity changes overtime, and usually long-term.

Each of the above mentioned level has an indicator to verify whether the desired objectives or activities implemented or not, so indicators is very crucial in M&E system. Minimal set of indicators is advisable

and the two golden rules of M&E, Do not define indicators that cannot be measured and Do not collect data that are not useful for decision-making or from which no lessons can be learned and it is better to approximate answer for few important question than to have the exact answer for many unimportant questions.

The current situation at the FMOH

The M&E system was established since 2003 after the implementation of the result- based planning approach. Unit at federal level and others (25) at different programs and directorate were also institutionalized. Serial training workshops were conducted on the other hand a unit was established in (6) states. Electronic program for monitoring the annual plan was installed and Indicators for the 5-years strategic plan were identified and accordingly the monitoring and evaluation plan was developed and now regular meetings were conducted to monitors the progress a predefined indicators.

The future perspective

One of the main challenges of the M&E system is the institutionalization of it at all levels, states and locality, stakeholder and other relevant sector involvement are very important and the capacity of the unit at federal levels need to be strengthen .last but not least, the commitment and ownership are so important for robust M&E system and better health for our population.

Conclusion

Monitoring and evaluation system need to strengthen at all levels, if that is done we will achieved our objectives and better health will be provided and MGDs will be attained.

References

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