

Climate change adaptation: Monitoring and evaluation gaining in importance

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Climate change not only threatens lives and livelihoods, but also reverses the progress towards sustainable development around the globe. Bangladesh is among the top ten countries that have been the most affected by climate change and, climate change is expected to have devastating consequences in the coming days particularly for vulnerable populations and businesses in low-lying coastal areas and flood plains in the country. Governments, private sectors, development partners and other stakeholders should address climate change directly and strongly - and many are already implementing climate change adaptation on different levels, ranging from household and community level to the global scale. In this context, a common question is being raised among the practitioners, development partners and government is, given the long-established expertise and experience of monitoring and evaluating development activities, why is this specific focus on this practice in the context of climate change projects?

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is essential to achieve the long-term success of climate adaptation initiatives. Based on experience and practice to date, there is a clear distinction in terms of who drives/uses the M&E between developed and developing countries. In many developing countries like Bangladesh, the practice of monitoring and evaluation is donor-driven and for the purpose of accountability. In terms of climate change adaptation, M&E plays an important role in supporting strategic and effective planning, as well as, provide understanding where to focus, why this is the case, what is working and what is not, and how to learn from experience to maximise the impacts. It helps to track the performance of activities of an adaptation plan (e.g. stakeholder engagement), pre-identified risks and determine whether the planned outcomes and outputs have been achieved. There are some differences between M&E for traditional development interventions and for climate change adaptation. Most importantly, the timescale in the context of climate change and the associated adaptation outcomes are expected to be longer than those of traditional development interventions. The traditional methods to monitor and evaluate may not work in the frequently changing climate. For

example, comparing results to static baseline situations, may not be possible, and a moving baseline must be taken into account. At the same time, the magnitude and nature of climate change possess uncertainty which can influence in the monitoring and the ways in which they are evaluated.

Since last few years this issue has received special attention when Bangladesh is approaching to access climate change funds particularly from Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund etc. where we need to demonstrate strong monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure the accountability and transparency. M&E of climate change projects basically aims to track progress in implementing the interventions, and/or how these interventions are improving adaptive capacity, reducing vulnerability, and supporting the overall well-being of populations affected by the impacts of climate change. As Bangladesh has already moved from raising awareness for the importance of adaptation to developing and implementing adaptation plans and projects, M&E of adaptation at the national level is gaining more importance in recent days. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of climate change adaptation may be useful in this context and will create the opportunity to access climate finance to reduce the vulnerability.

An increased amount of resources is being allocated for adaptation globally, as a result, transparency in the allocation of resources is essential. M&E is important for leveraging continued funding and assistance for adaptation, and for indicating that the taxpayers' money has been spent sensibly. Recipients, both government and non-government actors of climate funds, need to be accountable and transparent to their funders at the same time. Strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism can help ensuring ongoing support and any further assistance that may be essential. Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism, use of participatory processes where stakeholders can be involved in the planning and implementation of adaptation initiatives are two key elements to demonstrate effectiveness and accountability. Monitoring and evaluation must become an integral component of the project or programme design to ensure accountability and continuous learning.

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