

## Chapter 2

# Program Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainable Development Goals for Non-Profits and NGOs: Benefits, Functions, Stages, and Stakeholders

**Simon Cleveland**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9293-3905>

*Purdue University Global, USA*

**Marisa Cleveland**

*Northeastern University, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Non-profits and NGOs serve communities through programs, which are often complex to execute. Board members demand accountability for the execution of such programs, and as a result, these organizations adopt monitoring and evaluation practices to determine the success of failure based on a set of performance criteria. This study focuses on defining the program monitoring and evaluation process and exploring in depth its benefits, functions, and stages. Moreover, an examination of the stakeholders involved in the process is performed, and a set of currencies and power and influence criteria are explored.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Non-profit organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) exist to provide assistance to various individuals or groups, which is not available through government supported programs (Lee, 2008). The role of an NGO is to create an engagement and dialogue among stakeholders with a particular area

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(Legutko, 2018). Moreover, this engagement should not take place in isolation, but by encouraging participation of all parties who would benefit directly and indirectly from the deliverables by the NGO's work (Mayya, 2015).

In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted a 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which identified a roadmap to allow the member states to advance toward prosperity and improvement of health, economic development, decrease in inequality and increase in health (United Nations, n.d.).

To deliver on their sustainable development goals (SDG), non-profits and NGOs, who pursue the United Nations 2030 Agenda, need to launch programs which require continuous monitoring and evaluation to determine whether they have accomplished their strategic intent. While the literature is abundant on the subjects of project and program management, there is a gap in the areas addressing the complexity around the program monitoring and evaluation process, including its benefits, functions, stages and stakeholders. As a result, the research question for this study is: What are the benefits, functions, stages and stakeholders of the program monitoring and evaluation process for NGOs and non-profit organizations?

This rest of the paper is organized as follows. First, an overview of program monitoring and evaluation process is provided. Next, a detailed examination of the monitoring and evaluation benefits, functions and stages is proposed. This is followed by an overview of the monitoring and evaluation stakeholders, including identification of several currencies, which could be used by program managers when dealing with difficult stakeholders. The paper concludes with methods to characterize the stakeholders' power and influence on monitoring and evaluation projects as well as recommendations for future research.

## **PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

According to Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), program monitoring and evaluation, referred to as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) throughout this study is a process that provides "... routine monitoring and periodic evaluation that will take place over the life of a program or initiative. Typically, these parameters include a focus on evaluation domains, particularly those of appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability." (p.1). The goal of M&E is to establish connections between the past, present and future results, in order to derive information that can be leveraged to re-align new and existing programs.

Program managers spend a lot of their time having to communicate the status of the program to stakeholders and consistent communication is essential to ensure cross-program and program collaboration (Zulch, 2014). Any significant changes to the programs need to be shared across the organization so that quick and relevant decisions are made to correct any deviations in order to prevent any rework, delays or additional scope and cost to programs. To accomplish this, program managers collect consistently data related to the status of the program. This includes the use of specific indicators of metrics (Curlee & Gordon, 2013).

According to UNDP (2009), program monitoring is an ongoing process that serves various stakeholders to get feedback on the progress made by a program towards accomplishing its SDGs. The key here is that monitoring involves progress reviews against specific SDGs to determine whether these SDGs are achieved. Monitoring involves the tracking of projects, programs, strategies and actions taken by an NGOs or non-profits' stakeholders in order to determine next steps toward improved results (Paul, 2021). Furthermore, monitoring involves real-time information required by management and often creates

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