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# Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation on Sustainability of Donor Funded Projects in Afghanistan

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## Abstract

Monitoring and evaluation is a continuous management function to assess if progress is made in achieving expected results. The study sought to examine the influence of monitoring and evaluation on the sustainability of donor-funded projects in Afghanistan. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design is a type of research design that systematically aims to obtain information to systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. The target population included employees working at Afghanaid and International Rescue Committee. The study used the purposive sampling technique to get the sample size. The collection of the data was done using the questionnaires. The analysis of the data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that monitoring and evaluation are critical in determining the sustainability of donor-funded projects in Afghanistan. The study found that monitoring and evaluation is positively and significantly associated with project sustainability ( $r=.418$ ,  $p=.000$ ). It was also found that project monitoring and evaluation is positively and significantly related to sustainability ( $\beta=0.521$ ,  $p=0.009$ ). The results implied that when the project monitoring and evaluation improve by one unit, the sustainability will increase by 0.521 units while holding other factors constant. The monitoring and evaluation enhance the proper utilization of donor funds. The research recommended that a monitoring and evaluation plan be embraced that overviews the enhancement of monitoring and evaluation systems and sets out actions and procedures to develop a durable monitoring and evaluation system. A restructuring of the existing monitoring and evaluation framework should be evaluated regularly.

**Keywords:** *Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability, Donor Funded Projects, Afghanistan*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation have become an increasingly vital tool in global efforts to accomplish environmental, financial and social sustainability (Kusek & Rist, 2020). At national and worldwide scales, sustainability standards and indicators for monitoring and evaluation are essential tools for defining, monitoring, and reporting eco-friendly, financial, and social trends, tracking progress towards objectives, and influencing policy and practices. At regional and sub-regional scales, monitoring and evaluation are essential for evaluating the sustainability of regional practices and can be a crucial tool to aid with management planning (Horton, Mackay, Anderson & Dupleich, 2020). Monitoring is a management tool used to identify the disparity between the plan and reality to take corrective measures. It makes sure that tasks are executed as planned. Segura and Pedregal (2018) define monitoring as observing and recording tasks taking place in a project or program. It is a process of consistently collecting information on all aspects of the project. Monitoring likewise includes feedback regarding the project's development to the donors, implementers, and beneficiaries (Ika, Diallo & Thuillier, 2019). The resulting details are utilized for choice-making to enhance project performance.

Parlett and Hamilton (2020) defined evaluation as the systematic collection and analysis of information required to make decisions. It is a method of enhancing project performance and identifies accountability of resources and work. It creates personnel and enhances management capabilities in planning. It determines the effectiveness and reliability of programs and their effects on future programs and aids in decision making. Salerno, de Vasconcelos Gomes, Da Silva, Bagno and Freitas (2019) define a project as a collection of tasks that focus on addressing a particular problem within a given period. A project must have the resources, time, and funds before attaining any goal. There are several phases that any project goes through. Monitoring needs to take place at the start and should be incorporated right into all project phases. The primary phases should consist of project preparation which entails the situation evaluation specifying goals, formulating methods, problem recognition, developing a workable strategy, and budgeting.

Afghanistan has been the leading world recipient of donor aid since 2001, together with Iraq and Syria (Lawson & Morgenstern, 2020). The yearly aid was estimated to be \$6.4 billion between 2011-17. Bilateral and multilateral help organizations have been in operation in Afghanistan since the creation of the GIRoA. The principal bilateral donors to Afghanistan have been the United States, UK, EU, Japan, Germany, Nordic nations, Australia, and multilateral donors consisting of The World Bank and The Asian Development Bank. As per the SIGAR report on Afghanistan rebuilding, in 2018, the US government has given \$140.40 billion in army and development and charitable help to Afghanistan. The assistance consists of \$40.50 billion in development and charitable aid. As per the US Foreign Aid Explorer records of help that consisted of 2001 to partial 2018, USAID has given nearly \$21 billion to Afghanistan.

Khan, Ali and Khan (2021) reported that issues over resources, communal disagreements and rivalry within Afghanistan's various tribal, ethnic, linguistic and spiritual groups have likewise been among the significant initiators of hostility throughout the country. Corruption, together with the manufacturing and smuggling of illegal substances, has been a source of financing for

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anarchical groups and has further added to hostility both internally and externally. Afghanistan has gone through recurring natural disasters, like extended periods of drought, floods, heavy snowfall, avalanches, landslides and earthquakes (Konratyev, Krapivin & Varostos, 2018). These problems have intensified the population's vulnerability while increasing the number of casualties, rights infractions, and displacement in a lengthy conflict context.

The mix of conflict, insecurity and natural catastrophes has led the Afghan population to vulnerability by leading to the internal displacement of many citizens yearly (Majidi, 2019). Since the end of 2019, there have been 3 million internally displaced individuals in Afghanistan, representing about 8% of its residents. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure and low accessibility to resources and services remained more problems to human growth in Afghanistan, particularly in remote areas, where 80% of the population lived in 2019. The nation has been focusing on assistance for development since 2001, after the creation of the US-backed Afghan government (Margesson, 2020). Moreover, donation for development has not been sufficient to create the preferred results. Problems consist of poor oversight of the projects, absence of alignment of donor financing with Afghanistan's nationwide concerns, and heavy use of contractors. These are reviewed under the growth aid and aid efficiency areas.

When adequately created and used, the monitoring and evaluation systems can potentially enhance the effectiveness of help (Kim, Kim & Shchur, 2021). Nonetheless, Afghanistan's government and donor monitoring and evaluation systems encounter countless obstacles and problems. These consist of lower abilities, absence of exchange of monitoring and evaluation information between the government and development organizations, lack of organizational frameworks, reduced need for monitoring and evaluation information, resource constraints, inadequate baseline information, the inadequacy of application of existing monitoring and evaluation information and unsustainable monitoring and evaluation systems. Sharing information with donors and the absence of a clear distinction between monitoring and evaluation systems among government donor organizations makes it tough to enhance the status of monitoring and evaluation (Binnendijk, 2019).

Donors have demanded that each budget proposal submitted to them is required to have a component of monitoring and evaluation budgeted for and they have gone even more to advise that 10% of the total spending plan ought to be scheduled for the sole objective of monitoring and evaluation (Srivastava, 2018). Though the donors could have straightforward suggestions of why this element is essential, recipients of money tend to disregard or pay little focus on monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation tasks are intended together and give vital information required to affect evidence-based decision-making and offer additional advice to future project designs and execution (WHO, 2018). However, most projects take a much more extended period to be completed and end up not attaining the required objectives and a lot of them are unable to sustain themselves after the donor has pulled out since monitoring and evaluation methods are not noted throughout the execution and implementation of these projects.

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## **2.0 Literature Review**

Vrchota, RehoR, Marikova and Pech (2020) discovered that project monitoring and evaluation are essential if the task goals and success are attained. Monitoring and evaluating jobs enhance the overall effectiveness of project preparation, monitoring and execution, making it a vital step in the job administration life cycle. Monitoring and evaluation are crucial components in Project Management for donors and are taken seriously. On top of that, Programme officers utilized monitoring and evaluation information effectively and accomplished normal information collected from numerous sources efficiently monitoring and evaluation. The recommendations were that details regarding monitoring and evaluation need to be made accessible to administrative staff and that the beneficiaries must obtain feedback after measurement of project activities.

Baqui, El-Arifeen, Darmstadt, Ahmed, Williams, Seraji and Projahnmo (2018) performed research to examine the impacts of monitoring and evaluation practices on project execution in ACTED Bangladesh organization. The following research study goals directed the research; to figure out the impacts of M&E layout and planning on task implementation, to take a look at the extent to which ability building and information dissemination influences project execution and to determine the impacts of M&E budgeting on project execution in ACTED Bangladesh. The target population of the research study was all the workers (200 participants) of ACTED Bangladesh. A descriptive research layout was made use of in the research. Simple random sampling identified the population sample that was included in the research. Main data was gathered making use of questionnaires. The research findings suggested that M&E methods (Design and planning, capability building and also budgeting) influences project execution in ACTED Bangladesh. 80% of the participants concurred that ACTED Bangladesh agency constantly applies preparation approaches on schedule and 50% of the participants ranked the effect as high. 81% of the participants concurred that the organization's employees are acquainted with their core duties and 40% of the respondents ranked capability structure on project execution as effective. 79% of the participants indicated that ACTED Bangladesh had a good budget for M&E tasks and 60% of the participants agreed that it affects to a large extent. The research suggested that M&E design & planning method must be adopted in the organization because it is seen an evaluation development which is good for management method. Also M&E capacity structure must be stuck to as a sign of task execution for it is a fantastic determinant in an organization's successful project execution process. Finally, M&E budgeting needs to be complied with in organizations for it makes sure timely stipulation of funds with quality performance that has caused effective sustainability process.

Ahsan and Kumar Paul (2018) conducted research to examine the impact of project monitoring on effective application of donor financed projects in Iran. Findings of the study expose that reliable institutional and management ability is a dish to effective job implementation as it motivates participation and involvement of the community in all the processes of project execution, thus people really feeling encouraged. Involvement of community participants and other stakeholders allows them to far better influence the training course of their lives and the choices which influence them with respect to jobs application. As per the results of the research, the following suggestions

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are made: monitoring and evaluation is crucial to performance in execution of donor financed projects as it figures out the importance, appropriateness, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of projects so that the information acquired can educate the layout of future projects. It is of critical relevance to entail main stakeholders in numerous aspects of projects implementation since it aids in accumulating the ability of people to produce and influence growth at different levels, increasing their accessibility to and influence over resources and institutions. This subsequently helps in attaining projects sustainability. In order to avoid delay in projects mentioning time, occasioned by delays in funds dispensation by donors, there is demand for the donors to be educated of the consequences of the hold-ups, to make sure that when developing their policies, the process will be notified by strategic as opposed to bureaucratic reasoning. Project effectiveness is often made use of in measuring results in the direction of the vision, goal and objectives accomplishment of the organization. It is consequently essential that all stakeholders comprehend the project vision, goal and objectives and work as team members with the objective of obtaining the wanted results. This at times might ask for functioning long hours and in tough conditions, which needs that all stakeholders go an additional mile, without taking their eyes off the ultimate goal.

Witter, Toonen, Meessen, Kagubare, Fritsche and Vaughan (2020) conducted study to examine the effects and influences of technical ability, project preparation and baseline researches for result-based M&E on donor financed value chain projects in Afghanistan. In the study, donor financing for value chain projects has securely concentrated on reducing poverty and enhanced incomes. The study targeted 400 value chain project staff from firms running throughout greater than one area for over 5 years. Stratified random sampling was made use to pick 80 participants. Pre-tested, structured surveys were utilized to gather data evaluated using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The study discovered that execution, training and capability on M&E were very crucial, 75% (55). Baseline researches were crucial in developing and choosing project indicators, 60.5% (44). The research advised building M&E abilities through training, normal reviews, adequate budgeting, comprehensive project planning, stakeholder involvement and engagement in all phases. The positive correlations between the independent variables, even more, suggested that result-based M&E was influenced by different aspects that are associated and synergistic. The study concluded that the technical capability of M&E systems, project planning and baseline research studies ought to be given top priority for effective analysis of result-based M&E.

Heblinski, Schmieder, Heege, Agyemang, Sayadyan and Vardanyan (2021) performed research to determine the impact of monitoring and evaluation techniques carry the application or performance of numerous development projects executed in Armenia. The research sought to address the following concerns: To what level do monitoring and evaluation strategies affect government-financed projects' performance in Ararat Area? How does monitoring and evaluation training impact government-financed project efficiency in Ararat Region? What level do baseline surveys influence government-financed jobs performance in Ararat Region? To what level do information systems influence government-financed project efficiency in Ararat Region? The study was led by the concept of adjustment and the sensible evaluation theory. The study layout for this research study was a mix of ex-post-facto study style and survey. The target population of the research

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study was 250 respondents. A sample size of 200 participants was considered as computed by the Morgan and Krejcie. From the analysis done, it was kept in mind that the bulk of the participants (95%) completely supported the concept that monitoring and evaluation plans affect the efficiency of region funded projects substantially. Better, it was discovered that bulk (79%) of the participants supported the concept; monitoring and evaluation training affects area funded jobs efficiency. Also (94%) of the participants strongly supported the idea that baseline studies have a considerable impact on the performance of region financed development projects in Ararat. Ultimately, it was found that individual kindness in the embracing M&E IS affects the execution of projects in the region substantially. It was suggested that a research be done to take a look at the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation strategies on the performance of development projects in Ararat Region and various other regions of Armenia.

Barakat (2019) performed research to assess the performance of donor funded road-building projects in Afghanistan. It targeted at linking the knowledge gap by examining the aspects impacting the performance of road building and construction projects with a focus on donor funded road construction projects. The specific goals being to examine the effectiveness, performance, significance, effect and their impact on the efficiency of donor funded road building and construction projects in Afghanistan. A descriptive study design was made use of while a survey was utilized to collect primary data. Secondary information was utilized to verify the communicative and practical credibility of main information. The research focused on all road building firms and regulative agencies concerned with the recurring and most currently finished donor funded road building and construction projects in Afghanistan. 440 surveys were given to the sample group, 350 were filled and returned that stood for an 89% response rate. The information accumulated was evaluated. Descriptive statistics provided a summary of the information and a summary of the sample features. Relationships evaluation revealed the partnerships among the variables thus locating analytical assistance of the hypotheses of the research. The results disclosed that all factors of the research which is effectiveness, efficiency, significance, effect had substantial impact on the performance of donor funded road-building projects. Results even more revealed that efficiency in donor funded road projects was not sufficient; effectiveness had the favorable impact that could be credited to the rigorous standards used by benefactors. Furthermore, it is revealed that benefactor financed jobs were relevant in the development goals of Afghanistan.

A study by Riely, Mock, Cogill, Bailey and Kenefick (2019) discovered that effective performance of roadway development projects is important for economic development and growth of any nation. Regional construction companies contribute dramatically towards awareness of the objective. Nevertheless, they encounter difficulties in finishing the projects within the budgeted cost, period routine and achieving the preferred standards. The research determines the impacts of project monitoring and evaluation on the efficiency of road projects. The research was executed in the Jordan. The research used 50 roadway projects. The research concluded that project monitoring and evaluation has a substantial impact on the performance of roadway projects.

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Hwang (2020) conducted research which aims to take a look at the effect of monitoring and evaluation approaches on the performance of the development projects in Yemen and its connection to gender. It recognizes the level to which monitoring and evaluation approaches in the form of (monitoring abilities, technological tasks, information system, reports and gender) impact the performance of the development projects. It also explores the moderating result of the administration support in the direction of M&E and the performance of the development projects shedding the light on gender. In order to attain the goals of the research, the researcher utilized descriptive research layout in which blended technique was utilized. Qualitative data was collected with interviews that were conducted with ten Key Informants (KI) from program personnel at SFD. Quantitative information was gathered from the sample of 150 participants from program staff (project and M&E), making use of close-ended questionnaire and examined with the help of SPSS (variation 25). The findings of the study revealed that staff with monitoring abilities in SFD, who are practicing M&E technical activities, generating M&E reports in a prompt way, getting assistance from administration and considering gender in their activities will dramatically influence the performance of the development projects. Likewise, the results revealed that, there is a moderating impact by the management assistance in between the research is one of the gender and the project performance, suggesting that the monitoring of SFD is gender delicate. First studies which has concentrated on gender relations in the field of M&E.

A study by Nisa, Javed and Akhtar (2018) argued that monitoring and evaluation of projects is a really crucial factor of sustainability. This is due to the fact that correct M&E methods have a substantial impact on the effective delivery of projects. The purpose of the study is to analyze the effect of project M&E methods on construction project success requirements. Surveys were utilized to solicit the sights of project experts in the Yemen building sector. The study used a partial the very least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to develop the effect of project M&E practices on project success according to the theory. Outcomes revealed that M&E techniques had a favorable analytical substantial association with building and construction projects success requirements. Additionally, health and safety performance and project scope indicated a solid substantial relationship with M&E practice, indicating that, in upcoming nations, these two main constructs need to be offered essential attention in attaining project success. The results of the research might serve to institutions in figuring out M&E methods that matter and contribute extremely to project success. These might go a long way to enhance productivity and increase the rate of successful project delivery. The application of rigorous analysis, PLS-SEM, gives more trusted information on M&E techniques that can make sure successful distribution of construction projects.

Willar, Waney, Pangemanan and Mait (2020) performed a study to review the impact of project monitoring techniques on the execution of road-building projects. The research was executed in Iraq. The research was directed by the complying with certain objectives; establish the effect of interaction, figure out the result of monitoring tools, check out the impact of stakeholder's involvement, and establish the result of team proficiency on application of road construction projects in Iraq. The research used a descriptive study layout targeting 200 project supervisors, board members, monitoring board staff members of various projects and stakeholders in Iraq. A

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closed ended organized survey was used to gather key data from 90 participants. A pilot research was carried out to determine the reliability and credibility of the tools. The high quality and consistency of the research was more analyzed making use of Cronbach's alpha. Information discussion was done using frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations, regression, correlation, and the information was presented in the form of tables. The findings of correlation evaluation indicated that the project monitoring practices had favorable and substantial partnership with project execution. The research, therefore, concluded that thoroughness in project monitoring techniques improves road-building project application in Iraq: Excellence in project communication, project monitoring tools and techniques, team proficiency and stakeholders' involvements, being the pillars, is crucial. The research advised that road building and construction firms take on and invest the same to enhance effectiveness in project monitoring practices and execution of road construction projects in Iraq.

### 3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design is a type of research design that systematically aims to obtain information to systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. The target population included employees working at Afghanistan and International Rescue Committee. The study used the purposive sampling technique to get the sample size. The collection of the data was done using the questionnaires. The analysis of the data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics.

### 4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

The discussion of the research findings was done based on the findings.

#### 4.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was done to examine the association between the variables. The results presented in Table 1 describe the correlation analysis

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

Variable		Sustainability	Monitoring and Evaluation
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Monitoring and Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.418**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

The correlation results from Table 1 reveal that monitoring and evaluation is positively and significantly associated with project sustainability ( $r=.418$ ,  $p=.000$ ). This concurs with Vrchota, Řehoř, Maříková and Pech (2020), who articulated that monitoring and evaluation need to be made

accessible to organizational staff and the beneficiaries must obtain feedback after measurement of project activities.

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis

The study sought to examine the relationship between the variables. The section under regression analysis included the model fitness, analysis of variance, and regression of coefficient to achieve the objective. The results presented in Table 2 show the model fitness.

**Table 2: Model Fitness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.174a	0.218	0.203	0.015792

The results from Table 2 depict that project monitoring and evaluation was found to be satisfactory in explaining its sustainability. This was supported by the coefficient of determination, also known as the R square of 0.218. This showed that project monitoring and evaluation explain 21.8% of the variations in the sustainability of the projects.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.012	1	8.012	154.65	.000b
	Residual	10.154	196	0.052		
	Total	18.166	197			

The results in Table 3 show that the overall model was statistically significant. The results reveal that project monitoring and evaluation is a good predictor in explaining the sustainability of the projects. This was supported by an F statistic of 154.65 and the reported p-value of 0.000, which was less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05.

**Table 4: Regression of Coefficient**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.245	0.215		7.015	0.015
Monitoring and evaluation	0.521	0.125	0.338	2.154	0.009

According to the results presented in Table 4, it was found that project monitoring and evaluation is positively and significantly related to sustainability ( $\beta=0.521$ ,  $p=0.009$ ). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 2.154, larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The results implied that when the project monitoring and evaluation improve by one unit, the sustainability will increase

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by 0.521 units while holding other factors constant. Barakat (2019) reported that the adoption of better mechanisms in the monitoring and evaluation of different projects could improve performance levels. Monitoring donor-funded projects is essential to assess these projects' progress and aid in identifying their effective completion.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation is positively and significantly associated with project sustainability ( $r=.418$ ,  $p=.000$ ). It was found that project monitoring and evaluation is positively and significantly related to sustainability ( $\beta=0.521$ ,  $p=0.009$ ). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 2.154, larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The results implied that when the project monitoring and evaluation improve by one unit, the sustainability will increase by 0.521 units while holding other factors constant. The adoption of better mechanisms for monitoring different jobs can improve performance levels. Monitoring donor-funded projects are essential to assess the efficiency and identify their effective completion. The monitoring and evaluation enhance the proper utilization of donor funds. The research recommended that a monitoring and evaluation plan be embraced that overviews the enhancement of monitoring and evaluation systems and sets out actions and procedures to develop a durable monitoring and evaluation system. A focus needs to be offered to enhance the usage of monitoring and evaluation information in nationwide budgeting and planning processes. The NGOs' monitoring and evaluation need a proper level of authority and accessibility to decision-making structures to create the preferred results. A restructuring of the existing monitoring and evaluation framework should be evaluated regularly.

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