

These tips on how to run review meetings are designed to provide ideas and guidance for programmes implementing the DCED Standard for Results Measurement. They were developed by Aly Miehlabradt, Hans Posthumus, and Phitcha Wanitphon.

If you use these in your work, please let us know and give feedback at admin@enterprise-development.org

Analyzing and Using Information in Decision Making

1 Questions for Review Meetings

These are example questions only. They should be adapted and tailored to fit a specific program.

A. Intervention Level

Facts: What is happening?

1. Were our initial analysis and assumptions underlying the intervention results chain correct? What was correct and what wasn't? Why?
2. Are changes happening as expected? If so, why? If not, at what level did change stop happening as expected? Why?
3. Do we see any unintended results? Are they positive or negative?
4. Do we see any early signs of impact among the target group? Why or why not? How significant are they?
5. Do we see any signs of systemic change (eg crowding in or copying?)? If so, what signs? Why?
6. How are changes in the sector affecting the intervention?
7. What new information do we have that is relevant to this intervention?
8. Have we assessed the reliability of our information? Have we triangulated information from several sources?

Analysis: How is the intervention going?

9. Did the intervention lead to the expected business model? Why or why not?
10. Is the business model working? Why or why not? If so, is it sustainable? Why or why not? Is it likely to adapt and/or expand? Why or why not?
11. Did operation of the business model lead to the expected changes among the target group? Why or why not? If so, are improvements likely to last?
12. Is the intervention appropriately addressing/incorporating gender issues? Why or why not?
13. Is the intervention effectively addressing/incorporating other cross-cutting issues? Why or why not?
14. What is the potential for positive changes to reach a significant scale? How? Or why not?
15. What are key lessons learned?

Decisions: What should we do next?

16. What additional information do we need? Who will get that info, how, by when?
17. Will we continue, expand, modify or drop the intervention? How?

Learning: What have we learned? How will we apply it?

18. Can we apply the lessons learned to other interventions? How?

B. Sector Level**Facts: What is happening in the sector?**

1. Were our initial analysis and assumptions about the sector correct? What was correct and what wasn't? Why?
2. What is changing in the sector? Why? Is that as we expected and in line with our strategy and intervention areas? Why or why not?
3. Do we see any unintended results? Are they positive or negative?
4. Do we see any signs of systemic change? If so, what signs? Why?
5. What new information do we have about the situation and trends in the sector? What does it mean related to our current understanding of opportunities and constraints for pro-poor growth in the sector?
6. Have we assessed the reliability of our information? Have we triangulated information from several sources?

Analysis: How is the sector strategy going?

7. Is the sector strategy working? Which aspects of the strategy are working? Which are not working? Why?
8. To what extent are our interventions working together to enable the target group to sustainably take advantage of opportunities? To what extent are they working together to sustainably address key constraints? Why?
9. How will changes in the sector affect the sector strategy?
10. Are the changes observed effectively addressing/incorporating gender issues? Why or why not?
11. Are the changes observed effectively addressing/incorporating other cross-cutting issues? Why or why not?
12. What is the potential for positive changes to reach significant scale? How? Or why not?
13. To what extent and how are our interventions together addressing various aspects of sector change, including expansion, efficiency, resilience and responsiveness, and inclusion?
14. Are sector change drivers emerging? If so, are they likely to be able to drive positive sector change – inclusive, responsive etc.?
15. What are the key lessons learned?

Decisions: What should we do next?

16. What additional information do we need? Who will get that info, how, by when?
17. Should we modify our sector strategy? If yes, why? How? (Are we still focusing on the right intervention areas? Have we identified new ones? Should we adjust our focus?)
18. Which interventions should we continue, expand, modify, drop?
19. Should we add any interventions? If so, what should they focus on? Why? What do we have in the pipeline?

Learning: What have we learned? How will we apply it?

20. Are there any useful lessons learned for our other sector strategies? What? How can they be applied?
21. What have we learned about analyzing and developing strategies and interventions? What will we do differently next time?

C. Portfolio Level

Facts: What is happening?

1. What are the overall program results achieved to date and by sector?
2. What are the key changes to the political, economic and social environments that will affect the program implementation?

Analysis: How is our portfolio going?

3. Which sector strategies are proving appropriate? Why? Which ones need significant adjustments? Why?
4. With the current portfolio of sectors and interventions, are we likely to maximize results with available time and resources? Are we likely to reach our targets?
5. Is the portfolio effectively addressing/incorporating gender issues? Why or why not?
6. Is the portfolio effectively addressing/incorporating other cross-cutting issues? Why or why not?
7. How will the key changes in the political, economic and social environment affect the program?
8. What are the key lessons learned?

Decisions: What should we do next?

9. What additional information do we need? Who will get that info, how, by when?
10. What needs to be adjusted in the current portfolio of sectors and interventions?
11. Do we continue, adjust, drop or add sectors?
12. How should we allocate resources among sectors?

Learning: What have we learned? How will we apply it?

13. How can we apply lessons learned to make the whole program more effective?

2 Tips for Effective Processes

What does it look like?	How to encourage it?
Review meetings are regular and effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular and structured review meetings at appropriate intervals for each programming level (intervention, component/sector, program) • Start review meetings early in the program– even before there is much information to discuss – to instil the process and culture and build the capacity of staff to analyse, discuss and decide effectively • Develop and enforce a process to pre-analyse information and circulate before meetings so that people aren't starting from scratch in review meetings • Ensure results chains are used in meetings as a thinking tool; colour coding results chains is useful visual tool • Don't get stuck on the numbers; spend time on qualitative findings, particularly <i>why</i> changes happened or didn't happen as expected • Encourage the team to differentiate between anecdotes and more solid monitoring data. • Don't be tempted to focus on operations (of activities) but start and keep reviewing the other levels in the results chains (business model and impact) • Ensure various perspectives are heard in the meetings; this will strengthen the analysis
MRM processes are streamlined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review the MRM system to ensure it is effectively supporting decision-making at all levels – trial and error will be required to get the system right for the program • Participate in the assessment of the MRM system and offer ideas on how to address issues in the system and improve its effectiveness • Invite staff members to suggest adjustments to the MRM-system: often the actual review of an intervention or sector may trigger such reflections
MRM processes are useful, not paperwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure the development and review of strategies and interventions as a collaborative process between MRM specialists and implementation staff • Install a practical quality control system for processes and documentation – it is not enough for processes to be carried out, they have to be carried out to an adequate standard in order to be useful • Enforce the quality control system

3 Tips for Effective Documentation

What does it look like?	How to encourage it?
Documentation supports learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure internal reports to focus on effective analysis and use of information to support decisions • Read and comment on internal reports with a focus on the quality of the analysis, decision-making and learning • Write external reports that highlight both results and analysis and learning • Don't require that results are reported before they can realistically be expected • Agree with donors and other stakeholders on a realistic schedule for measuring and reporting on results at various levels
Documentation supports decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match documentation timing to the review meeting cycle and vice versa • Ensure inputs and outputs to review meetings are clear • Assign someone to document each review meeting
Documentation is clear and timely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure it is clear who is responsible for updating documents • Ensure it is clear when documents need to be updated • Develop and enforce a clear filing system with documents easily accessible to staff • Develop and enforce a clear system for document versions so it's clear which is the latest version • Plan MRM "catch ups" – it's easy to get behind and hard to catch up • Enforce MRM documentation – make approval of activities contingent on documentation eg) approval of an intervention contingent on having an adequate results chain done and agreed among staff • Combine analysis and decision-making meetings or "weeks" with reporting – it's a practical way to ensure the documents are completed