

Evolution of Natural Resource Programs
Performance Management in Tanzania:
A Review of Monitoring, Evaluation and
Learning (MEL) Aspects and Policy
Recommendations

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Acronyms

BALANCED	Building Actors and Leaders for Advancing Community Excellence in Development
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
DFID	Department For International Development
GPS	Global Positioning System
MS-TCDC	Training Centre for Development Cooperation in Eastern and Southern Africa
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PROMIS	PEPFAR Records & Organization Management Information System
RBM	Result Based Matrix
RIPL	Responsible Investment in Property and Land
SUCCESS	Sustainable Coastal Communities and Ecosystems
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats
TNRF	Tanzania Natural Resource Forum
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I.0 Background

International and National Non-Governmental Organizations around the world are forced to respond to good governance and financial accountability in natural resource management projects. In addition, technological development and demand for promoting participatory natural resource management demands more funding accountability. This in turn has required development project implementing organizations to mainstream monitoring, evaluation and learning aspects in sustainable development projects (Kusek and Rist, 2004)¹.

The World Bank and Africa Development Bank have recorded low demand for monitoring, evaluation and learning aspects Sub-Saharan governments and public sector (Kusek and Rist, 2004). However, the scenario is different with donor induced sustainable development project implementation. To satisfy the demand, the donor community has played a major role to influence capacity building and strengthening in monitoring, evaluation and learning aspects. This has gradually nurtured project performance management from the monitoring, evaluation and learning lens in respective countries.

In Tanzania, like most sub-Saharan countries, monitoring, evaluation and learning in development projects has been spearheaded by both natural resource management and health sector projects. This has enabled frontline cultivation of project and program performance management specialists in the form of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) officers. The initiatives have also cultivated performance management systems in development projects implemented in the country. There is however limited capacity building in public sector performance management capacity building.

¹Kusek, J. Z., & Rist, R. C. (2004). *Ten steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system: a handbook for development practitioners*.

2.0 Rationale

This paper aims to:-

- a) Enable natural resource project management specialists and emerging monitoring, evaluation and learning arena utilize practical examples of project performance management.
- b) Provide natural resource management researchers with available benchmark information in the field of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).
- c) Inform project management specialists with better decisions on establishing and maintaining natural resource project performance management systems.

3.0 Methodology

This review has gathered natural resource projects performance management secondary information that has significantly contributed to its documentation. Primary information has been collected through personal communication with different performance management specialists in Tanzania natural resource management projects and programs. Both primary and secondary data were categorized, processed and drafted into a meaningful pattern as described by Creswell (2013)². Different sub-sections that detail the gist of natural resource performance management in Tanzania were then introduced in the following sequence of paragraphs below.

²Creswell, J.W (2013). Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Fourth Edition

4.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Tanzania

Menon and Wignaraja (2009)³ have defined monitoring as the ongoing process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving their goals and objectives. Information collected is about program implementation and the shifting strategic context. The monitoring aspect has been the major role of the most performance management personnel in natural resource management organizations. This is fueled by regular donor and organization reporting frequencies (Quarter, bi -annual and annual reports).

Menon and Wignaraja (2009) have further defined evaluation as rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which activities are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision making. Evaluation is centered in program value and decision making. Evaluation unlike monitoring is conducted after a certain specified period of time of project implementation.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) projects/programs have centered evaluation activities as an organizational external oriented activity that is usually undertaken by consultants or any other third part. This is done to safeguard evaluation reputation and avoid bias. Evaluation set up has obliged natural resource performance management specialists to grasp a managerial role rather than a direct involvement in most projects/programs evaluation. SWOT analysis is commonly used in most NRM project evaluations.

Learning in natural resource performance management is a recent concept aimed at using data and insights from a variety of information-gathering approaches-including monitoring and evaluation-to inform strategy and decision-making. Information collected and compiled in different program formats such as policy briefs, information briefs, reports and publications should be used as lessons for next phases of project implementation. Learning is set to improve programming efficiency and improve adaptive management in organizations. In Tanzania, the learning concept is amateur and needs more resources to effectively operationalize.

³Menon, S., Karl, J., &Wignaraja, K. (2009).Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating For Development Results.UNDP Evaluation Office, New York, NY.

5.0 The role of donor community in natural resource programs / projects performance management.

USAID-Tanzania has played a significant role in natural resource management performance management. Through the Mitchell Group Inc., USAID – Tanzania provided capacity building to several natural resource implementing partners with regards to project performance management. The introduction of Performance Management Plans (PMP); Performance Management Information Systems (MIS); and strong data collection tools development were among other techniques spearheaded by USAID-Tanzania to improve performance tracking and quality reporting. USAID also introduced online reporting training platform-Trainet-VCS that partners use to report related capacity training details.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has special formalized quarterly refresher trainings to build capacity of its project performance management specialists. Depending on funding availability through different donors, the organization has regular trainings and refresher trainings with regard to performance management. In addition CARE-Denmark and Tanzania have also exhibited patterns to provide capacity to its advocacy performance management staff and respective partners. Such efforts have significantly contributed to the growth of performance management capacity in Tanzania.

6.0 Project Performance Management in Public and Private Education Institutions

In 2000s, both public and private education and training institutions had inadequate specific courses for project performance management (MEL aspect). Most public education and training institutions conduct a general project management short courses and degrees in statistics. Most employers therefore preferred hiring performance managements (MEL) specialists with a background in statistics or related natural resource management course. Other employers preferred staff on-job training with regard to performance management. This was done in response to performance management needs of specific organizations.

There have been more short courses offered in MEL in the last decade. This accounts for the surge in demand for performance specialists in the country, especially in the private sector. For example, MS-TCDC in Arusha offers certification training in monitoring and evaluation whereas the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) has a master's degree course in monitoring and evaluation.

Other institutions include Tanzania Institute of Monitoring and Evaluation (TIME), Tanzania Institute of Project Management (TIPM) offering a postgraduate diploma in monitoring and evaluation, Tanzania Business School (TBS) is dedicated to providing postgraduate diploma in monitoring and evaluation management, ESAMI is specialized in offering certificate in monitoring and evaluation and Mzumbe University (MU) has the capacity to offer the master of science in health monitoring and evaluation.

While most employers preferred performance management specialists with statistics and project management background, there is an increasing number of employers that desire project management specialists with Information Technology (IT) and computer science backgrounds. This is due to increasing use of technology and quantitative information demand in modern informed project management.

7.0 Performance management in Integrated approach NRM

Integrated approaches introduction in NRM projects in Tanzania is another paradigm that has fueled project performance management (MEL) to another level. Integrated approach projects had to report project performance in an integrated dimension. For example, the USAID funded PWANI project which partially employed the Population, Health and Environment (PHE) approach to cater for USAID Wealth, Nature and Power (WNP) dimension of the project.

The PWANI project maintained complimentary health and population aspects into environment through the BALANCED project and partly the USAID PEPFAR funding in Tanzania. The projects were separately implemented but had specific integrated activities that contributed to PWANI project performance indicators. The other unique natural resource management programs with such integrated approaches in Tanzania include; Tuungane Project which is the collaboration of The Nature Conservancy and Pathfinder International currently operating near Lake Tanganyika and the Greater Mahale Ecosystem. The project has featured integrated implementation of activities addressing environmental, health and population challenges.

Such integrated project approaches use the logical framework performance tracking and posed a challenge on indicator framing and reporting. USAID-Tanzania through AIDSTARone provided training and coaching with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention mainstreaming it to natural resource management projects. This capacity building was unique to the performance management arena; it illustrated natural resource management mainstreaming not only HIV/AIDS but also with other socio and economic human dimensions in performance management. USAID further provided access to natural resource management programs mainstreaming health to PEPFAR – PROMIS health programs management systems for reporting health aspects.

Organizations such as PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc; University of Rhode Island (URI), Coastal Resource Centre (CRC); and Conservation International (CI) have in collaboration with USAID dedicated capacity building in building resilient communities while incorporating performance management in integrated programs. In East Africa for example, the organizations have made capacity building to different conservation actors from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. This further improved performance management of integrated NRM programs in respective countries.

To strengthen the capacity of NRM integrating health projects, USAID through the Centre for Disease Control and Management (CDC) provided performance management specialist to capacity build NRM integration health in respective interventions. Most NRM projects integrated Non-Facility interventions such as HIV/AIDS prevention and family planning components. The CDC performance management specialist trained on technique to report the Next Generation Indicators (NGIs). Due to the dynamic nature of the PROMIS reporting system, the CDC performance management team scheduled quarterly implementing partners' refresher trainings. This is another important initiative that boosted the capacity of the NRM performance management personnel in integrating human dimension into respective NRM programs.

8.0 Public Projects Performance Management

Though the demand for public project performance management is low in Tanzania, some of the project such as roads construction, HIV/AIDS schemes and Land Tenure Support Programs (LTSP) have robust project performance management schemes. This could be due to partly donor involvement in such projects. Regular reporting is essential in such projects and hence the necessity to have concrete and robust data to inform decision making.

On the other hand, there is an inadequate performance management schemes in public sector natural resource management. For example, apart from indicative data from the National Bureaus of Statistics and Bank of Tanzania, the fisheries sector lacks a central system with fisheries database that disaggregates information to the finest single unit to inform decision making and provide access to researchers. Moreover, the Wildlife sector has no inter-ministerial central coordinated information system that is regularly updated to provide decision making vibrant which maximizes cutting edge technological information analysis.

9.0 Project Performance Management in Local and International NGOs

There is a great difference in natural resource management systems of Local and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). Local NGOs view project performance management as a donor requirement. Therefore most NGOs have no permanent performance management as a permanent structure embedded in organization structure and programming. This has led to organizational inadequate performance management systems that affect organizations' strategic decision making ability.

International NGOs (INGOs) are made accountable to respective government and mega donors. In addition, there is a nurtured culture of accountability in most INGOs. This has forced the bodies to establish both project and program performance management systems. For example, the WWF uses Project and Program Management Standards (PPMS) as one among several tools to trace the programs and project performance. This fuels proper documentation of the overall program management and informs strategic decision making.

The NRM portfolio of USAID-Tanzania has an online management system that tracks all implementing partners' activities and deliverables. For example, The Tanzania Monitoring and Evaluation Management System (T-mems) spearheaded by the Mitchell Group, Inc established an online natural resource management system that can provide performance history of the respective NRM section.

10.0 Status of statistical software usage/ data analysis system

The use of statistical software depends on whether the organization is a “think tank”, “advocacy” or simply a “service delivery” organization. This also depends on whether the organization is implementing natural resource management or health service delivery projects. Tanzania has recorded a high use of statistical software in health service delivery related organizations rather than NRM projects. This is due to data sensitivity and difference in margins of error acceptance between NRM and health service data. The NRM sector has a relatively greater margin error acceptance compared to the health sector.

Statistical software that has dominated the Tanzania projects performance management includes the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), Stata, Epi-Info and R-stat. SPSS and to some extent R-stat have dominated the NRM sector, while Epi-Info and Stata have dominated the health sector. However, the use of statistical software in NRM remains dominant in organizations that are geared to establish performance management in research.

11.0 Practicability of MEL Systems in Tanzania NRM Projects

Result Based Monitoring (RMB) has worked for some of the projects in Tanzania. To make this much more efficient, a result based matrix is usually established with a timeline embedded. The performance management focal point has the task to make a follow up on deliverables established and document the process of obtaining the deliverables. Projects like RIPL have exploited some aspects of RBM to address challenging timelines within project implementation. This mode of performance management is also preferred by DANIDA and SIDA.

The Logical Framework is also another approach in NRM projects have utilized in addressing performance management in Tanzania. The approach sets the goal and subsequent outcome areas (Intermediate Results (IR), or Result Areas (RAs)). Outcome areas then devolve respective indicators depending on the nature of activity in each outcome area. In some instances, outcome areas and goals could also have indicators irrespective of activity indicators. The logical framework use in performance management is well exemplified in SUCCESS and PWANI projects funded by USAID- Tanzania. This model of performance management is also preferred by DFID.

Projects or Programs that prefer the use of the logical framework have a supplementary way of documenting project impact and success. This is because, the logical framework alone, cannot elucidate the impact aspects of the project. Therefore, logical framework practitioners have always documented “Success stories”, “Most significant changes” and “Success documentaries” to well document project impact and success irrespective of archived success percentages displayed in Key Performance Indicator (KPI) tables.

Advocacy is relatively challenging in performance tracking and management. The advocacy work’s performance can be tracked by use of KPI tables but the use of outcome mapping has documented a comparative advantage. Outcome mapping involves a participatory determination of stakeholders, progress markers and stakeholder outcome challenges. Progress markers act like indicators, illustrating every slight change in behavior of each stakeholder in advocacy interventions. Stakeholder outcome challenges stand as outcome areas, intermediate results or result areas. Stakeholder outcome challenges then contribute to the overall project or program goal. Organization like CARE-Tanzania, HAKIARDHI, JET and TNRF have applied outcome mapping techniques to track and document performance in advocacy interventions.

12.0 Performance Management Personnel (MEL) Organization Positioning

There are different patterns of performance management personnel positioning in different organizations. Most NRM organizations in Tanzania position the performance management personnel in between the head of the organization and programs operations. This is because the position reflects quality assurance and check functions. Program technical staff would for example collect quarterly technical reports to the performance management personnel before submission to the donor for quality check and then the reports would be submitted to the director for final approval.

The other scenario which exemplifies positioning of the performance management staff between the head of the organization and program technical staff is the collection of project reports to the performance management personnel for compilation to produce an organization or strategic donor overall report. This compiled report is usually sent to director then to the organization oversight body and/or strategic funding donor.

Depending on the number of projects the organization is currently executing, Tanzania project implementation has also exhibited another pattern of positioning of performance management staff. Organization executing multiple projects tend to position performance management (MEL) staff under each project with an umbrella organizational performance management specialist that report to the organization head. This has made junior project performance management personnel with dual reporting; to the senior project/program head and to senior overall organizational performance management personnel.

Due to highly analytical and report collection functions of the work, performance management personnel have mostly spearheaded projects fund raising. Stored data, publications, organization information background and record storage have made the performance management practitioners an important human resource in fund raising. In addition, most fund raising concept notes and full proposal require an exhibition of performance management by either filling in a logical framework or stipulating the overall project performance management scheme. This necessitates the presence of project performance specialist (MEL) in respective activity.

13.0 MEL associations in Tanzania

Tanzania has registered Tanzania Evaluation Association-TanEA as the major project performance management forum. TanEA was registered back in 2006 as a branch of Africa Evaluation Association-AfrEA whose headquarters is in Ghana. TanEA has however inadequately reached performance management specialists and therefore has a comparatively lower number of members. Zanzibar has register Zanzibar M&E Association-ZAMEA as the platform for performance management specialists.

Non-TanEA project performance specialists have grasped the advantage of Information Technology (IT) advancement to communicate. WhatsApp is the widely used informal communications involving job opportunities dissemination, sharing of performance management challenges and solution seeking. The groups have also been used in socialization and physical meeting whenever members are in field and happen to visit fellowmembers' field sites. The practice has widely facilitated information exchange between and among performance specialist members.

14.0 NRM Project Performance Management and Technology

Natural Resource Management (NRM) has also made progress towards data collection with advancing technology. Recent data collection has documented the use of phones in collecting data. This is for example mobile data collection using Open Data Kit (ODK) that is currently present in android phones. The program is used in collecting and posting of natural resource management related data. It also has extensively encouraged participatory project management with community as supported by the growing number of phone users in rural Tanzania

Conservation drones are currently playing an important role especially in wildlife management and land use planning. Drones can be deployed in wildlife areas to trace illegal activities then provide an exact locality of the activity. This enables wildlife patrol resources to concentrate in an area that has problems. From drones' activity, decision makers have ability to process information and make appropriate decision based on geo-spatial data generated. In addition drones can be used in land use planning and border demarcation and this has eased the land use planning process.

The uses of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and websites have also been widely used in natural resource management advocacy work and its performance management. Facebook for example, has a function to provide spatial, qualitative and audience engagement quantitative data. This data provide the reach of the advocacy interventions conducted by organizations. It can also produce feedback on topics, the degree of reach and audience level of interest in particular advocacy topics.

15.0 Recommendations to project decision and government policy makers

In Tanzania, there is more demand of performance management in private rather than public sector. Although the government of Tanzania tried to use some of the performance management schemes such as Big Results Now (BRN) to monitor sector specific achievements, there is a need to make performance management a policy and demand driven public consumption. In addition, there should be sector policy statements supporting different performance systems strengthening. In sector that both qualitative and quantitative information is inadequately used in decision making, there should be respective policy statements emphasizing performance management information decisions.

There is evidence of strong performance management systems in International Non-Governmental Organizations as compared to Local Non-Governmental Organizations. It is therefore important that heads of Local Non-Governmental Organizations invest in respect organization performance management not only for donor reporting purposes but also for respective organization performance tracking and decision making.

The government through the respective ministry that oversees NGOs requires that both local and internationally registered NGOs present both technical and annual financial report. However for a number of years this practice has not been as robust and NGOs have inadequately adhered to the responsibility. The government should therefore through the respective ministry amend the sector policy to make the reporting enforcement robust. This will further improve NGOs accountability to the government and public.

Statistical software have proven to increase information accuracy in reporting. In Tanzania, most think Tank and health oriented organizations have documented an extensive use of statistical software. Most advocacy and service delivery organizations have not extensively utilized the software. It is important that decision makers in the organizations employ the extensive use of the software to adopt new technology, ensure data sustainability and increase accuracy in decision making. To improve information accuracy and adopt technology, the government through the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) could engineer the policy statement that enforces the use of qualified processing data software to avoid ambiguous or less confident information.

It is also evident that performance management platform have not developed to full potential. Existing platforms like TanEA and ZAMEA should make more effort to recruit new members and make the platform more vibrant. This will provide an opportunity for the performance management specialists in Tanzania to grow. Such platforms in Tanzania have a potential to secure funds to make more capacity building to platform members. A policy statement by the government would propose that all private sector shared data be endorsed by such nationally recognized bodies as TanEA and ZAMEA prior public use.