

# Step 8. Develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

Focus of this chapter: Showing the importance of monitoring and evaluation of your work, and how this can be done in practice

Content of this section:

- The importance of monitoring and evaluation of your CFM project
- How to monitor and evaluate your work while the project is ongoing
- How to evaluate the work once the project has ended

## Why monitoring and evaluation is important

It is essential while monitoring campaign finance that you monitor the quality of your work and evaluate it carefully. Evaluations should be made during the monitoring project to ensure that the work is carried out without bias and according to the set plan, and after the project is completed so that lessons can be learned for future CFM projects.

Monitoring the work in the CFM project is normally the responsibility of the project core team members, who will need to issue careful instructions to all involved regarding the data that needs to be collected. Where the CFM project includes PET (see Chapter 3), the data analyst (see page 99) should be instructed to carefully monitor the data that is coming in as expected from field monitors and raise any concerns immediately.

Evaluations of the collected data should be done during the monitoring project. This can be a very informal process carried out during core team meetings, or a formal approach can be taken where someone not involved in the project is hired to do so.

FIGURE 27. MONITORING AND EVALUATION



## Monitoring and evaluation during the CFM project

### Verifying unit costs for PET

Starting on page 17, we discussed how Parallel Expense Tracking (PET) can be used to make estimates on the amounts that contestants (or non-contestants) spend on their election campaign. Starting on page 258, we explored how unit cost estimates can be established that allow the monitoring team to put a price tag on the campaign materials and activities that are observed.

The campaign spending estimates arrived at through PET will be incorrect if the unit cost estimates are wrong, and therefore it is important to control the accuracy of the cost estimates. For this, contract someone not working with the project to independently establish unit cost estimates for spending categories you expect will be used frequently in the campaign, and compare these estimates with those originally established. You may not get an exact match between the original estimate and the independent verification. That is ok – where you should be concerned is if the independent verification arrives at a significantly lower estimate than the one done for the project. This is since (as discussed above), the PET methodology is used for establishing minimum estimates of campaign spending, and it is therefore problematic if the unit cost estimates are exaggerated.

Table 23 below shows the actual original unit cost estimates and the independent verification estimates established in a PET project covering a parliamentary election.

**TABLE 23. EXAMPLE OF UNIT COST VERIFICATION FOR PET**

Item	Cost estimate <i>monitoring group</i>	Cost estimate <i>External evaluator</i>	Comment
Color poster A3 size	\$5	\$5	Monitoring group makes no distinction between color and black and white posters
Color banner 2 x 4 m	\$40	\$50	Variation acceptable
Renting venue in mid-range hotel (2 h, capacity 200 people)	N/A	\$400	Monitoring group has not yet made an estimate for this
TV advertisement Channel 1/Channel 2(30 sec)	\$250	Channel 1, \$240 Channel 2, \$255	These are overall estimates. Exact amount will differ according to time and type of program to which the advert connects

## Early monitoring evaluation

It has proved valuable in several CFM projects to deploy field monitors after their training and have them start monitoring, but to then stop the monitoring and gather all the Field Monitors (within a few days or a week of monitoring). The reason is that there may be some unclarity or misunderstandings that cannot be detected until the actual monitoring starts and the Field Monitors have confronted the reality of their work. A similar approach can be valuable for Media Monitors, who, may for example detect that no advertising appears on the channels or times they have been asked to monitor. It is important that evaluations of this kind are short and that any detected errors are solved quickly, to avoid significant gaps in the monitoring.

There are various approaches to verify the work of monitors during the monitoring period. In the 2020 JDPMC monitoring project, monthly validation meetings were held where the monitors presented and explained the monitored data.<sup>233</sup>

## Using a rumor tracker

Before starting monitoring of any aspect of campaign finance, the monitoring group should discuss what information is required before the group investigates the accuracy of an accusation or information received about a campaign finance violation. It is also useful to decide what information is required (from external sources or investigations by the monitoring group) before the group publishes this information in its reports or in other formats.

Even if you decide on the information needed to follow up on an accusation, and for whether a case should be reported, it is often difficult to ensure that these criteria are followed identically in every case. Some groups carrying out CFM projects have found it valuable to create a document for tracking rumors or accusations that they come across during the reporting period. In this document they collect any form of accusations, noting the source and whether or not they tried to verify the information.

The document will be full of rumors that may or may not be true, and a rumor tracker itself is therefore never made public. Doing so may give credibility to baseless rumors and may leave the monitoring group open to lawsuits for slander. However, this approach can be valuable for making sure that any potential violations are noted and followed-up on if there is reason to do so. This can help to ensure that the work is without bias against or in favor of any political party or candidate, and the information in this document can be valuable in developing the final report or other project output.

An example of what a document of this kind might look like is included below, using fictional information received in a made-up country. The column “follow-up” shows the decision that this fictional monitoring group took regarding whether it would investigate and try to find more information about an individual case. The column “result of follow-up” shows the result of this fictitious investigation and whether it was decided to report the case publicly or not. By using a table of this kind, the monitoring group can establish if the same criteria for following up on a reported case and for including a case in the CFM reporting have been followed for all cases.

---

<sup>233</sup> JDPMC (2020) page 16.

TABLE 24. FICTITIOUS EXAMPLE OF A RUMOR TRACKER

Date	Locality	Source	Accusation	benefitting party / candidate	Follow up?	Result of follow-up
12/10/2021	Newtown	www.fictionalnews.com	Unnamed party representative handed out money, promising to come back with more if they voted “the right way”	Truth party	<b>NO, Source frequently accuses party of violations, did not provide details to allow follow-up</b>	None. Case closed.
13/10/2021	Old square	Information via hotline by named resident of Old Square	Meeting at Old Square organized by Ministry of Education, supposed to announce new curriculum, but flags of People Party everywhere and with speakers urging electorate to vote for party candidate	People party	<b>YES, named source who is willing to testify about the event</b>	Photos on ministry website show flags of People Party. Several meeting participants and one ministry driver interviewed attested that campaigning took place. <i>Information about violation posted on Facebook page, reported to authorities &amp; will be included in final report.</i>
24/10/2021	Old City	Phone call to Field Monitor by named source	Candidate from Great Party received significant donation from foreign source	Great party	<b>YES, named source made credible accusation on potential violation</b>	Contacted candidate and concerned bank. Both however refused to cooperate, and accusation therefore not possible to confirm. Case closed.

## Evaluation after the CFM project has ended

It is also valuable to develop an internal evaluation report after the CFM project has finished and the final report (if any) has been made public. A summary can be made public to assist other CSOs wishing to carry out similar monitoring in other countries or in future elections.

The post-monitoring evaluation can be more thorough than what can be carried out during the monitoring, as the actual work with the CFM project will have ended. It can be done by members of the core team or by someone who was not involved in the project. The latter reduces the risk of bias and provides an outside perspective on the work, but it is especially important that this person or persons are provided with all available materials and are able to hold discussions with anyone who was involved in the project. If it is anticipated that an external evaluation will be carried out after the CFM project has ended, it is valuable to consider in advance what data should be collected during the planning and monitoring phases. This information can be put in a separate folder on a shelf or in a computer.

An evaluation report could cover the following issues, among others:

**TABLE 25. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN EVALUATION REPORT**

Issue	Comment
<b>A description of the methodology and how this was arrived at, including the considerations that were taken during the preparations</b>	<p>Turnover within the organization may mean that once it is time for the organization to do monitoring again, the people involved may not be available.</p> <p>Careful record-keeping of what worked can therefore be extremely useful, even if it seems unnecessary at the time.</p>
<b>Lessons learned about the methodology</b>	Outline what did and did not work, so that lessons can be learned for forthcoming monitoring efforts. Be as frank and direct as possible.
<b>Recommendations for future monitoring efforts</b>	No project is ever perfect. Make recommendations for things that should be changed in the future. Remember to also make recommendations on things that should not be changed if they worked well.
<b>Discuss potential challenges in scaling up the pilot methodology</b>	<p>If the project was a pilot to test the methodology (as many have been), discuss what challenges may be faced when scaling the approach, and how these challenges can be overcome.</p> <p>Consider particular challenges regarding internal communication and how the quality of the monitoring can be controlled.</p>
<b>Budgetary issues</b>	<p>Did the actual costs match the budget? Were there any unforeseen costs or savings? Also, discuss how economies of scale can be made if you are going to scale the methodology.</p> <p>This is especially important if a pilot CFM project is carried out – if this project covered two regions and included 20 field monitors, what would be the costs if you cover five regions with 50 field monitors next time?</p>