



Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture



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MODULE 3

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Pacific handbook for
**gender equity and
social inclusion**
in coastal fisheries and aquaculture

Module 3:
Monitoring, evaluation and learning

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Noumea, New Caledonia, 2021

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Original text: English

This publication should be cited as:

Mangubhai S., Donato-Hunt C. and Kleiber D. 2021. Module 3: Monitoring evaluation and learning. In: Barclay K., Mangubhai S., Leduc B., Donato-Hunt C., Makhoul N., Kinch J. and Kalsuak J. (eds). Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture. Second edition. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 11 pp.

Prepared for publication at SPC's Noumea headquarters, B.P. D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex, New Caledonia, 2021

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Key points

- MEL (monitoring, evaluation and learning) is designed to answer the question 'Is what we are doing working?' A MEL framework that is sensitive to gender and social inclusion (GSI) should be integrated throughout the life of a project or programme.
- MEL is part of good project management. It enables project progress to be monitored and changes to be made, if necessary, to interventions or indicators to ensure the project's goals are achieved and are sustainable.
- Participatory approaches to developing MEL help ensure the project is inclusive and the community is engaged from the start.

What is MEL?

MEL is part of the project or programme management process (Fig. 3.1 and Table 3.1). It allows us to determine if interventions or management actions are **making a difference**, and if a project or programme is producing the **intended results or outcomes**.¹

MEL can be applied to a new project or to an existing programme. The MEL process can:

- improve the performance of projects or programmes by tracking progress and enabling adjustments to be made if necessary;
- identify the extent of change that a project or programme has contributed to, including unplanned effects (both positive and negative);
- strengthen the ability of an organisation, community or sector to implement future projects or programmes.

Monitoring: Are we doing things right?

Monitoring is the systematic and ongoing collection of information on project implementation, with a focus on processes, activities² and outputs.³ It identifies strengths and limitations to help track progress and guide implementation. Data collected continuously, or at regular intervals during the programme or project, can help determine whether goals or outcomes (e.g. improved livelihoods, empowerment of marginalised groups) are being achieved.

Evaluation: Are we doing the right things?

Evaluation looks at the overall picture, i.e. the whole project and its broader context. It includes periodic assessment of the design, implementation and results of a project and is usually carried out at the mid-point and end of projects. Evaluations can examine relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. They should provide findings that can be used in decision-making by project beneficiaries, implementers and funders.

Learning: Have we adapted how we do things?

Monitoring and evaluation information can be used to refine, adapt and improve project design, planning, implementation and management. Lessons learned from both successes and failures can be used to modify a programme or project to ensure goals are met. By incorporating learning in the design and implementation of future projects, we avoid making the same mistakes again.

1 Outcomes are defined as the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects or changes resulting from activities or interventions. Additional MEL tools, guides and resources are suggested at the end of this module.

2 Activities are actions taken, interventions made, or work performed.

3 Outputs are the products, goods or services that result from activities.

Key steps for conducting MEL in a project management process

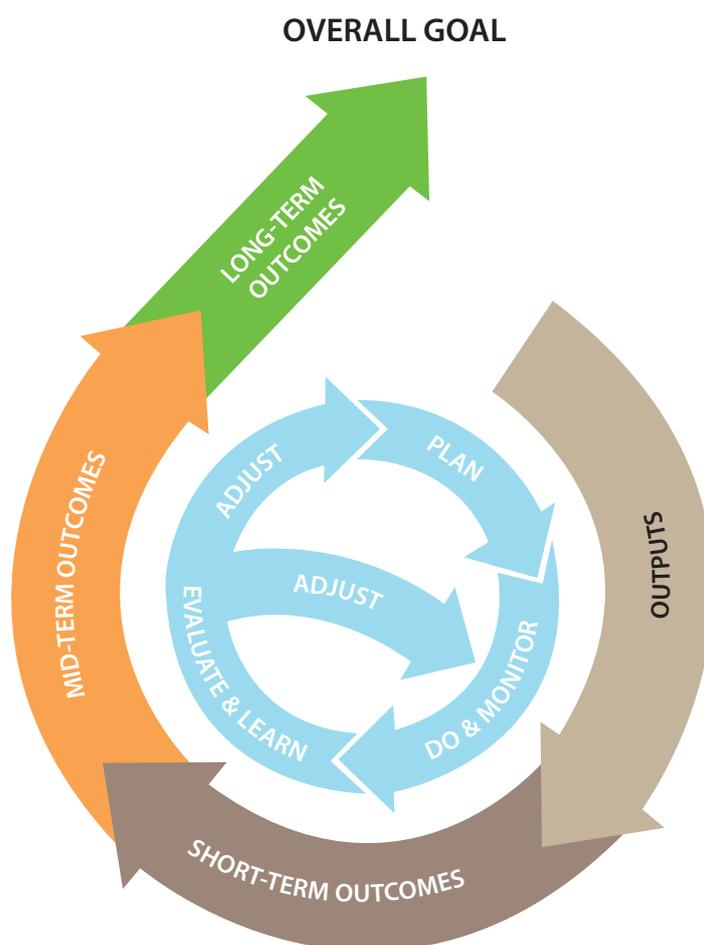


Figure 3.1. MEL as part of adaptive management.

Table 3.1: Key steps in MEL for projects and programmes.

	Define what is being evaluated	Identify the goals and outcomes of the project or programme, and the activities and outputs that will address these
	Identify the methodology	Work out how you will know whether the project or programme is achieving what it has set out to do. To do this, identify indicators and decide how you will measure them
	Collect data	Data collection may include collating existing information (e.g. from GSI analysis) or gathering new information. Data must be collected by sex, age, and other relevant social groupings
	Analyse data and answer key questions	During data analysis ensure data is disaggregated and presented by gender, age, and other relevant social groupings, and is linked to the goals and outcomes
	Report results	Communicate disaggregated monitoring and evaluation information to all relevant stakeholders to inform ongoing review
	Identify and report learning	Use results to adapt activities and revise and/or improve outcomes as necessary

Tips for integrating GSI in MEL processes

GSI-sensitive MEL

- **Include participatory approaches:** It is important that project stakeholders are themselves participants in the MEL process and are engaged and invested in the outcomes from beginning to end. Their involvement ensures that the MEL process is meaningful, relevant and transparent, and not just a box-ticking exercise. Participatory MEL also helps gather information on issues that are less easily captured by non-participatory approaches (e.g. sensitive or personal information, unintended outcomes, etc.).⁴ In addition to taking part in the project's planning stages, stakeholders can participate by contributing data, being part of the evaluation team, assisting in interpreting results, etc. It is essential to have an adequate representation of the key stakeholders to ensure buy-in and support. Evaluations and processes that leave out 50% (or more) of the population (e.g. women) are not representative and can lead to biased information and ineffective and unequal governance.
- **Keep it simple:** Keep your MEL system and methods as simple as possible. For example, select a realistic number of indicators to measure. Use participatory approaches to identify the indicators that stakeholders feel are the most important ones to measure, to simplify a complex MEL system.⁴

Integrating GSI in the planning stage

- **Include GSI in the planning stage:** GSI considerations for MEL should be included in the planning stage to ensure GSI reporting and acting on feedback (i.e. learning) are built in from the start of the programme or project. Embedding GSI into MEL involves observing and documenting to what extent the initiative includes and benefits different people, especially women and those from marginalised groups.
- **Use information from GSI analysis for MEL:** The GSI analysis process itself collects information that can also be used for MEL (Module 2: Gender and social inclusion analysis). For example, conducting a time use analysis as a baseline and follow-up can measure outcomes relating to women's participation and access to resources. Where possible, build on existing data to measure indicators. This minimises MEL labour and costs.

Choosing indicators for monitoring

- **Consider broader social and economic impacts:** Often, performance and monitoring indicators are narrowly defined. For example, the impacts of different management systems could be assessed mainly in terms of fish stocks, with economic factors (e.g. harvest costs, market access) or community factors (e.g. participation in the fisheries sector, decision-making, food security, cultural values) being overlooked or given low priority. MEL should attempt to capture the full range and value of people's contributions and incorporate links with the broader development outcomes of food security, nutrition and poverty eradication.⁴
- **Consider indicators related to conflict in communities:** Although coastal fisheries and aquaculture staff do not have the training to deal with gender-based violence, MEL should attempt to capture any gender-related or other social conflicts arising from the implementation of a project or programme. These might include indicators of trust, perceptions of fairness and equity (e.g. over access to resources, or economic opportunities and benefits), number of conflicts, compliance with fisheries rules, and whether there are effective mechanisms to resolve conflict.

⁴ FAO. 2017. Towards gender-equitable small-scale fisheries governance and development – A handbook. In support of the implementation of the Voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication. Prepared by Nilanjana Biswas. Rome, Italy.



Types of GSI indicators

An indicator is a variable that provides a way of measuring one aspect of a project to understand how it is being implemented or what changes are occurring.⁵ Table 3.2 provides an ‘Indicator reference sheet template’ to assist in defining indicators.

There are two main types of indicators:

- **Quantitative indicators** are numeric. They are presented as numbers, percentages or ratios, or as the results of other numeric calculations.
- **Qualitative indicators** may be presented as descriptive narratives. They provide information about the context in which a project is operating or stakeholders’ experiences of outcomes achieved.⁶

Table 3.2. Indicator reference sheet template.⁶

Indicator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the indicator being measured? • Is the indicator linked to an outcome(s)? • Is the indicator SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)? • Is the indicator defined clearly and unambiguously? 	
Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the population of interest? • What is the desired representative sample size? 	
Rationale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should this indicator be in the MEL plan? • Why is the indicator important for implementation and/or decision-making? 	
Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit of measurement (usually a number or percentage) 	Disaggregation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the data be disaggregated? (e.g. by sex, age, social status, etc.)
Type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the indicator measuring an activity, output or outcome? 	Direction of change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the desired units be higher or lower than the baseline?
Data sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the existing data sources that can be used? (e.g. from a GSI analysis, monitoring programmes, national surveys such as household income and expenditure surveys, etc.) • Do new data need to be collected? 	
Notes on measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level at which data is collected • Who will collect data for this indicator? • How should it be collected? • Frequency of collection (e.g. initial evaluation, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation) • Important assumptions 	
Data use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the data be analysed and who is responsible? • How will the data be communicated to decision-makers? • How will the data be used to make project or programmatic changes? • Who should be involved? • How and when will the MEL process engage stakeholders, or be accountable to stakeholders? 	

5 OECD/DAC. 2002. Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

6 Modification of Tool 16 in Fehringer J., Iskarpatyoti B., Adamou B. and Levy J. 2017. Integrating gender in the monitoring and evaluation of health programs: A toolkit. MEASURE Evaluation.

GSI-sensitive indicators can be categorised in two ways:

1. **Disaggregated baseline indicators** (Table 3.3): These are indicators that are disaggregated by key population characteristics, most often by sex, but also by other relevant demographic factors such as age, ethnic group, social group, socio-economic status, etc.
2. **GSI-specific indicators** (Table 3.3): These indicators address GSI issues directly and go beyond disaggregation of data. They address more complex issues such as changes in attitudes and social/gender norms, power differences, decision-making, division of labour, unpaid care work and workload, access to educational and economic opportunities, etc.⁷

Table 3.3. Examples of disaggregated indicators versus GSI indicators.

Indicator type	Example indicators
Disaggregated indicators	<p>Disaggregated information on participants and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people attending and participating in meetings or training by demographic group (men, women, youth, other groups) • Number of people receiving resources or support through the project or programme by demographic group (men, women, youth, other groups)
	<p>Extent to which different segments of the community have benefited from a project or programme.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in knowledge among men and women following training • Change in behavior or fishing practices among men and women • Change in income among men and women
GSI-specific indicators	<p>Extent to which a project or programme included equity-promoting practices.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in decision-making by demographic group (men, women, youth, other groups) • How fisheries and resource management affects men and women differently, and how these perspectives were taken into account during project design and implementation
	<p>The extent to which the project contributed to equity-promoting outcomes.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of labour between demographic groups (men, women, youth, social groups) • Control over the benefits of their work by men and women (along the value-chain) • Access to resources (e.g. fisheries, money, equipment, supplies) by demographic group (men, women, youth, other groups) • Active participation in managing coastal resources among demographic groups (men, women, youth, social groups) • Level of community recognition of men's and women's roles in fisheries management or aquaculture

Table 3.4. gives examples of indicators relating to Outcome 7 of *A new song for coastal fisheries* ('More equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups') and Outcome 8 ('Diverse livelihoods reducing pressure on fisheries resources, enhancing community incomes, and contributing to improved fisheries management').⁸

7 Fehringer J., Iskarpatyoti B., Adamou B. and Levy J. 2017. Integrating gender in the monitoring and evaluation of health programs: A toolkit. MEASURE Evaluation. <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/tools/gender/toolkit-for-integrating-gender-in-the-monitoring-and-evaluation-of-health-programs>

8 SPC. 2015. A new song for coastal fisheries – Pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy. Noumea: SPC.

Table 3.4. Examples of indicators relating to Outcomes 7 and 8 of *A new song for coastal fisheries*.

Intermediate outcomes	Key players	Indicators
Equitable access to resources and benefits of coastal fisheries within communities	Communities, champions for change, researchers	# of gender-differentiated studies # of community action plans in which access to benefits for women, youth and marginalised groups is improved Indicators of well-being are gender-differentiated and socially disaggregated Engagement of women, youth and other marginalised groups in fisheries activities
Greater inclusivity of decision-making while acknowledging cultural norms and traditional values	All demographic and social groups within a community, including village leaders	# of women, youth and other marginalised groups involved in decision-making forums New stakeholder groupings are developed in decision-making forums
Decision-making processes are transparent, and the roles of government and traditional authorities are clear	Communities, leaders	# of community members aware of decisions and decision-making processes
Plans take account of equity issues, especially those involving women and youth	Communities, leaders, women and youth	# of plans that explicitly address equity issues
Diverse livelihoods, contribute to coastal fisheries management	Communities, private sector, fisheries agencies	Healthy stocks (with assessment of all stocks harvested, including those targeted by women, youth and other marginalised groups) Diversity of livelihoods Gender division of labour in livelihoods Social breakdown of access to livelihood activities Proportion of income from coastal fisheries Distribution of income across social groups within communities
Enhance value of wild-caught fisheries	Fishers, private sector	Total household income Distribution of income within households
Aquaculture, tourism and inshore fish aggregation devices (FADs) contribute cost effectively to sustainable livelihoods	National departments, private sector, communities, SPC and NGOs	Household income Who controls individual and household income? Status of fish stocks (with assessment of all stocks harvested, including those targeted by women, youth and other marginalised groups)

Checklist for GSI sensitive indicators⁹

- Does the project have a systematic way to collect and analyse information on its social impacts on a regular basis?
- Can the indicators be disaggregated appropriately (e.g. by sex, age, social status, economic level, ethnicity, social group)?
- Has baseline data been collected on people of different sex, age, social status, economic level, ethnicity, and other social groups to ensure good understanding of the situation before the start of the project?
- Are there specific GSI indicators to measure changes in gender relations, social interactions, inequalities, and access to services, resources and power?
- Does the project have policies about what to do when MEL data reveals inequities?

⁹ Fehringer J., Iskarpotyoti B., Adamou B. and Levy J. 2017. Integrating gender in the monitoring and evaluation of health programs: A toolkit. MEASURE Evaluation. <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/tools/gender/toolkit-for-integrating-gender-in-the-monitoring-and-evaluation-of-health-programs>



Fisher on Koro Island, Fiji © VCreative

Collecting GSI data

It is important to think about the methods used to gather data that informs the indicators. Here are some things to consider:

- Is there existing data you can use (e.g. GSI analysis, household income expenditure survey)?
- How big is your sample? Quantitative disaggregated data sometimes requires larger sample sizes to be representative.
- Where are you collecting data? If you focus on economic centres where fishery products are sold, such as markets or wharves, you may miss capturing data on subsistence fisheries labour.
- Who is collecting the data? In some cases, women may prefer to be interviewed by women, men by men and youth by youth.
- In group settings, is everyone's voice being heard? In focus groups, it may be necessary to consider cultural barriers to attendance and participation, as well as the household and community commitments of different groups (e.g. childcare, catering for the meeting).

Ethical considerations for collecting socio-economic data

When collecting socio-economic data, it is important to incorporate the following social and ethical considerations:

- Participation in the surveys must be **voluntary**. No one should be pressurised or coerced into being interviewed. There should not be any consequences for any person refusing to participate.
- All participants must understand the survey and the risks involved in the study, and must give their **consent** to participate.
- No-one should be put at **risk of harm** or any form of persecution as a result of their participation in the study.
- Confidentiality** must be guaranteed. It should be clear who the data will be shared with, and how it will be presented. Aggregation of data can help protect individual identities.

Adaptive management

Monitoring and evaluation information is used to take action if necessary to improve a project or programme.

Adaptation involves changing assumptions and interventions to respond to the new information obtained through monitoring and evaluation to improve long-term management outcomes.

Information collected through MEL processes may also assist in other projects or programmes. Government agencies may be able to use the data collected to report on other global, regional or national obligations.

Case study: Including women as community-based fisheries monitors in Vanuatu and Fiji



There are many gaps in the data for community-based small-scale fisheries. To fill these gaps, community-based monitoring programmes are being established across the Pacific Islands region. For example, in 2017, community monitoring was established in Vanuatu (19 communities) and Fiji (24 communities) to monitor fish catches in selected villages using an app called 'Tails', which was developed by SPC. Each community has one community monitor who uses a mobile phone or tablet to collect data and submit it to a regional database.

Vanuatu was the first country to use the system. Communities were asked to nominate a community monitor to attend data collection training. All the monitors who attended training in Vanuatu were male. To achieve gender balance, the implementing team decided that when asking communities to nominate their data collector they should specify that villages were encouraged to select women. This was done when the training was held in Fiji and as a result, 13 of the monitors were women and 11 were men. Vanuatu has also included female community-based data collectors since the initial roll-out.

Emerging data indicates that female monitors increase the diversity of resources for which harvest data is collected. For example, in November 2017, data collected by female and male community monitors in Fiji was compared. The results showed that females recorded that 'collecting' or 'gleaning' made up 11% of fishing activities. In contrast, males recorded that collecting/gleaning made up only 2% of fishing activities.

Gleaning is a type of fishing that is often overlooked or not considered as fishing. As a result, fishing activities commonly undertaken by women and young people are discounted or ignored. The inclusion of female community monitors ensures that women's fishing activities are more visible. In addition, women selected as community monitors have access to training, skills development and resources associated with the role, rather than this opportunity being limited to men.

Case study: Monitoring and evaluation to support adaptive management in Ra Province, Fiji



The traditional fishing grounds surrounding Vatu-i-Ra Island are shared by all 28 villages in Ra Province. Because the reefs are 15 km from shore, the area is fished mainly by men. The reefs surrounding the island were made a *tabu* area (fisheries closure) in 2012 and have become highly popular with the dive industry.

In 2015, community leaders and representatives and the tourism industry began discussions to expand the *tabu* area and declare a conservation park over the island and surrounding reefs, which would include a large no-fishing zone. In return, the tourism industry proposed to seek 'voluntary contributions to conservation' from visitors to the park to support its day-to-day management and to establish an education fund for students.

To assess the impact of the initiative, biological and socio-economic surveys were conducted in 2016. The socio-economic assessment examined the community's knowledge of the current management arrangements for their customary fishing ground, the status of their fisheries, community perceptions of the Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park, and the scheme for voluntary contributions to conservation. Efforts were made to interview an equal number of male and female heads of households.

The socio-economic assessment found: (i) there were gender differences in the responses received, with women having less knowledge of the *tabu* area, the existing rules and the proposed voluntary contribution scheme; and (ii) the majority of women felt they were not involved, or only passively involved in decision-making about natural resources.

The monitoring and evaluation process highlighted that the community outreach programme had not been effective in engaging women in the discussions. Although women do not fish in the proposed conservation park area, they have access rights to all waters within their customary fishing grounds and play a large role in the education of their children. As a result, the project has been adapted and resources have been allocated to meet with the women in the village to ensure their inputs into the process are taken into consideration.

This study was a valuable demonstration of: (i) the role of monitoring and evaluation in measuring impact and enabling adaptive management; and (ii) the need for sex-disaggregated data to understand the impact of a project on men and women in a community.

This module contributes to the following outcomes of *A new song for coastal fisheries* and the *FAO Small-scale fisheries guidelines (SSF)*.

- If *A new song* is to be effective, it is vital to monitor progress, identify and address critical issues in a timely manner, and take into account the dynamic nature of coastal communities and ecosystems. Monitoring implementation of *A new song* will provide an opportunity for the region to report to Pacific Island leaders on coastal fisheries, including under the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*
- *A new song* Outcome 7 – More equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups
- *A new song* Outcome 8 – Diverse livelihoods reducing pressure on fisheries resources, enhancing community incomes, and contributing to improved fisheries management

Additional MEL tools, guides and resources

<http://www.betterevaluation.org/en>

An international collaboration to improve evaluation practice and theory by sharing and generating information about options (methods or processes) and approaches.

<https://www.measureevaluation.org/>

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development, with a mandate to strengthen health information systems in low-resource settings.

<https://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/>

A ‘one-stop’ site for the evaluation of community sustainability engagement projects that aim to change household behaviours.

Lawless S., Doyle K., Cohen P., Eriksson H., Schwarz A.M., Teioli H., Vavekaramui A., Wickham E., Masu R., Panda R. and McDougall C. 2017. Considering gender: Practical guidance for rural development initiatives in Solomon Islands. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish. Program Brief: 2017-22. http://pubs.iclarm.net/resource_centre/2017-22.pdf

Wongbusarakum S. and Pomeroy B. 2008. SEM-Pasifika: Socio-economic monitoring guidelines for coastal managers in Pacific Island countries. Apia, Samoa: SPREP.

