

Checklist 3: Implement, Monitor and Evaluate Strategy

Implement Strategy

Before strategy implementation, it's ideal to create some kind of 'Action Plan'. Such a plan should show who will implement the products and activities listed in the strategy, as well as when, where and how (task, person responsible, and date). With your strategy, pre-testing and action plan finalized, it's time for you to implement. Good luck!

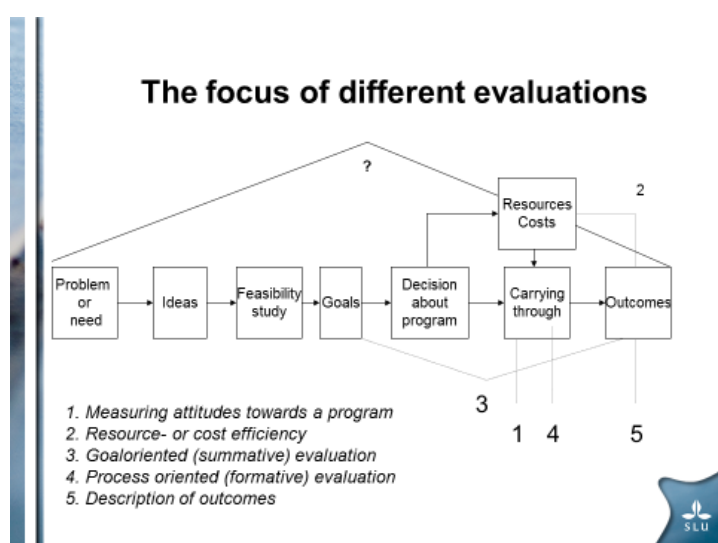
Monitor and evaluate implementation

Evaluation provides an opportunity to find out if your hard work has really made a difference. By assessing what does and does not work, you will use lessons learned to improve your efforts in the future. You will also be able to show your team, partners and funders exactly what has been achieved.

The most common question during evaluation is: Did your products and activities achieve what it originally where set out to do? You must therefore go back to your original communication goals and objectives and use them to inform your indicators of progress. Some examples could be:

- Has the issue been communicated properly?
- Was awareness raised?
- Have attitudes been changed?
- Have you been able to motivate people to take required actions?

But evaluations might be focusing on different aspects and relations, linking specific aspects of a program or project to each other. In the figure below the different forms of evaluations are illustrated.



It is important to note that monitoring and evaluation should be done throughout the entire process, as well as at the end. Effective monitoring involves keeping on top of all activities and making sure that implementation is on the right path towards achieving your goals. Monitoring might reveal that your strategy is not working – that means you may need to change your strategy during the implementation phase.

It is important to be flexible! A strategy is a living document and does not need to be followed at all costs. Instead it is a tool to help you get results, and if the anticipated results are not coming, then the tool might need to be changed. It's also important that your system of monitoring and evaluation is planned from the start, so you know exactly what to assess right from the beginning.

Evaluations might be done both continuously and at the end (of a project period). The former is often labelled a formative evaluation (a method to continuously support development and change), the latter a summative evaluation (a method to control goal fulfilment).

How to monitor

Once you know **what** you are monitoring (e.g. attitudes, efficiency, goal fulfilment), there are a number of ways **how** to monitor or measure progress. The important thing is to make sure you ask the right questions for the right people. If you want to know whether your activities are helping bee-keepers to become more aware of strategies to create more resilient bee populations, then you need to ask them. The same goes for assessing whether your communications have helped bee-keepers to implement new management or techniques. You need to make sure that the results you are seeing are directly linked to your activities – and this is usually not that easy. Your target group may be changing the way you want them to, but maybe your efforts have nothing to do with it! Maybe they are doing it because of a change that has occurred elsewhere such as other information sources, new regulations or an economic incentive.

Questions to help monitor and evaluate communicative products and activities

- How many participated in the different communication activities?
- How many enquiries or requests for further information were generated?
- How many people were reached through the channels used? How many were target group members?
- How big media coverage and/or many media stories appeared as a result of your work?
- How many materials were handed or sent out to the primary target groups?
- How many partners were engaged in distributing and/or presenting the same key messages?

- Were all activities carried out on budget and according to the timeline? If not, why not?
- Did access to relevant information improved (for the target groups)?
- How did the target group find out about your initiative? How where they reached?
- Counting the number of brochures that have been given out, etc.

You may then need to include **assumptions** and **future scenarios** in your monitoring and evaluation if you want to relate your communications to systems or behavioural goals. For example, you could argue that, based on the changes in perception caused through your communication activities, you expect the actions of your target group to change (in the future), and that this will lead to a more sustainable bee-keeping sector, etc. The important thing is not make statements which does not hold for a closer look.

The importance of good examples and success stories

During your monitoring efforts, you will hopefully uncover a number of successes or good examples among both what you have done as well as among the target group. While these can tell you a lot about how the communications are doing, they can also be packaged into success stories. Such positive, simple and descriptive stories are great tools for communicating both to target groups, partners as well as donors! They can also be incredibly useful in generating media attention, gaining more interest and additional support for your work.

Final Report

A well written and reflective final report is also a valuable tool for communication, not least to show you team, partners and donors what you have achieved and how the communication plan and strategy has worked in practice. Such a report will also be useful for you in planning any next stage or strategy.

A final report should not only cover what you have done in a more descriptive way, but also basically state whether the goals and objectives of your communication plan were achieved or not, as well as why and how. It should explain how monitoring was used to make your evaluation, as well as lessons learned and recommendations for how planning and implementation might have been improved. We can always become better in communication, planning and process design, why the development of a final report is an important possibility for learning.