

## What Is Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) involves setting up systems to consistently review how the emergency communication response is progressing, what needs to be improved and whether the program goals are being met.

**Monitoring** is a continuous process that entails the regular collection and analysis of data to assist timely decision making, check whether activities are being executed according to plan, ensure accountability and provide the basis for evaluation and learning.

**Evaluation** assesses the degree of success obtained and determines to what extent the anticipated outcomes are produced. It measures whether the behavioral communication objectives have been achieved through specific intervention activities. Evaluation also provides insights into lessons learned and promising practices.

## Why Is M&E Important?

Through M&E it is possible to review how the intervention is progressing, recognize risks and challenges as they develop, and adjust the implementation strategy as necessary to achieve the program goal. In particular, M&E allows you to:

- Track progress of activities against indicators
- Adapt the strategy as needed against program goals and objectives
- Provide accountability to the audiences, partners and donors
- Assess the success of communication activities
- Identify lessons learned and best practices
- Inform future emergency communication response

In the initial phases of an emergency, M&E systems should remain light and dynamic due to time and resource constraints. As the emergency progresses, more formal M&E systems need to be established. **Table 16** below highlights some essential M&E steps in relation to each of the emergency phases.

**Table 16: Key Steps to M&E in Emergency Communication**

<b>Pre-Crisis</b>	<b>Preparedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage partners and stakeholders</li> <li>• Define roles and responsibilities in case of an emergency</li> <li>• Define reporting structures and feedback loops</li> <li>• Determine basic output level indicators that can be used to monitor initial communication response</li> <li>• Establish basic preemptive M&amp;E plan</li> </ul>
<b>Initial Crisis</b>	<b>Initial Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct systematic collection of output-level data</li> <li>• Conduct monitoring to check quality of communication response</li> <li>• Activate feedback loops</li> <li>• Hold regular review meetings</li> <li>• Communicate results</li> <li>• Make changes to activities as per monitoring results</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance Resolution</b>	<b>Formal M&amp;E System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop formal M&amp;E Plan</li> <li>• Conduct systematic collection of output-level data</li> <li>• Conduct monitoring activities to check quality of communication response</li> <li>• Review and adjust activities as per monitoring results</li> <li>• Hold regular review meetings</li> <li>• Communicate results and adjustments to activities</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct post-emergency evaluation</li> <li>• Gather lessons learned and best practices</li> <li>• Share findings</li> <li>• Use findings to inform future activities to prevent future crisis</li> </ul>

Based on the fact that M&E evolves through a communication response, the following steps are recommended to establish an effective system that allows for the monitoring of activities, informs changes where necessary and assesses progress towards the program goal at the end the emergency:

## Key Steps for M&E in Emergency Communication

1. Establish Preparedness Systems for Rapid Activation
1. Activate Simple M&E Systems of Early Monitoring
2. Develop and Implement M&E Plan
3. Conduct a Post-Emergency Evaluation

### Establish Preparedness Systems for Rapid Activation

Time constraints, limited resources and the panic that characterize emergencies affect the ability to respond rapidly and effectively. Wherever possible, preparatory activities should be conducted in the pre-crisis phase, and M&E is no exception.

In the pre-crisis phase, preparatory activities can support the creation of M&E systems that can be activated quickly should an emergency happen. Examples of such activities include:

- Identification of partners for M&E purposes and definition of coordination mechanisms
- Definition of roles and responsibilities for M&E should an emergency occur
- Definition of reporting structures and feedback loops to allow for regular communication between the national and subnational levels
- Development of simple output-level indicators and reporting forms to assist with initial monitoring, in areas where known emergencies are likely to happen

### Activate Simple M&E Systems for Early Monitoring

Typically, at the onset of an emergency, resources are limited, personnel is burdened with multiple demands and time is of the essence. This does not mean, however, that monitoring the communication response activities should be forgone. The M&E component must be considered, planned and budgeted for from the onset of the communication response. In the initial phase, M&E should focus on developing simple, use-oriented and flexible systems that can be adjusted to the changing context.

Monitoring during the first phase of an emergency often involves the systematic collection of **quantitative**, output-level data that can strengthen accountability and inform progress. Examples of indicators that could be used to monitor communication activities in the initial phase include:

- Percent of households reached with messages/door-to-door activities
- Number of leaflets distributed
- Number of radio spots broadcast
- Percent of respondents recalling one message from radio spots
- Percent of respondents knowing that they can call a hotline for information
- Number of calls received by the hotline
- Number of mobilizers trained and deployed

For communication activities it is also important to monitor **qualitative** data that can help inform messages and activities. This type of monitoring allows you to identify bottlenecks early, such as rumors, misunderstandings and negative reactions. Examples of areas that can be assessed through qualitative data include:

- Fidelity in content of information provided by spokespeople, community mobilizers, media and press to the public
- Reaction of communities to the emergency and to the communication activities
- Rumors and misunderstandings
- Fears and concerns that develop among community members
- Reactions to SBCC messages and activities
- Unintended interpretations of communication products
- Barriers to adopting the desired behaviors
- New challenges that need to be addressed
- Information needs of community members and intended audiences
- Identification of vulnerable and at-risk groups
- Identification of most compelling approaches to reach target communities
- Behaviors that aggravate the emergency

Rapid and simple systems and tools should be put in place to collect the above data. **Table 17** below provide some methods that can be used to do so.

**Table 17: Data Types and Collection Tools**

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<p><b>Quantitative Data</b> (i.e., numbers and percentages) is often used to answer “what,” “to what extent,” or “how many/much” questions.</p> <p>Examples of the tools used for collecting quantitate data include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms completed by community mobilizers</li> <li>• Surveys (door-to-door and phone SMS)</li> <li>• Logs of phone calls to the hotline</li> <li>• Participants lists</li> <li>• Materials distribution lists</li> </ul>	<p><b>Qualitative data</b> (i.e., types of questions received, reactions in the community and behaviors) is often used to answer “how” or “why” questions.</p> <p>Examples of tools used for qualitative data collection include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• In-depth interviews</li> <li>• Open-ended questions embedded in door-to-door surveys</li> <li>• Focus group discussions</li> <li>• Log of questions received by hotline</li> <li>• Case studies</li> </ul>

Importantly, the data collection systems must be incorporated into regular communication between (1) field teams, (2) M&E teams and (3) communication teams. Communication needs to be ongoing, especially in the initial phases of the emergency when people’s reactions are likely to be unpredictable. Throughout the emergency response, this essential feedback loop can inform activities for improved success.

The box below provides tips for proper continuous and ongoing assessment of the emergency communication response to ensure that messages and communication activities are on track to bring the emergency to an end.



### Tips for Setting Up an Effective System for Continuous, Ongoing Reassessment of the Communication Response

- Set-up and/or participate in regular meetings with the communication response team and the national emergency coordination cell.
- Agree with stakeholders and partners what indicators need to be reported on regularly and how.
- Develop data collection templates that can be used by all actors to facilitate data analysis.
- Consider access to and ability to use specific mobile technologies for rapid data collection/monitoring of activities.
- Develop a data information flow chart to share with partners and stakeholders so that they know exactly what information needs to go where and by when.
- Set up a feedback mechanism to liaise with field teams of social mobilizers, spokespeople, outreach personnel, health personnel, community surveillance officers and other relevant individuals on the ground (see Unit 3 for more information).
- Provide mobilizers, spokespeople and other relevant personnel with the necessary knowledge and sensitivity training to identify and report back on important information that can be used to guide the communication response. Examples include: detecting rumors, identifying vulnerable and at-risk groups, detecting barriers to desired behaviors, misinterpretation of messages and traditional or cultural practices that hinder the adoption of desired behaviors.
- Ensure you have systems in place to track if and how the intervention is reaching marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- Train program staff on how to quickly assess data findings to modify SBCC activities, messages, etc., and ensure a system is in place that encourages rapid data analysis and use in programs.

### Develop and Implement M&E Plan

In the initial phase, although a basic M&E needs to be structured and guided by tools and a coordination system, it tends to remain flexible and simple to allow for the rapidly changing context. As the emergency stabilizes, M&E should start to become more rigorous and be guided by better defined tools.

One way of doing this is to develop a formal M&E Plan. An M&E plan is a document that defines what data will be collected, and when and how it will be collected. It establishes the system that will guide measurement of the immediate, intermediate and long-term effects of the intervention.

In the resolution phase, it becomes easier to consolidate data from information collected during the initial phase or from rapid needs assessments done to inform activities (see **Unit 2**). As part of the M&E plan, objectives and indicators are defined (see **Unit 6**) to track progress. More information on the development of an M&E plan can be found here.

The M&E plan should be developed in conjunction with the SBCC strategy, but remain a separate document. Generally, it is designed by staff with research or evaluation experience in partnership with program personnel. A complete M&E plan generally contains the seven following elements:

- Identification of the program goal and communication objectives
- Definition of indicators
- Definition of data collection methods and timeline
- Identification of roles and responsibilities
- Creation of a data analysis and reporting plan
- Creation of a dissemination plan

The **program goal** defines the desired outcome resulting from the SBCC program or strategy. In cases of emergencies and outbreaks, the goal is often to stop the emergency.

The **communication objectives** are the desired changes in behaviors or factors that affect behaviors that can contribute to achieving the program goal. Examples of factors that affect behavior include knowledge, attitudes and beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, perceived susceptibility and perceived severity). Communication objectives should be established on the basis of the rapid needs assessment (see **Unit 2: Rapid Needs Assessment**) and the data collected in the initial phase of the emergency, and they should be SMART (see **Unit 6: Developing Communication Objectives and Indicators**). SMART objectives support the development of well-defined indicators that can be measured.

**Indicators** are the tools that measure any change and progress toward the behavioral communication objectives as a result of the intervention. Indicators can be used both to monitor and to evaluate the intervention, and they can be of four kinds: input, output, outcome and impact indicators. Process and output indicators are monitoring indicators that measure who the intervention is reaching and how, while outcome and impact indicators are evaluation indicators that provide information on the effects of the intervention. All four types of indicators should be included in the M&E plan. In order to develop these indicators, it is essential to have a clear operational definition. **Table 18** on the next page provides example indicators for each phase of emergency response.

More information on program goal, objectives and indicators, and how to formulate each, can be found in **Unit 6: Developing Communication Objectives and Indicators**.

**Table 18: Example Indicators for Each Phase of Emergency Response**

Indicator Phase:		Initial	Maintenance	Resolution	Evaluation
Monitoring	Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of community mobilizers in the program</li> <li>Number of personnel manning the hotline</li> <li>Number of radio stations airing messages</li> </ul>			
	Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of community mobilizers trained</li> <li>Number of radio spots aired</li> <li>Number of materials distributed</li> <li>Number of households visited</li> <li>Number of participants in sensitization sessions</li> <li>Percent of households visited</li> </ul>			
Evaluation	Outcome	<i>Not applicable for Initial phase</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of respondents recalling three messages from the radio spots</li> <li>Percent of respondents claiming to have adopted at least one new protective behavior</li> <li>Percent of population demonstrating correct water usage and storage</li> </ul>		
	Impact	<i>Not applicable to Initial, Maintenance or Resolution phases</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of households having adopted new behavior</li> <li>Percent of health services having incorporated recommended practices</li> <li>Introduction of new recommended policies</li> </ul>	

**Data collection methods and timelines** refer to how and when information will be gathered to measure each established indicator. The methods used will depend on the type of indicator being measured and on the source of the required information. Where available, multiple data sources can be used to collect information on indicators and construct a more complete picture of how the communication response is faring. A range of different data sources can be accessed depending on the information being sought. Examples of data sources include, but are not limited

to: program activity monitoring tools, health service statistics, facility logs, referral cards, focus group discussions with representatives from the intended audience groups, community-based or population-based surveys, in-depth interviews, media consumption studies, media ratings, listener-viewer discussion groups, meetings and discussions with emergency management personnel, surveillance officers, health workers and social mobilizers.

Qualitative data sources can be used to gather necessary information on the context and to help explain quantitative data found in other data sources. **Unit 2** includes **Worksheet 2.1: Gathering Existing Data Sources to Inform the Needs Assessment**, which can be used as a starting place for teams developing lists of relevant data sources.

Once a decision has been made on the data that needs to be collected and from which sources, it is necessary to determine the frequency at which it will be collected. This will be influenced by the accessibility of the data sources, the availability of resources and the timeline of the intervention. In an emergency, monitoring data should be collected and shared with partners as frequently as possible to identify and address new issues promptly, report on progress in a timely manner and shape the overall emergency response. Information about data sources and timing of data collection for each indicator should be inserted in a table to be included in the M&E plan. The table can be printed out and shared with all partners working on the communication response so that all are informed of the data required and when it needs to be collected.

**Roles and responsibilities** should be agreed upon from the early planning stages. Roles and responsibilities identify who is responsible for collecting data for which indicator. It is likely to involve a mix of M&E personnel, research staff and program staff. During an emergency, when multiple partners work together, determining clear roles and responsibilities becomes even more important to ensure effective collaboration and the sharing of accurate information in a coordinated and timely fashion to monitor and inform the emergency response. Importantly, assigning roles and responsibilities should be agreed upon with partners and stakeholders who are involved in the communication response.

The **data analysis and reporting plan** provides details on what data will be analyzed and how the results will be presented. This defines the methods that will be used and who will be responsible for performing the analysis. During an emergency certain indicators will need to be reported regularly and frequently, such as the number of cases affected by the emergency in different geographical areas. Key information can be presented in table format with statistics for each relevant indicator and shared among all partners in the emergency coordination cell. Graphs and charts can be used to present data in a visual way and quickly see trends over time. Qualitative information about possible rumors, misinformation and at-risk behaviors is also important for shaping the communication response, and careful attention must be given to preparing this information in culturally sensitive ways.

The dissemination plan describes how and to whom the data will be disseminated. Questions to consider when establishing a dissemination plan include:

- How often will the monitoring data be shared with partners, stakeholders and audiences?
- How will the M&E data be used to inform staff and stakeholders about the progress and success of the communication response?
- How will the M&E data be used to inform the necessary adjustments to stay on track of the program goal?
- How will the M&E data be used to improve program effectiveness?

The M&E plan should include a plan both for internal dissemination among partners and for external dissemination among other stakeholders and donors. The internal dissemination plan is particularly important during an emergency as this enables monitoring of how the situation is evolving and supports collaboration and coordination of activities among partners. Especially in the initial phases of an emergency, internal dissemination of M&E information among response partners should occur at least on a weekly basis.

Some information may need to be shared more frequently, and both the frequency and in what form it is shared should be agreed upon in partnership with relevant stakeholders from the onset. As the emergency stabilizes, the frequency of information sharing may reduce; however, it should still happen on a regular basis as this can also act as

an early warning system should the situation change. Post-emergency, evaluation data will be disseminated internally and externally among stakeholders and donors to highlight successes, lessons learned and promising practices.

For both internal and external dissemination, involving affected communities through a participatory approach is recommended. Keeping communities informed of progress and providing them with feedback on the successes, challenges and areas of improvement of the emergency response has several important functions, including:

- Increasing accountability and building trust among communities
- Promoting community ownership of activities and long-term changes
- Supporting community engagement
- Aiding the healing process and supporting communities to rebuild post-emergency

Once you have developed your M&E objectives, you can use the checklist in **Worksheet 9.1** to assess whether they are SMART and to identify how to improve them.

## WORKSHEET 9.1: DEVELOPMENT OF AN M&E PLAN

**Purpose:** This worksheet provides a template that can be support the development of Steps 2 to 4 of the M&E plan (to insert the necessary information for the M&E plan (definition of indicators; definition of data collection methods and timeline; identification of roles and responsibilities)

**Directions:** Use the tables below to input the required data for your M&E plan

When completed, the first table can be shared with relevant partners to inform them of the data being collected, how and by whom.

When completed, the second table can be used to report regularly to the emergency response team and shape the intervention.

**Please note that this worksheet is followed by a completed example that you can use as reference if necessary.**

---

On the table below, list all program indicators, how they will be measured, when and by whom. When completed share with all emergency communication response partners.

Indicator	Data Source(s) for Measuring Indicator	How Measured	Frequency of Data Collection	Person Responsible/ Data Manager

The table below can be used to update the emergency coordination cell on key indicators. It can be designed on an excel spreadsheet to allow inclusion of data over the course of the whole emergency, not just up until Week 5, as presented below. Graphs and charts can be used to represent information visually.

Key Indicator	Baseline	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5

More information on how to make graphs and charts in excel can be found at:  
<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Create-a-chart-0baf399e-dd61-4e18-8a73-b3fd5d5680c2>



## Conduct a Post-Emergency Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring of relevant indicators is vital for early identification and correction of problems. The monitoring data however, is also important to generate information for evaluation, which must be carried out at the end of the emergency.

The aim of post-emergency evaluation is to assess the relevance, performance and success of the communication response. It should measure behavioral, organizational and social changes that contributed to ending the emergency as a result of SBCC activities. Key questions that post-emergency evaluation should attempt to answer include:

- Was the communication response timely and coordinated?
- Were the strategies adopted appropriate?
- Has the overall program goal been achieved?
- Have the behavioral communication objectives been achieved?
- Which desired behaviors were most important in curbing the emergency?
- What was successful about the intervention?
- How sustainable are the changes made?
- How did the communication response contribute to the overall emergency response?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the communication response?
- What are some of the lessons learned?
- What gaps, if any, exist and how should they be addressed?

Post-emergency evaluation should therefore aim to identify what worked effectively and why, what can be learned and improved, and how likely it is that a similar emergency can be prevented in the future.

Importantly, post-emergency evaluation should also gather information and lessons learned from partners and record these for future use. Perspectives from partners and stakeholders, including affected communities, should be captured. Including affected communities in the evaluation process and sharing the results with them can help the healing process and support communities to rebuild themselves from the aftermath of the emergency.

Post-emergency evaluation is likely to take time if carried out properly, and can provide valuable insights into how to respond effectively to similar crisis in the future. It should be conducted by experienced research and/or M&E personnel, and results should be shared with all national and international stakeholders to build global capacity to respond effectively to emergencies.