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MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROJECTS

A FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

CASE STUDY FOR UNIVERSITY OF GHANA - LEGON

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

AS globalization has continued its match in making our world a global village, there are growing pressures on Governments and Organizations around the world to be more responsive to the demands of internal and external stakeholders for good governance, accountability and transparency, greater development effectiveness and delivery of tangible results people can see and attest to.

Irrespective of whether an organization operates in the private or public sector, all stakeholders these days are intensely interested in better performance. Governments and organizations all over the world are grappling with internal and external demands and pressures for improvement and reforms in public management. The demands come from a variety of sources including multi-lateral development institutions, donor governments, parliaments, the private sector, and NGO’s, citizen groups such as students in our case, civil society, the media and so forth.

Governments and organizations must therefore be increasingly responsive to internal and external stakeholders to demonstrate tangible results. “The clamour for greater effectiveness has reached crises proportions in especially developing countries where some states and their apparatus have failed to deliver even fundamental public goods”. (World Bank 1997, p2).

This can also be said of the higher education sector across the piece. Today, most higher education institutions across the world face diminishing in-flow of funds whether State sponsored or derived from other sources. It is in this light that this case study was developed.

The need for management in higher education to answer to an increasing list of legislation, reporting protocols and compliance requirements has helped focus minds and given birth to the need to do more with what few funding they have. Consequently, in an effort to achieve the afore-mentioned; the concept of monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and projects have begun to take center stage in the vocabulary of many universities the world over.

There is also increasing pressure on university management to attract the best faculty and indeed students alike. Achieving this goal would require a vision to be “world class” which includes continuing improvement in delivering new infrastructure across campuses and rehabilitating existing structures. A major part of delivering the above vision is in ensuring that university funds once committed to project developments are spent on those activities that provide the greatest benefits to the university community; and that funds are spent in the most efficient way.
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MONITORING & EVALUATION (M&E)

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are in fact two distinct sets of organizational activities, related but not identical.

Monitoring – is the systematic collection and analysis of information as a project progresses. It is aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of a project or indeed an organization. It is based on targets set and activities planned during the planning phases of the work. It helps to keep the work on track and can let management know when things are going wrong long before they become crisis. If done properly, it is an invaluable tool for good management and provides a useful base for evaluation. It enables you to determine whether the resources you have available are sufficient and appropriate, and whether you are doing what you planned to do.

Evaluation – is the comparison of actual project impacts against the agreed strategic plans. It looks at what you set out to do, at what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it. It can be formative (taking place during the life of a project with the intention of improving the strategy or way of functioning of the project). It can also be summative (drawing learning from a completed project).

What monitoring and evaluation have in common is that they are geared towards learning from what you are doing and how you are doing it by focusing on: efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Efficiency tells you that the input into the work is appropriate. This could be inputs in terms of money, time, staff, and equipment and so on. When you run a project and are concerned about its replicability or about going to scale, then it is very important to get the efficiency element right.

Effectiveness – is a measure of the extent to which a development project achieves the specific objectives it sets at the outset.

Impact – tells you whether or not what you did made a difference to the problem situation you are trying to address. In other words, was your strategy useful? Before you decide to get bigger or to replicate the project elsewhere, you need to be sure that what you are doing makes sense in terms of the impact you want to achieve.

From the above it should be clear that monitoring and evaluation are best done when there has been proper planning against which to assess progress and achievements, and that the deliverables have also been agreed and communicated to the stakeholders.

Conducting a monitoring and evaluation assessment can be resource intensive. Such an exercise should therefore be carried out collaboratively wherever possible between stakeholders; but lead responsibilities need to be well defined and
accountability for delivery, accuracy and thoroughness clearly understood. Carrying out such an assessment should never be regarded as a specialist activity and therefore sidelined.

Generally speaking, most monitoring and evaluation exercises have to take cognizance of the following characteristics:

- **Strategic Impact** – New proposals can be said to have strategic impacts on organizations if they significantly affect the whole or a major part of the organization over the medium and long term. Development proposals should therefore be considered in terms of their potential scale of impact and how they fit in with the strategy of the organization they affect.

- **Economic Rationale** – As higher education continues to face diminishing economic / funding resources, project implementation needs to be underpinned by sound economic analysis which should be provided by a cost – benefit analysis.

- **Financial Arrangements and Affordability**: Project proposals need to be fully costed and an affordable financial plan needs to be developed and the funds made available in advance of implementation.

- **Achievability** – All proposals should be assessed for their achievability and recognized program and project management arrangements set up as necessary.

- **Commercial and Partnering Arrangements** - Project proposals need to take account of commercial partnering and procurement arrangements, determine what can be delivered in the market and how controls will be managed through to completion.

- **Environmental Impacts** – The effects on the environment should be considered; including air and water quality, land use, noise pollution and waste production.

- **Health and Safety** – The health and safety of people at work or arising from work activity may need to be safeguarded. This is obviously a particular concern in construction.

The current economic dynamics has therefore necessitated the development of various monitoring and evaluation frameworks to help them manage better than before.
GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Taking into account the afore-mentioned, the major goal of this study is to put together a framework document that monitoring and evaluation teams within universities could use as a tool in their efforts to bring project developments home on time, within cost and meets objectives.

To achieve this goal we shall accomplish the following objectives:

- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation team have the right mix of skills to undertake the various reviews as and when they fall due.
- That the requisite senior management buy-in is secured and for all involved to be aware of that.
- That all the stakeholders have been identified and brought on board from the initial stages and to carry them along to the completion of the project.
- Adequate resources are available to help the monitoring team to undertake their work properly and efficiently.
- Ensure that the value - add contribution of the M&E reviews are seen to be key contributions to the entire project effort.
- Making sure of the professionalism of the M&E team and their ability to handle conflict resolutions while standing their ground on issues that they feel strongly about.
- Establish escalation procedures from the outset should the need to avail themselves of it arise.

The goal of this case study is to strive to develop a practitioner’s guide for undertaking the monitoring and evaluation of projects in a disciplined and organized way that helps project leads and boards to take stock and check that on-going project development is on course.

While this case study is not the complete prescriptive guidance document, it aims to point M&E practitioners’ in the right direction as to how to undertake M&E work from start to finish.
CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

A number of sources were explored to fulfill the present investigation. They comprise:

- articles, reviews, reports and official documents on research work on monitoring and evaluation in several research areas;

- interviews and meetings with various senior staff managers and professionals within the University of Ohio;

- direct observations, presentations, seminars, workshops by project contractors, finance experts and trustee members charged with the ultimate responsibility of delivering projects.

- Library research work has also informed the contents of this case study.

In trying to achieve a more practical approach to monitoring and evaluation, M&E success delivery tools and guidelines were extensively researched to give the case study the direct practical probe areas that M&E teams should concentrate on.

The format in which the case study is presented was informed by the various practitioners’ guides that many bodies and professionals use. It is envisaged that readers will design their testing schedule alongside the recommended format outlined in this case study.
BRIEF UNIVERSITY PROFILES

The general profiles of both universities are outlined succinctly here to put the case study in context when discussing their sizes. The case study topic however applies to any institution of higher education when it comes to the monitoring and evaluation of development projects.

Ohio University

Ohio University was established in 1804 as the first institution of higher learning in the Northwest Territory. One of its first two graduates, Thomas Ewing, went on to become a United States senator and cabinet member or advisor to four presidents. In 1828 Ohio University conferred an A.B. degree on John Newton Templeton, its first African American graduate, and in 1873 Margaret Boyd earned an A.B. degree, becoming the first woman to graduate from the University.

Though its neo-Georgian architecture reveals its historic roots, Ohio University is an institution devoted to educating students for the challenges of the future. Its commitment to academic excellence has earned recognition from the Ohio Board of Regents in the form of numerous Selective Excellence Awards, which in turn have helped the University continue to provide outstanding faculty members and faculties for its students.

Ohio University offers 250 undergraduate majors through nine undergraduate colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, Scripps College of Communication, Patton College of Education and Human Services, Russ College of Engineering and Technology, Fine Arts, Health Sciences and Professions, Honors Tutorial, and University College. The University also offers master’s degrees in nearly all of its major academic areas and doctoral degrees in selected departments. In addition, the College of Osteopathic Medicine has a four year program leading to the doctor of osteopathic medicine degree.

Enrollment on the Athens campus totals more than 21,000 students, who come from nearly every state and about 100 nations.

In addition to the Athens campus, Ohio University has regional campuses in Chillicothe, Ironton, Lancaster, St Clairsville and Zanesville. Enrollment for the
regional campuses totals more than 10,000 students.

University of Ghana – Legon

The University of Ghana began in 1948 as an affiliate College of the University of London and in 1961, was granted degree-awarding status by an Act of Parliament. Aiming to develop world class human resources to meet our development challenges, the University offers courses in arts, business, physical and biological sciences, law, agriculture, nuclear and allied sciences, and engineering sciences. We also offer courses in medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, and allied health sciences.

A number of Ghanaian and international institutions collaborate or hold affiliation with us. We have several link agreements with universities in Africa, Europe and North America for student, faculty and staff exchange as well as joint research programs. Our research institutes support these programs and with the centers of learning, our faculty members are involved in studies that support policy making for national development.

The University is a member of the International Association of Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The University of Ghana is also a member of the League of World Universities.

Managing Monitoring and Evaluations – A general synopsis

When a project is adjudged to be worth-while, then the objectives of the project need to be stated clearly. Objectives should be stated so that it is clear what the project intends to achieve. There should be a hierarchy of outcomes, outputs and targets that should be clearly set out in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) exercise.

Outcomes are the eventual benefits to the Organization for which the project is intended. Objectives on the other hand are expressed in terms of the outcomes that are desired; while outputs are the results of activities that can be clearly stated or measured as relating in some way to the desired outcomes.

Targets can be used to help progress in terms of producing outputs, delivery outcomes and meeting objectives. Targets should be SMART; i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.
Best practice advice suggest that the following questions may help the M&E team to test the suitability of the project objectives and targets set:

- What are we trying to achieve? What are our objectives? What constitute a successful outcome or set of outcomes?

- Are our objectives defined to reflect outcomes rather than the outputs which will be the focus of particular projects?

- How might the objectives and outcomes be measured?

- Are the objectives defined in such a way that progress towards meeting them can be monitored?

- What factors are critical to success?

- What SMART targets can we then set? What targets do we need to meet and by which time?

Conducting a monitoring and evaluation assessment can be resource intensive. The exercise should therefore be carried out collaboratively wherever possible between stakeholders; but lead responsibilities need to be well defined and accountability for delivery, accuracy and thoroughness clearly understood by all. Carrying out such assessments should never be regarded as a specialist activity and therefore sidelined.

There will be the need to consider how monitoring and evaluation are integrated with the decision making processes, and how that relates to the governance structures and arrangements upon which the project is to be rolled out. To ensure a coordinated approach to conducting assessments, Senior management teams (SMTs’) are encouraged to consider the following matters:

- Establishing a formal monitoring and evaluation unit or team within the internal or external audit remit.
Provide clearly defined mile-stones for conducting thorough and timely monitoring and evaluation activities.

Maintaining an accessible archive of the evidence of implementation.

For individual monitoring and evaluation assessments, consideration needs to be given at the outset to:

- The availability and cost of specialist resources that may be needed.
- The possible need for quality assurance.
- How findings would be reported and to whom.
- The procedure for deferring or halting delivery while corrections in the implementation are undertaken and resumption authorized.
- Establishment of a project plan for the M&E assessment program; setting out agreed stages at which assessments would be undertaken.

M&E is a powerful public management tool that can be used to improve the way organizations achieve results. There has been an evolution in the field of M&E involving a movement away from traditional implementation based approaches towards new results based approaches. While a number of approaches are in operation out there, this case study will has chosen to opt for the results based approach.

The introduction of a results based M&E system takes decision makers one step further in assessing whether and how goals are being achieved over time. Results – based systems are a continuous work – in –progress which; when implemented properly, provides a continuous flow of information feed – back into the system, which can help guide projects leads or Senior Responsible Officers (SROs’) towards achieving the desired results. It differs from traditional implementation focused M&E in that it moves beyond an emphasis on inputs and outputs to a
greater focus on outcomes and impacts.

This case study on M&E will rely amongst others; on the Gateway Review Process approach which is a result – based M&E system created by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Of the UK Government. The approach examines projects and policies at critical stages in their life cycle to provide assurance that they can progress successfully to the next stage until the project is fully implemented or delivered.

**PHASE 0 - THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT**

This is the initial phase of the M&E framework and supports the best practice guide that advocates for the need to undertake in-depth planning of projects at the front end if the M&E exercise is to deliver any value add to the successful implementation of a project. Consequently, this phase commences after the broad strategy / agreement for undertaking the project has been set.

The work of the M&E team in this phase is to focus on the justification for the project. The exercise in this phase is to provide assurance to the project board that the scope and purpose of the project has been adequately researched, that there is a shared understanding of what is to be achieved and that there is a realistic possibility of getting the resources required for delivery of the project. Consequently, this phase aims to test whether the expectations of stakeholders are realistic in respect of costs, outcomes, resource needed, time-table and whether the project is generally achievable.

Projects have definite start and finish dates, a clearly defined output and a well-defined development path; benefits are achieved after the project has finished. The M&E exercise here is to help project leads better manage the change process and navigate the route map of how to get to the outcome deliverables. The M&E work helps to deal with the uncertainty about achieving the vision. It should be flexible
and capable of accommodating changing circumstances; whether challenges or opportunities.

**Purpose Of This Phase**

There is the need to review the objectives of the project and ascertain that a strategic – fit can be made of the project and the wider goals of the organization. The identification and support of the key stakeholders in the delivery of the project will be a key part of the work in this phase. Another key purpose for this phase is the review of the arrangements for leading, managing, and monitoring the project as a whole. Risk management in any project development is key and the M&E process reviews the arrangements for identifying and managing the main project risks including external risks such as changing business priorities. Financial resources are always a crucial element in any project delivery. From the outset, M&E processes will check the financial provision that is available for the project and that plans for the work to be done through to the next stage are realistic, properly resourced with sufficient people of appropriate experience and authorized.

**Documentary requirements of M&E team**

The following information should be available before the M&E review commences:

- Any Performance Partnership Agreement document to ascertain the performance criteria if any.
- A project brief or business case document which at this stage is a loosely formed document but will be developed over the life of the project, including information like;
- Objectives: which is a description of the purposes, outcomes sought, key deliverables and timescales plus the main success criteria against which the project will be measured.
- Background: This outlines the key drivers for having the project.
- A model of the intended outcomes as a vision of the future and how the vision will be delivered through the organization’s delivery unit / agents (internal and external).
- Scope: that outlines the boundaries of the program to help avoid scope creep.
- The main assumptions and constraints on which the project will be founded
and any dependencies on other factors.

- Stakeholders: being a list of the main stakeholders and their role in the project roll out, with a strategy and plan for communicating and engaging with them.

- Finance: This includes the financial provision made for the project and its components.

- Project organization: Which deals with the way in which the project is to be organized and led.

- Outcomes: A strategy for measuring results and achieving outcomes.

- Risks and issues: the main risks identified so far, a strategy for managing those risks as well as a strategy for capturing and resolving issues and possible conflicts.

- A plan covering the work to be done over the short and medium term; identifying the work streams together with the main deliverables and milestones.

The M&E team would be expected to focus on the key areas for probing given the stage of the project implementation. As afore-said, front loading the preparatory work in project development is a step in the right direction if the project is to have a reasonable chance of success. The following constitute the areas of probing for the M&E team.

1.0 Organizational Issues and Success Pre-conditions

1.1 Does the project intention have a strategic fix with the overall development program of the University? There should be evidence in the strategic business plan of the Institution.

1.2 Is the governance framework fit for purpose and is there commitment to key roles and responsibilities for the project? The M&E team should seek evidence of commitment from top management and key delivery partners with evidence that they understand their roles in achieving the project’s successful outcomes.
1.3 Are the required skills and capabilities for the project available and do they have the capacity to deliver? There must be evidence that the University has brought together the skills and capabilities that will be required to achieve the desired outcomes.

1.4 Is there a framework for managing risks to the project?

2.0 The Business Case; its scope and stakeholders

2.1 Is there a clear understanding of the needed outcomes the project must achieve? An outline of the required outputs and how they relate to each other will be evidence enough.

2.2 Is there good evidence that there is a good understanding of the scope of the project? Although still in its very early days, the project scope as far as it is known should be in place to ensure there is no scope creep or a delivery shortage.

2.3 What will constitute success in the eyes of the stakeholders? M&E teams must be provided with a definition of the key critical success factors. Projected performance of the project over its life cycle, with key performance targets and measures that have been agreed with stakeholders will be good evidence.

2.4 Have the key stakeholders been identified and are they all on board? A list of all the principal stakeholders and records of their needs and their support for the project should be demanded for.

2.5 Is the proposed project affordable? Availability of funding has and continues to be a key challenge for Universities across the piece. This then makes this particular enquiry a must ask question in any deep dive M&E assessment exercise. Evidence to demand include assurances that there are available funds and strategies and methods of securing additional funding is being
explored.

2.6 Have those additional factors that could affect success been identified? Dependencies, supplier and partner issues that could potentially impinge on success should be outlined.

Management of Intended Outcomes

2.7 Are key stakeholders confident that outcomes will be achieved when expected? There must be a mechanism for collecting performance data and a plan for evaluating impact of the project in operation.

Is there a plan for achieving the required outcomes? The expected evidence to look out for should include a plan to ensure that outcomes are delivered in terms of performance measures and key performance indicators and / or where planned outcomes have not been achieved, evidence is in place that the problems have been identified and plans are in place to resolve them.

3.0 Risk Management

3.1 Risk is defined as uncertainties of outcomes. Evidence on risk management is key and the key issues an M&E team will want to know is; have the major risks to the project been identified? How will risks be managed and what assurance measures have been put in place to confirm that risks are being managed to within their tolerable levels?
4.0 Readiness for the next step

4.1 Once the M&E team has satisfied themselves that the afore-mentioned responses to the asked questions provide adequate assurance for the project to move to the next level, the team would be required to go through the following areas probing to ascertain if the project should be given the “all clear” to move to the next stage.

4.2 Are there funds to undertake the next phase? Budget provision for the project should be verified.

4.3 Are the required individuals and organizations needed to undertake the next stage in place and confirmed as available to carry out the work? There should be information showing who needs to be involved, when and what they must deliver. Evidence that these resources will be available throughout the next phase.

4.4 Whether the appropriate management controls are in place for the next phase. Accountabilities allocated to the senior responsible officer (SRO) must be listed; project management controls and reporting mechanisms set out and plans for ongoing management of the delivery chain defined.
PHASE 1 - Business Justification

This next phase commences after a high level business case has been prepared as indicated under the strategic assessment phase afore-mentioned. This phase must be undertaken however before any development proposal goes to a project board. The review work here focuses on the project’s business justification. It also provides assurance to a project board that the proposed approach to meeting the project requirement has been researched and can indeed be delivered.

Purpose of this Phase

The work of the M&E team during this phase is to obtain assurances on key issues relevant for this phase. First and foremost, the review will seek to confirm that the business case as laid out is robust in principle and meet business needs, is affordable, achievable and likely to deliver value for money. Establish that any feasibility studies have been satisfactorily completed and evidences the necessary links to the market place.

The team will also be confirming the existence of the requisite internal and external authorities and their support for the project. Under this phase work on risk management will centre on whether the major risks to the project have been identified and if outline risk management plans have been developed to mitigate the identified risks. M&E testing here is also for the purpose of confirming that the scope and requirements specifications are realistic, clear and un-ambiguous.

Testing here by M&E teams will further seek to confirm that the intended outcomes, timescales and impact of relevant external issues have been considered; while ensuring that the planning assumptions and plans for the next stage will deliver the next stage objectives.

Documentary Requirements of the M&E Team

The following information should be made available to the M&E team before the review for this phase commences.

- A project brief document that encapsulates the project scope and the need for the intended project development.

- A project initiation document or equivalent.
A quality management strategy to outline the quality standards being expected. The project approach paper, including how the project board intends to deliver the intended outcomes.

An initial assessment of the current and proposed physical and technical environment.

A cost report on the project to date and against budget.

At this stage, a draft high level definition of the business requirements and total scope of the intended change

A definition of how to judge the project’s success.

A high level business case addressing business need, affordability, achievability, value for money and range of options estimating the project’s cost and benefits; including some form of feasibility studies, sensitivity analysis and market sounding.

A communications strategy to keep stakeholders informed of the project’s progress.

A list of major risks and draft plans for managing them.

A high level activity, time and resource plan for the whole project.

Plans to move the project through to the next stage.
A procurement strategy.

Funds to cover all work for the next stage.

The authority and approval to proceed.

A document on how performance is to be reported and monitored.

Project organization showing key roles and governance / reporting arrangements.

In the case of construction projects, design quality indicators.

At this phase, the M&E team will have to focus on the relevant areas for probing in order to issue the kind of assurance that will allow project leads to confidently move project development to the next stage of roll out. The areas for probing during the review of this stage is as follows:

1. **Business Case and Stakeholders**

1.1 Check that there is a clear and agreed understanding of the business goals and how the project will deliver them. There should be evidence that the business objectives are clearly stated and are; Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timely (SMART).

1.2 Ascertain what the critical success factors are and the means by which the project will be judged as success. These success factors for each main objective should be outlined in detail, quantified and measured.
1.3 The M&E team should seek evidence that all likely stakeholders of the project have been identified and their needs clearly understood. Evidence to examine includes documents listing both internal and external stakeholders and the roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders.

1.4 Is there evidence that stakeholders support the delivery approach selected? Seek evidence of consultation, involvement and support from these stakeholders.

1.5 The M&E team has to probe the arrangements around contract management of the project and managing the interfaces with suppliers.

1.6 Seek evidence to confirm that the high level business case is complete.

2.0 Risk Management

2.1 The risk management arrangements are a key area for probing. Risk identification processes, assess, allocation and monitoring actions must be evidenced; as well as emerging risks.

2.2 Have the worst case implications associated with the identified risks been properly assessed? Evidence to seek by the M&E team is some indication of the financial cost of risk management and how it has been allocated.

2.3 Where the costs and time implications of managing risks are identified, check if these are included in the cost and time estimates or are they treated separately. Seek evidence that where risks cannot be reduced, the costs of managing these risks separately identified and included as a risk allocation
provision. For construction projects, decisions on how residual risks are being managed.

3.0 Readiness for next Phase

3.1 This M&E framework document advocates the need to have a check point at the end of each stage or each significant phase to examine if the project is on course as expected.

3.2 Consequently, each phase should end with the M&E evaluating the readiness of the project lead to initiate the next step.

3.3 In respect of this phase, the probing questions should be in the area of whether an overall structure has been determined for the procurement stage, which is the next stage in the M&E framework.

3.4 This exercise should include verification of evidence on objectives still relevant, planning assumptions, constraints, activities and milestones defined and agreed for the next stage and indeed the remaining stages. There should be evidence that the project continues to address both short term and long term business requirements.

3.5 In the case of construction projects, evidence that the project timescale allows enough time for the development of the required design quality.

3.6 Finally as part of ensuring that the project delivers on time, M&E teams ascertain if project time plans continue to be realistic. For example, how realistic is the assessment of time needed for pre-procurement activities? Is there evidence of senior management commitment to the time plan and if the procurement time plan justified and not longer than necessary.
Phase 2 - Procurement Strategy

By this time, the project board should have arrived at a decision that the project is feasible and a robust high-level business case is in place. This stage outlines the procurement strategy by focusing on establishing a clear definition of the project and a plan for its implementation. It will also deal with any outstanding issues from the previous stage. The M&E team should verify this to allow this stage to proceed.

Purpose of this Phase

The aim of the M&E team at this stage is to assess the viability of the project, its potential for success and whether the project is ready to invite proposals and tenders from suppliers. The work of the M&E team should provide comfort to the project board that the selected procurement approach is appropriate for the acquisition that is planned. The project lead should be satisfied that the selected procurement approach offers value for money.

The tests by the M&E team at this stage will first confirm the outline of the business case now the project is fully defined. The team will also be able to ensure that the procurement strategy is robust and appropriate. Project plans through to completion will also be determined for its appropriateness, detail and realism.

Tests by the M&E team should reveal the facts surrounding the contract management strategy as well as confirm the funding in place for the whole project. The review work here will confirm if the development and delivery approach continues to be appropriate and manageable. Track record and capabilities of suppliers must also be tested during this phase of the monitoring and evaluation exercise.

Another key purpose of this stage is the testing of the efficacy and appropriateness of the procurement plan and whether it detailed enough to keep procurement timescales to a minimum. Finally, M&E work will attempt to confirm that appropriate project performance measures and tools are being used to evaluate deliverables.
Documentary requirements of the M&E Team

The team must receive the following information before they commence work on this stage. The following key information must be in place:

- An updated business case and plan for realizing benefits.
- The project’s costs to date as against budget.
- A plan for managing the business change.
- Clear specifications of the project’s expected outputs and outcomes.
- A document outlining the procurement strategy and justification for the approach taken.
- An evaluation strategy to be used for evaluating proposals.
- Draft contract based on a suitable standard contract model.
- A proposed implementation strategy for implementing the contract
- An updated risk register, issues log and risk management plans.
- Outline project plans to completion and detailed plans for the next stage.
✓ Updated information on the market and supplier assessments.

✓ The updated communication strategy and plan.

✓ A strategy for measuring project performance

The probing areas for the M&E team at this stage include a look at how the business case has developed, the procurement approach, review of the current stage and how risks are being managed. Readiness for the next phase should also be closely examined to ensure that the project is ready to move safely onto the next phase without jeopardizing the overall project objectives, outputs and outcomes.

1. **Business Case and Stakeholders**

   1.1 Seek evidence that the business case continues to demonstrate business need. Evidence this by acquiring confirmation that the project will meet business needs and that priorities have not changed.

   1.2 The M&E team should probe to get assurance that the chosen approach is the preferred approach and that it is backed by all the assumptions made dependencies and reliance on other partners.

   1.3 Value for money implications must be investigated by seeking information on the bases for calculating costs and comparison of tenders agreed with key stakeholders.

   1.4 The affordability of the project in terms of whether costs are within current budgets and if the project’s whole-life funding is affordable and supported by key stakeholders. M&E tests on this will center on the reconciliation of projected whole-life costs with available budget, that there is evidence that this has been reviewed and accepted or approved by the key stakeholders.
1.5 The M&E team would have to probe the continuing achievability of the project by checking if it still had the ability to achieve a successful outcome. Evidence to seek to include plans to manage known weaknesses and contingency plans in place.

1.6 The fact that a clear definition of the total project scope is available with updated documentation on the scope of the project together with any business change information.

1.7 There should be plans for realizing benefits which implies that stakeholders understand and agree on the initial plan for realizing benefits. Any savings gained over the life of the project thus far will be valuable evidence.

2. **Procurement Approach**

2.1 The procurement review would have to be extensive and comprehensively monitored to ensure whole life value for money. It also usually is a key risk area for collusion and sub quality risk exposures. In the light of the above, the M&E team will have to probe the under mentioned areas.

2.2 Work will have to be assessed to ensure that the market or supplier community has been sensitized. Evidence o be sought through M&E include an initial assessment of market capacity to deliver, as well as an initial assessment of the likely suppliers.

2.3 The business needs of the project must be understood by suppliers. Details of output/outcome-based specifications together with key success factors to show how achievability of the outcomes and outputs will be assessed.
2.4 Check that the project outputs/outcomes are accurately reflected in the requirement specification. Evidence in place must include an appropriate mechanism to articulate the requirement to potential suppliers, quality assured to ensure that suppliers will understand what is wanted.

2.5 The M&E team should investigate the fact that options for the procurement route being opted for have been evaluated including the source of supply. Reasons for selecting sourcing options must be documented and justified.

2.6 Seek good evidence that the procurement procedure has been evaluated by determining whether procedure was open, restricted or negotiated. Reasons for following this procedure must be understood and the related risks in terms of impact on timescales and bid costs have been justified and documented.

2.7 Look for evidence that the selected procurement strategy has been defined and endorsed. Evidence backing this should include the existence of a clearly defined procurement strategy showing reasons for selection and agreed by stakeholders, evidence that business continuity and a future exit strategy has been considered at a high level.

2.8 In monitoring the procurement process the M&E team should probe if the factors that influence the procurement strategy have been addressed. There should be evidence that the efficiency and predictability of the procurement process has been considered, with a process in place for addressing the impact of any deviations from the plan and time table and plans for two-way communication with stakeholders and suppliers.

2.9 Since non delivery from suppliers can negatively impact the project’s ultimate outcome, the M&E team should probe if there is evidence of adequate knowledge of the existing and potential suppliers and those likely to succeed. Evidence that adequate knowledge of suppliers have been considered,
evidence of a track record for the suppliers and indications of the types of suppliers most likely to succeed in delivering the required outcomes.

2.10 Evidence to support the fact that the contract management strategy is robust should be demonstrated and seen to be working during the evaluation phase of this stage of the project rollout.

2.11 Cognizance should be taken of all the relevant procurement regulations and laws.

3. **Review of current phase**

3.1 The essence of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is to facilitate “pit stops” at key stages of the project development to check if he project is on course to deliver its objectives.

3.2 As part of the review work in this phase, evidence must be sought to confirm that the project continues to be under control by sighting information that buttress the fact that the project is running to schedule and costs are within budget. Project timescales must also be reviewed.

3.3 Reasons behind deviations such as over and under runs must be known through reconciliations set against budget and time plans. Actions necessary to prevent deviations recurring in other phases must be listed in project management documents that are continually reviewed and updated.

3.4 During the review of this phase, outstanding assumptions and plans identified in the previous stage should be examined and confirmed done.
4. **Risk Management**

4.1 Each stage of the project development and rollout has its own challenges and risk exposures. Active monitoring and indeed evaluation of these risks enables project leads to tackle risks before they become crisis.

4.2 M&E work here entail include ascertaining whether the major risks have been identified, understood, financially evaluated and considered in determining the procurement strategy. Information on major issues and risks logged and an update on how they are being tackled should be available for inspection.

4.3 Seek for evidence of risk management plans and documentation indicating responsibilities for managing each risk clearly identified and allocated and approved by the stakeholders. A risk reporting process should be in place with procedures for upward referral of risks. Where applicable, contingency plans should be asked for and inspected.

4.4 All issues raised in previous reviews by the M&E team should confirmed as satisfactorily resolved by inspecting issue and risk logs that are regularly by the project team and the evidence of appropriate action haven been taken.

4.5 External issues such as statutory processes, communications, public relations and environmental issues should be probed by seeking the list of external issues and related stakeholders with plans for contact with each relevant group to meet the project needs.

5. **Readiness for Next Stage**
5.1 The review exercise for each stage of project roll out must culminate with the M&E team testing the project team's readiness to commence the next stage, which is the investment decision stage. The end stage monitoring and evaluation work will deal with matters like;

5.2 Whether there is evidence that clear objectives, deliverables and milestones for the next stage have been defined.

5.3 That project time scales are reasonable and achievable

5.4 Seeking evidence for the arrangements for the next stage and if the activities for the stage have been defined and resourced.

**PHASE 3: Investment Decision**

This stage of the review seeks to confirm that the recommended investment decision is appropriate. The M&E examination must be undertaken and the assurance provided before the preferred supplier is given the contract.

**Purpose of the review of this Phase**

The purpose of this review is to provide assurances on the processes used to select a supplier. It also assess whether the process has been well managed; whether the business needs are being met; that both client and supplier or suppliers can implement and manage the proposed solution, and that necessary processes are in place to achieve a successful outcome after the contract is awarded. The M&E team must be satisfied that due consideration has been given to all the factors.

**Documentary requirements of the M&E TEAM**

To assist the M&E team undertake their review of this important phase, the following information and documents should be available for inspection if credible assurance can be provided by the team:

- The project management documents must include strategies for
managing risks and issues, and plans and risk register showing that risks were identified and managed.

- Plans for handling business change and for handling future change.

- The service management arrangements defining how services will be managed, how their performance is measured and the service management responsibilities for the client and the supplier.

- The benefits management strategy plans and who is responsible for delivering it.

- The procurement strategy.

- The operational requirement and a draft contract based on a model version.

- Realistic plans from the supplier for development and implementation.

- A evaluation report containing the recommendation for the selected supplier or partner; justification of the selected supplier; details of close contenders and plans for debrief of unsuccessful suppliers.

- Outline project plans through to completion and plans for the next stage.

- An updated communications plan.

- Confirmation of the availability of project funds and the authority to
1.0 **Business Case and Stakeholders**

1.1 The business case drives the project rollout and indeed the monitoring and evaluation work to be undertaken at each stage. The team will have to re-assess the business case document to ascertain it has been updated including strategic, economic, financial, and commercial and project management factors.

1.2 Work on confirming that the most appropriate option has been selected will include checking cost/benefit risk analysis against final bid information. In the case of construction projects, the whole-life design quality, cost and time has been optimized as far as possible.

1.3 The team must check that the commercial arrangements represent value for money by reviewing the results of the supplier evaluation process.

1.4 Check that the business case when incorporated with the bid proposal still demonstrates affordability. This information should be reflected in the updated business case document.

1.5 Review the benefits realization plan. It should discuss the critical success factors, individuals responsible for delivering and achieving benefits identified and the agreed process for measuring benefits.

1.6 Seek evidence of stakeholder involvement in quality and proposal reviews and approving the tender evaluation report and draft contract.

2.0 **Assessment of the Proposed Solution**

2.1 The M&E team should check that the proposed solution will deliver the business need by confirming the selected bid fully complies with the requirements of the project.

2.2 Team should check if the proposed solution has affected the strategy for business change. Is there any analysis of the differences from the original plan?

2.3 The team should seek evidence that the project lead and the supplier are
prepared for the development. The implementation plan should have been agreed by supplier and project management.

2.4 As part of the monitoring exercise, the team must enquire if there are plans and processes to address future issues, both business and technical. There must be evidence that the strategy for managing change has been agreed by all parties.

2.5 It is crucial that there is good evidence in the review of this stage that there are clear allocation and understanding of responsibilities between all parties, in addition to any contractual liabilities.

2.6 The M&E team must also check if there are adequate resources in place for the business to fulfill its obligations within the contract. Evidence backing this could be formal management acceptance of the resource requirements.

2.7 The technical feasibility of the project must be probed and evidence sought to demonstrate that the proposal is technically acceptable.

2.8 Does the project have the appropriate skills set and experience to achieve the intended outcomes of the investment?

3.0 Review of Current Phase

3.1 The job of the M&E team includes ensuring that the current phase is being handled appropriately. Consequently, check that the project is under control by getting the evidence that the project is running to schedule and costs are within budget.

3.2 Ascertain that there is knowledge of the root causes for under and over runs. Reconciliation statements against budget and time plans must be inspected.

3.3 Is there evidence that actions to prevent recurrence of over runs are in place.
3.4 Have all the required procurement and technical checks been carried out?

3.5 Temp to ask if the project team followed the planned steps in the procurement strategy.

4.0 **Risk Management**

4.1 There is a need to check that the risk and issues management plans are up to date.

4.2 Check that all the major risks that came up during this stage have been addressed.

4.3 What mitigation actions and strategies are in place to minimize the impacts of identified risks? The team should seek evidence of business continuity plans agreed by suppliers and the project lead.

4.4 Check that the contracts reflect standard terms and conditions and that there is evidence that it is being actively managed.

5.0 **Readiness for next phase – readiness for service.**

5.1 The M&E team should enquire and confirm to themselves that the working relationship between the project team and suppliers will deliver success for the project.

5.2 That all resources and internal funds are in place, manpower provision agreed and authorization and approval process for payment to suppliers is stream-lined.

5.3 Seek evidence that supplier’s project, risk and management plans are adequate and realistic.

5.4 Does the available evidence confirm that the client or project side plan reflect the supplier’s plans?

5.5 Can the project lead confirm that all mechanisms and processes for the next phase are in place? There should be project plans confirming arrangements for management, monitoring, transition and implementation.

5.6 Are the service management plan, administration and service level arrangements complete? Evidence for the M&E team to seek includes
documented service management strategy and plan, a defined and agreed service level management, and service quality measurement clearly outlined.

5.7 The team must call for the implementation strategy and the plans that under-pin it.

This framework is set out to enable the monitoring and evaluation team to undertake their M&E work in a precise and controlled manner such that each major phase is assessed and declared to be on track before the next stage is initiated. The objective behind this approach is to enable the project owners have a better chance of ensuring that the project is on course following each key development stage.

Phase 4 – Implementation and readiness for Service

The M&E review work at this stage focuses on whether the selected solution for project roll out is robust before delivery, how ready the project team is to implement the business change that occur before and after delivery and whether there is a basis for evaluating ongoing performance.

Purpose of the Review of this Phase

The review exercise at this stage focuses on a number of key matters; notable amongst them being, whether the contract is properly completed and documented. It also ensures that the contractual arrangements are up to date and processes and procedures to ensure long term success of the project are laid out.

The M&E team would want to give assurance that there are feasible and tested contingency and reversion arrangements in place, that on-going risks and issues are being managed effectively and do not threaten implementation.

Confirmation that defects or incomplete works have been identified and recorded is a keep part of this stage review as well as lessons for future projects have been recorded.

Documentary Requirements of the M&E Team

The following information should be available before this review starts:
The updated requirements definition with any agreed changes up to this phase.

Close outs and any status reports.

An assessment of contractual issues during the project to date.

Test plans and test reports

Updated risk register and issues log including residual risks.

Outline project plans through to completion and detailed plans for the next stage.

Details of any facilities not provided to the required specification and any missing or deficient items.

1.0 Business Case and Stakeholders

1.1 Checks that the project continues to meet the business need and is approved by the stakeholders.

1.2 Evidence to the fact that the business case is still valid by looking at the updated project plan, likely to deliver value for money, is affordable and achievable with implementation broken down into modules.

1.3 Check that if there have been any changes between award of contract and completion of testing that can affect the business change.

1.4 Are there the required resources with the appropriate skills and experience?
2.0 **Review of Current Phase**

2.1 Check that the project meets the acceptance criteria.

2.2 Through completed progress reports as part of the communication plan for stakeholder information, have all the stakeholder issues been addressed?

2.3 Evidence that all testing and commissioning/acceptance procedures have been completed and accepted by all parties.

2.4 Are there workable and tested contingency and reversion plans for roll out, implementation and operation?

3.0 **Risk Management**

3.1 Is there evidence that risks and issues that arose in the contract award and implementation phase been properly managed?

3.2 Team should check if there are any risks in implementing although there are un-resolved issues that could lead to delays.

4.0 **Readiness for next Phase**

4.1 The monitoring team should probe into whether all the project elements are ready for delivery. Evidence to examine must include; updated schedules, handover notes, test and commissioning data and contingency plan in place.

4.2 Probe and check if the long term contract management process is in place. The team should look for evidence such as detailed plans, roles, responsibilities and organization in place for supplier and end users. That there are appropriate numbers of suitably qualified staff appointed by both end users and supplier. They must look out for continuity plans, skill appraisal and plans for addressing any shortfalls.

4.3 The team should also seek evidence that there is a process to manage and measure performance. The M&E team should demand and review any performance management plans and the means of measuring performance them.

4.4 Enquiries should be made by the team about the process to manage and measure benefits. Check for benefit management plans and how they are
linked to project outcomes where applicable.

4.5 Is there a process for post-implementation reviews? The team must review plans for post implementation reviews endorsed by the supplier and internal and external parties.

Phase 5 – Benefits Evaluation

Once the project is delivered and about to be fully turned over to the end users of the project outcome, the monitoring and evaluation exercise should also be brought to a controlled end by undertaking the review of this phase.

The monitoring and evaluation work here focuses on ensuring that the project has delivered the benefits and value for money identified in the business case and benefits plans. It should be held between six and twelve months after the project has been completed. It must however be noted that the M&E work at this stage is NOT a post implementation review. It takes place after the project team has undertaken its own post implementation review from a project completion standpoint.

Purpose of this Phase

The key purpose for the M&E exercise at this stage is amongst others, to assess whether the business case justification for the project as aid out at phase three of the review stages was realistic. The review also tries to assess whether the anticipated benefits were actually delivered. Where changes have been identified as necessary to implement, the M&E team will be expected to check that it does not compromise the original plan. Finally, before the curtain is drawn on the monitoring and evaluation exercise, they will have to confirm the validity of the exit strategy.

Documentary requirements of the M&E Team

The team will require the following information before this stage’s review can go ahead.

- An updated business case that reflects the actual operating conditions when base lined against the business case in phase four.
Report on the findings from the post implementation review.

Evidence of an assessment of the delivered benefits to date and future expectations.

Check for reports on stakeholder issues.

Plans for disposal of any assets at the end of the project.

1.0 Business Case and Benefits management

1.1 Check that the business case deliverables is still valid.

1.2 The team should explore the available evidence that the business benefits have been realized as set out in the business case. Reports from the post project review should include information on project success factors being met as well as key performance indicators.

1.3 Ask if there have been any changes in business needs of end users when compared with the end-user needs as identified in the third and fourth M&E reviews.

1.4 Check that an updated communications plan is in place and addresses all the stakeholder issues.

2.0 Review of Organizational Learning

2.1 Team should enquire for evidence that an effective process is in place for the embedding of improvements based on lessons learnt.

2.2 Has there been a review of how well the project and indeed the monitoring and evaluation work has been carried out.
Conclusion

The higher education sector must continue to introduce new policies, projects and procurement initiatives if they are to attract world class faculty and students alike. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that has been outlined in this case study is an attempt to provide project leads and senior management teams in universities with a comprehensive tool that improves their chances of delivering high profile, complex and in most cases; expensive developments.

The M&E framework tool in this case study attempts to break-down projects into key stages of the project development and suggests possible monitoring areas that the monitoring and evaluation team should probe at each relevant stage to help avoid bringing the project home over budget, and timescales and not delivering what the project set out to deliver.

By way of summary, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework contributes to the following:

1. Provides assurance to project leads and Senior Responsible Officers (SROs’) who are charged with delivering project outcomes that the projects are on course to deliver its outcomes.

2. The M&E exercise gives project managers the opportunity to review project development progress, tackle any short-comings before proceeding to the next stage of project implementation.

3. Through the M&E process the best available skills and experience are deployed on the project as the M&E team identify and evaluate the capabilities of the deployed skills set.

4. A key ingredient of the M&E framework is to provide the project management with the opportunity to ensure buy-in of the project’s progress by all the stakeholders who fully need to understand the project status at each material junction as well as the issues involved. The independent and objective function of the M&E activity delivers this buy-in.
5. Another key role of the M&E exercise lies in the assurance provision the exercise brings to project development. Through the M&E activity, assurance that the project can progress to the next stage of development or implementation is a significant benefit since it allows potential problems to be identified and dealt with at each stage end before they become crisis.

6. Some of the key causes for project development failures have been attributed to cost over runs and runaway timescales. The monitoring and evaluation checks on these two elements ensure the achievement of more realistic time and cost targets for projects.

7. The very scrutiny that an M&E team undertakes during each project roll out also improves the knowledge and skills of the project staff themselves.

All said and done, the fact remains that university funding the world over continues to be a significant challenge to University leadership teams. Consequently, pressure to demonstrate whole life value for money in how these scares funds are used, has become a primary concern for Universities.

This case study has been developed as a practitioner’s guide to assisting university management in better managing their project development portfolios by providing a stage by stage review of the key elements, issues and risks that have the potential to cause projects to come in late, over budget and not meet its original objectives. It is envisaged that the contents of this case study would serve a useful tool in university project, policy and procurement management.
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