

Agricultural Productivity Program for Southern Africa (APPSA)

Role of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning of R&D Projects

APPSA

End of Project Conference

Holiday Inn, Johannesburg, South Africa

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27-29 November 2019, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Presentation Outline

1. Introduction
2. Impediments to MEL of R&D Projects
3. Characteristics of an Effective MEL System
4. Conclusion

Introduction

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Introduction (1/4)

Monitoring – Definition

- *Monitoring is the built in mechanism to check that things are going to plan and enable adjustments to be made in a methodical way (Oxfam, 1995).*
- *Monitoring is a systematic and continuous assessment of progress of a piece of work over time (Save the Children, 1995).*

Introduction (2/4)

Evaluation – Definition

- *Evaluation is the assessment at one point in time of the impact of work and the extent to which stated objectives have been achieved (SCF, 1995).*

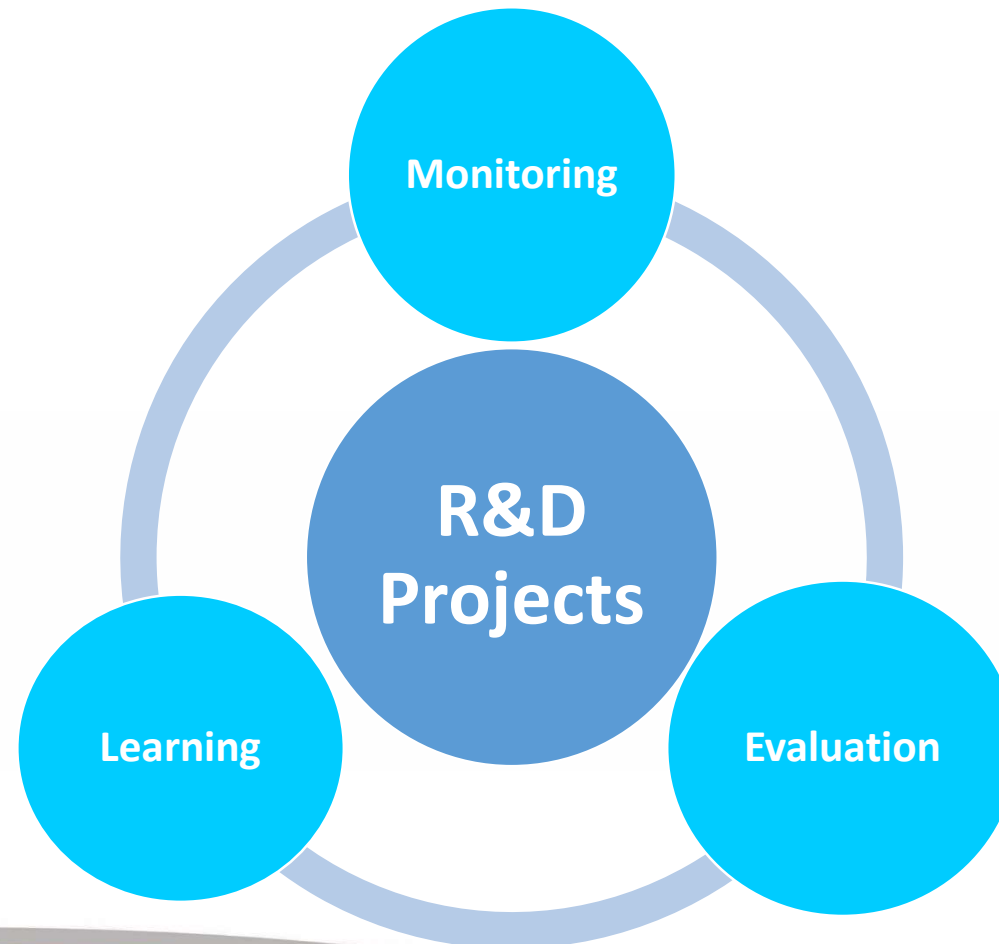
Introduction (3/4)

Learning – Definition

- **Reflective Learning** is: ‘a process of critical analysis that questions assumptions, experiences and feelings to inform future action for improved performance’
- Learning should lead to corrections and adjustments

Introduction (4/4)

MEL is closely intertwined



Impediments to MEL of R&D Projects

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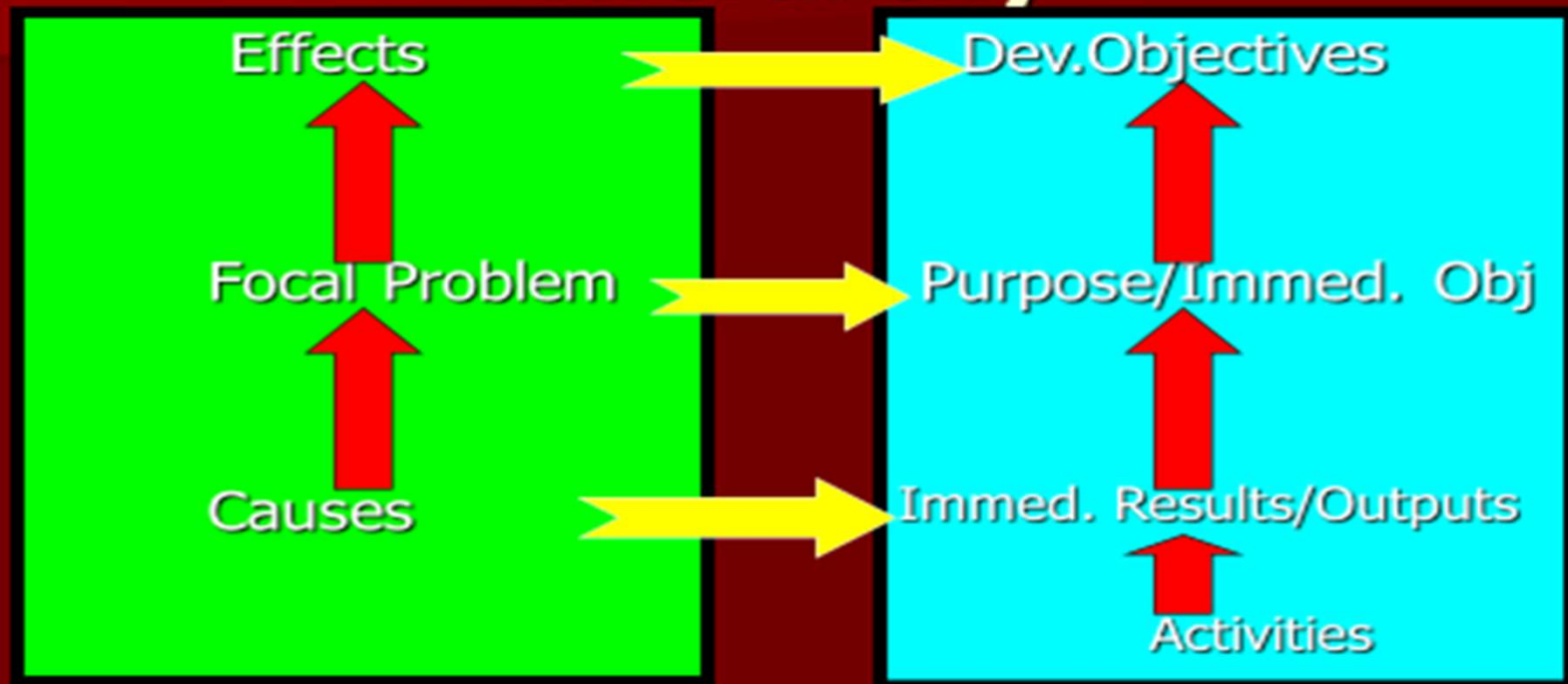
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Wrong Identification of Core Problem

- Arises due to inadequate problem analysis in terms of:
 - Root causes
 - Effects of the core problem
- Inadequate key stakeholder consultation
 - Particularly the target group

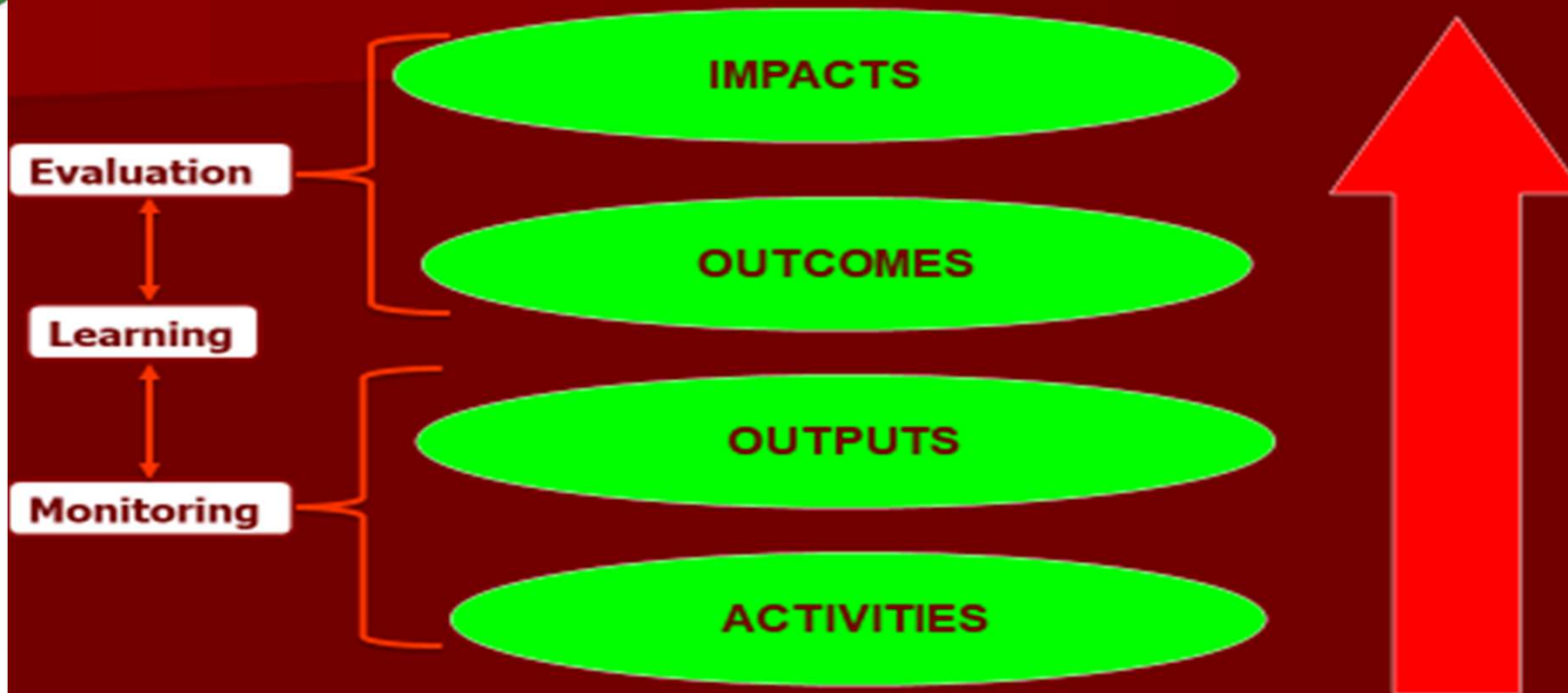
Objectives are Poorly Developed

Objectives Analysis Hierarchy



Indicators are Poorly Developed

Categorization of Indicators by Objective Hierarchy



The log-frame is poorly developed

The log-frame is the bedrock for MEL, but its construction continues to have considerable gaps:

1. In a number of cases, KPIs are not objectively verifiable
2. There is usually confusion between outcome and output indicators
3. The causal-effect relationship is sometimes absent
4. Assumptions are sometimes wrongly placed at various levels of the objective hierarchy

The Logical Framework Matrix

Objective Hierarchy (Narrative Summary; Intervention logic)	Performance Questions and Indicators (Objectively verifiable indicators, indicators, targets)	Monitoring Mechanisms (Means of verification, sources of information)	Assumptions and Risks
Goal (Overall objective, development objective) <i>The long-term objective, change of state or improved situation towards which the project is making a contribution</i>	Performance questions and indicators at goal level-high level impacts	How necessary information will be gathered	For long term sustainability of the project
Purpose (Project development objective) <i>The immediate project objective, the overall observable changes in performance, behaviour or resource status that should occur as a result of the project</i>	Performance questions and indicators for each purpose (component) – lower-level impact and outcome indicators	How necessary information will be gathered	Assumptions in moving from purposes to goal
Outputs (Results) <i>The products, services or results that must be delivered by the project for the component objectives and purpose to be achieved</i>	Performance questions and indicators for each output – output indicators	How necessary information will be gathered	Assumptions in moving from output to purposes
Activities <i>The actions taken by the project that are required for delivery of the outputs</i>	Note: activity targets come here		Assumptions in moving from activities to outputs

Inconsistency in the evaluation processes

Baseline

***Methods used**

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

***Sampling issues**

- Sampling frame
- Sample sizes

***Key Performance Indicators**

- Use of same indicators
- Use of same data collection tools

Midline

***Methods used**

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

***Sampling issues**

- Sampling frame
- Sample sizes

***Key Performance Indicators**

- Use of same indicators
- Use of same data collection tools

Endline

***Methods used**

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

***Sampling issues**

- Sampling frame
- Sample sizes

***Key Performance Indicators**

- Use of same indicators
- Use of same data collection tools

Characteristics of an Effective MEL System

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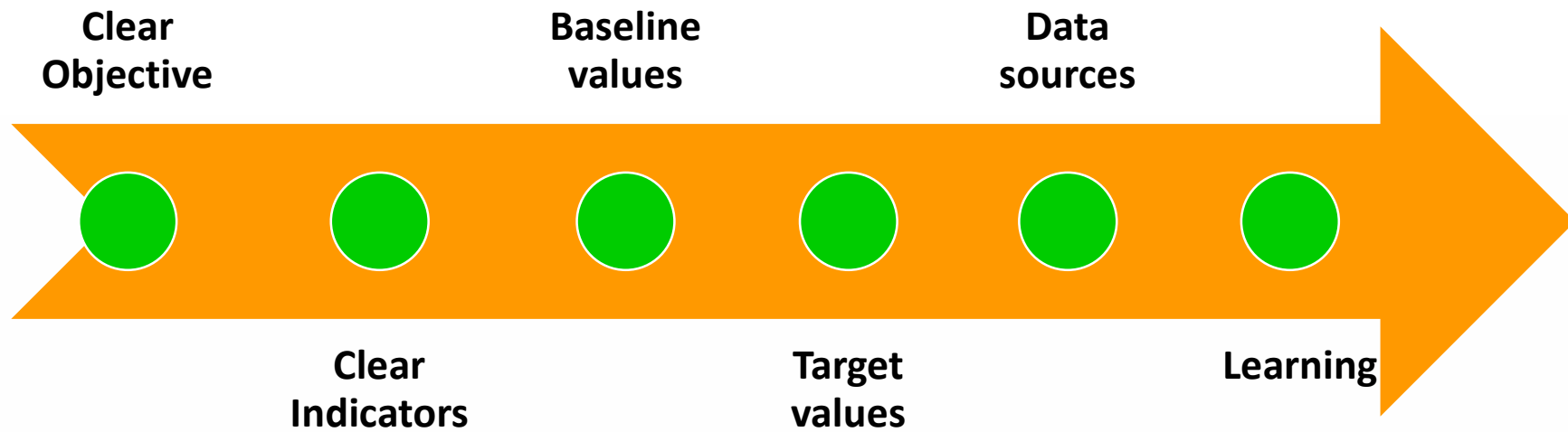
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An Effective MEL (1/2)



An Effective MEL (2/2)

- Correct results are measured
- Results are documented and disseminated to all major stakeholders
- There is a deliberateness in identifying and planning for key learning events
- Implementation of evaluation recommendations is monitored and reported on

Conclusions

- ❖ The idea of MELs has been on the table for decades, but gaps in its effective performance still persist
 1. It is common for baselines not to be conducted, but midlines and endlines are insisted on
 2. Poorly constructed log-frames without baseline values
 3. The learning part is often not given much attention
 4. Evaluations are often driven by financiers hence they are rarely owned by governments
- ❖ MEL is the missing link in effective performance of R&D and yet it continues to be given low priority or ignored