The Participation Toolkit

A USAID Health Population & Nutrition Officer's Guide to Using Participatory Approaches for Managing HIV/AIDS Activities

Introduction

This toolkit is based on the premise that people support what they create. Evidence shows that development strategies that are created and managed by those with a stake in their outcomes are likely to be more effective and more sustainable than those that are designed and managed by external actors. The toolkit was therefore conceived and designed for use by USAID HPN officers and their partners to facilitate the participatory management of their HIV/AIDS programs.

The toolkit is divided into four modules. Module 1 of this Toolkit seeks to define and explore the potential benefits and risks of participatory program management.

Despite strong evidence that participatory approaches enhance program outcomes, USAID program officers must typically generate support from within their organizational unit or may sometimes have to overcome internal resistance and for undertaking participatory processes. Some ideas for generating internal support are presented in Module 2 of this Toolkit.

True participation - i.e. shared decision-making by program stakeholders - is most easily and successfully achieved when it is planned and executed in a manner that maximizes six process characteristics:

- **commonly valued objectives**: the degree to which the HIV/AIDS issues around which participation occurs are commonly valued by all participants;
- **stakeholder representation**: the degree to which the participants in the process accurately and fully represent critical beneficary, partner and other stakeholders;
- **collaboration**: the degree and consistency of inclusiveness, transparency and teamwork exhibited in the decision-making processes;
- **path-goal expectancy**: the perceived technical merit of the product developed as a result of shared decision-making;
- **empowerment**: the extent to which USAID and other relevant stakeholders execute the decisions arrived at during the process; and
- **feedback**: the consistency and rapidity with which stakeholders are kept informed on the progress of the program.

Modules 3 and 4 of this Toolkit present practical guidelines for conducting participatory program design and evaluation in ways that maximize the six characteristics listed above.

Module I: Benefits, Risks & Principles of Participation

Benefits of Participatory Approaches

The practical benefit that is claimed for participatory approaches to the design, implementation and evaluation of development programs is that they generate **stakeholder commitment** to a development initiative, and that the effectiveness, performance and sustainability of a development initiative depend (in large part) on this commitment.

Stakeholder commitment is an intrinsic motivation to act to achieve objectives:

1. *Commitment is about action*. It is, therefore, not simply about intellectual agreement, but also about motivation: the factor that energizes behavior and sustains it over time.

2. *Commitment is about intrinsic motivation*. In extrinsic motivation, we engage in particular behaviors in order to receive (or avoid) certain incentives (or punishments) that are outside or external to a certain task[1]. In intrinsic motivation, we act because we believe in and value the task itself. The distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is an old one[2] in the fields of organization development and social psychology. It is also an important one. Intrinsic motivation is more powerful and more sustainable than extrinsic motivation: for the latter to work, rewards need to be large and increasing over time.

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[1] In the context of international development work, extrinsic motivation exists when, for example, stakeholders act because they believe that this will cause a development agency will allocate or disburse funds (external rewards) as a consequence of their actions.

[2] See, for example, the work of A.H. Maslow 1943; F.W. Herzberg 1959 and 1968; B.M. Staw 1976; E.L. Deci 1975.

3. *Commitment is directional*: It is an intrinsic motivation to act to achieve a particular objective. Commonality of objectives among stakeholders is therefore highly important. Indeed, where there is motivation to act but a divergence of objectives, conflict and opposition will be very high.

Commitment is measured by the timely and full discharge of the roles and responsibilities assigned for the implementation of the development initiative, rather than by the declared excitement or satisfaction of participants at the end of a participatory event. The implementor(s) provide a certain quality and quantity of products and services according to an established timetable; beneficiaries use these products and services and add value to them; partners commit to coordinating their responses; "critical affecters" commit to removing current and future obstacles to this beneficiary-implementor relationship.

Commitment is a behavioral response to a psychological state. Evidence shows that people are committed to work when they associate that work with a strong sense of:

- *achievement* (derived from the experience of having completed something challenging and important);
- *involvement* (derived from the experience of being included - of being a player rather than being on the sidelines while others do the work)
- *influence* (derived from the experience of having one's ideas heard and used)
- *fairness* (derived from the knowledge that decisions have been made in a rational and just - rather than arbitrary and power-based - manner) and
- *trust* (derived from the experience of being given responsibility and freedom to act).

There is a substantial amount of evidence to support the theory that some types of participation leading to commitment cause greater program effectiveness and sustainability. For example, a detailed comparative analysis* of 121 rural water supply projects supported by 18 international agencies in 49 Asian, African and Latin American countries found, inter alia, that:

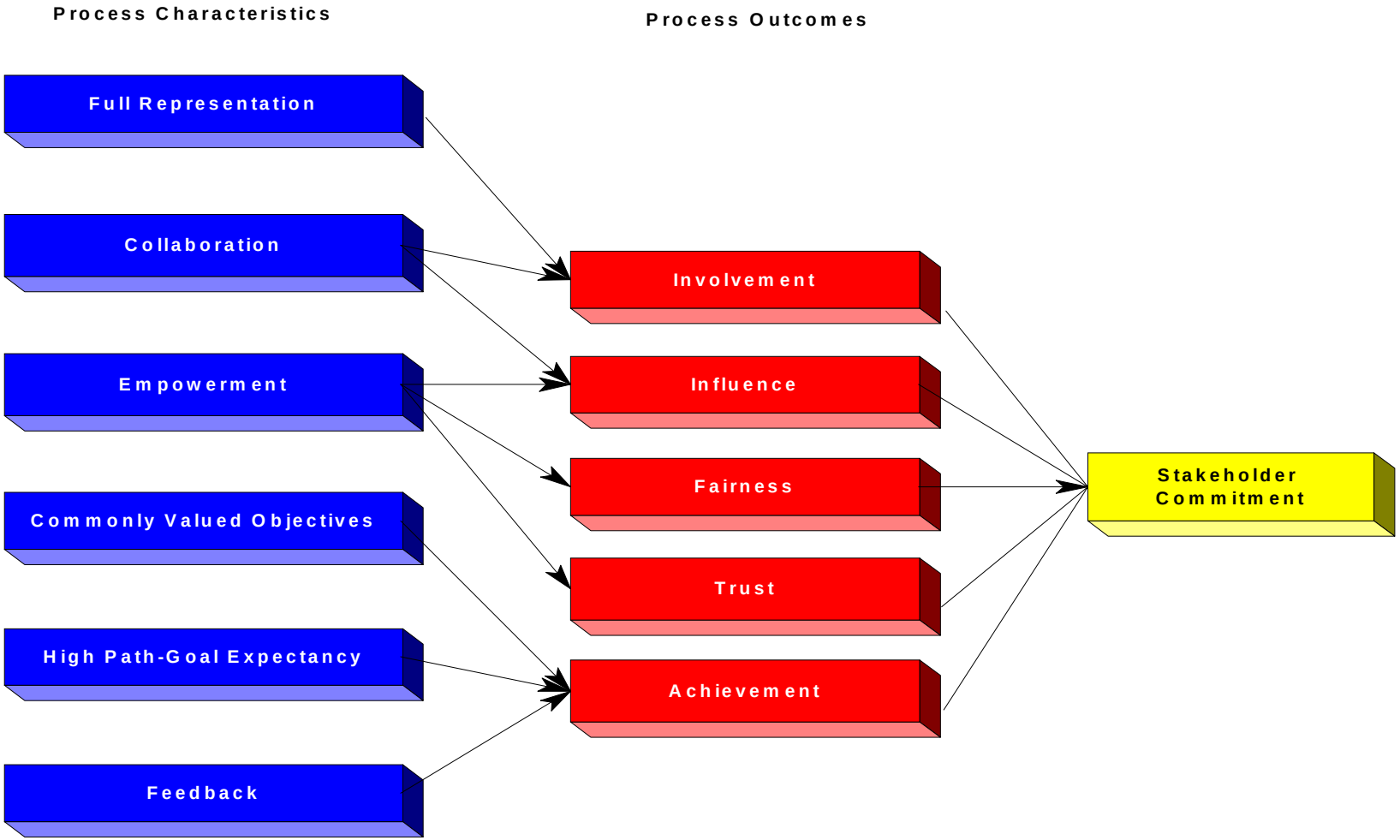
- ☞ "*there is a strong, robust, statistical (causal) association between participation and performance*": projects with participation consistently out-performed (in terms of overall project effectiveness) those with information-gathering and consultation by 25 to 51 percent; and
- ☞ the benefits of participation seem to work more through their intermediate impact on beneficiary commitment than through design quality.

*Narayan 1994, and Isham et al. 1995

The challenge for managers is to design and operationalize a process that generates these experiences in the stakeholder group. Research and experience suggests that such processes must have six characteristics:

- ☞ *commonly valued objective*: (all stakeholders must have a clear and common vision of the outcome of the initiative, and they must all value that objective);
- ☞ *high path-goal expectancy*: (logical and plausible relationship between proposed activities and the outcomes they are designed to achieve);
- ☞ *full representation*: (full participation of all legitimate and important stakeholder representatives);
- ☞ *collaboration*: (shared authority and accountability among stakeholders in the design, implementation or evaluation of the initiative);
- ☞ *empowerment:* (ensure that decisions made through collaboration are supported, approved and implemented by the institution); and
- ☞ *feedback*: (ensure that stakeholders are able to evaluate the quality of their joint-decisions in terms of progress toward achieving the objectives).

Factors Determining Stakeholder Commitment



Costs and Risks Associated with Participatory Approaches

Just as there are benefits to participatory management (see Box 1), so there are real and perceived risks and costs associated with it. Some of the most common of these are presented below. These risks and costs vary according to the stage of the program cycle in which participation is applied, and are discussed in detail in Modules 2, 3 and 4.

Modeling Participation

From the rationale and direct benefits discussed above, it is possible to induce a basic participation model, which is presented here:

- *Clarify the objectives of the participatory design process*. Make sure that everyone involved in your organization knows what the participation process is expected to achieve and how that achievement will be measured;

- *Identify and invite stakeholders.* Identify your institutional beneficiaries, partners, and those entities and persons who have an important role in regulating the relationship between you and your beneficiaries. Ask those stakeholders that you have identified is anyone is missing;

- *Make decisions collaboratively.* At these events stakeholders make decisions that are irreversible. It is not enough to consult or share ideas. You become participants (and not hosts) and an experienced facilitator is usually required to ensure that power is equally shared among participants;

- *Use the decisions made in these events*. The decisions that have been made at the collaborative event(s) are

used to form the strategic and tactical plans; and

- *Provide full and regular feedback.* Make sure that the strategic and tactical plans that you have crafted have not changed the meaning or spirit of the decisions made at the collaborative events. Provide the participants, and the wider stakeholder group, full feedback on the outcome.

This model should be used at major decision-making stages (preparation, design and evaluation) in the management of strategies, programs or projects. The quality of the commitment fostered by the application of this model will be determined by the quality with which each step in the process is implemented.

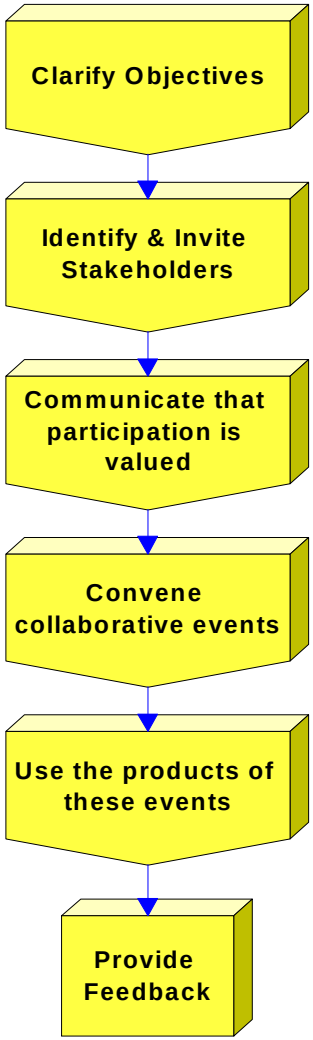
Module II: Preparing to Launch a Participatory Process

Participatory processes should themselves be designed, implemented and evaluated in a participatory way if they are to avoid the risks described in Module 1. Individuals within and outside the USAID operating unit[3] (OU) who have the influence or authority to prevent or hinder the implementation of a participatory approach may (and very often do) have serious concerns about it. These concerns should be addressed up front, rather than after the fact. The most common of these concerns are outlined in the table below:

[3] An operating unit is the USAID team, Office, Division or Mission responsible for managing the HIV/AIDS program under consideration.

Stakeholder	Concern
OU leadership	*STAFFING*: Who will fulfill the SO Team members' daily duties if they are engaged full-time in implementing a participatory process? *MONEY*: Scarce Operating Expense resources will be consumed by SO Team member travel and other expenses implied in participatory process; *TIME*: A participatory approach takes too long, and we need to obligate money before x date.
MOH	*RISK:* A USAID-sponsored participatory process may involve stakeholders that I don't recognize as legitimate.
SO Team Leader	*RISK*: Outside scrutiny of the program may expose USAID and/or my program to (unfair) criticism; *BIAS*: Participants may simply advocate for their own parochial positions (both defensive and offensive) rather than acting in the interest of the program; *INTEREST*: Counterparts, other-donors etc. will simply not be interested in being a part of the participatory events, and in addition they are too busy; *CAPACITY*: Community representatives and other local stakeholders are not technically competent to participate as members of an design, implementation or evaluation team.
Other SO Teams	*PRECEDENT*: If you implement a participatory process now, I may be expected/required to do so in the future.

The Basic Process Model



As discussed in Module 1, effective participatory processes are implemented according to a basic sequential model presented at left, and the remainder of this Module describes how it can be applied to ensure a well-design and implemented participation strategy.

Preparation Step 1: Clarify the Objectives for a Participatory Approach

Participatory approaches often begin with the vision of a single individual in the responsible operating unit. Indeed, it is critical to the success of a participatory approach that it has at least one such advocate. This advocate (which we refer to as the *process manager)* should understand, and be able to articulate, the potential benefits that a participatory approach to program management could bring to the operating unit's HIV/AIDS activity. The process manager will play a variety of roles during the preparation stage, including:

➔ ***advocating*** the use of participatory approaches;
➔ ***identifying*** the process management team;
➔ ***representing*** the process management team to other stakeholders;
➔ ***participating*** as a process management team member in the design, management and evaluation of the participatory approach.

It is therefore important that the process manager should clarify for him/herself the context-specific advantages or objectives for using participatory approach to program management. The Worksheet below may aid the rogram manager in deciding whether a participatory approach is worthwhile, and in laying out a rationale for consideration by other important stakeholders.

Worksheet: Potential Benefits of a Participatory Approach to Managing the HIV/AIDS Activity	
Q1a. Apart for the beneficiary population, is USAID the only entity that has a stake in preventing and managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in this country/region?	A1a. Yes No
Q1b. Who else has a stake (i.e. who else has responsibility and or important interest in assuring a reduction of HIV incidence in this country/region)?	A1b.
Q2a. If the stakeholders listed in A1b. pooled their skills, experience and knowledge, could the design, implementation and/or evaluation of USAID's HIV/AIDS program be technically superior than otherwise?	A2a. Yes No
Q2b. In what ways could the technical aspects of the program improve?	A2b.

Worksheet: Potential Benefits of a Participatory Approach to Managing the HIV/AIDS Activity	
Q3a. If these stakeholders pooled their resources in a coordinated effort to combat the epidemic in this country/region, would each stakeholder have a better chance of achieving <u>its own</u> objectives (i.e. is collaboration a positive-sum game)?	A3a. Yes No
Q3b. How so?	A3b.
Q4a. If these stakeholders were as invested in USAID's HIV/ADS strategy as USAID itself is, what could/would they do differently or more of?	A4a.

Worksheet: Potential Benefits of a Participatory Approach to Managing the HIV/AIDS Activity	
Q4b. How would these stakeholder actions improve the USAID program's potential for success?	A4b.
Q5. If the stakeholders were meaningfully engaged in the design, implementation and/or evaluation of USAID's HIV/AIDS program, they may reciprocate by inviting USAID to participate in the design, implementation and/or evaluation of their own activity. How could USAID benefit from being involved in another stakeholder's program design effort?	A5.

Preparation Step 2: Stakeholder Identifcation and Engagement

Once the participation manager has satisfied him/herself that a participatory approach is appropriate, s/he needs to generate the agreement and commitment of other individuals that could help, hinder or prevent such an approach. It is important that these stakeholders be correctly identified and involved so that parameters such as degree of participation, time-frame and cost are negotiated and agreed upon in advance. The Worksheet below is an aid to such a stakeholder identification exercise.

Worksheet: Identifying Participation Stakeholders

Q1: ***Whose time do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

_____

_____

_____

Q2: ***Whose skills and knowledge do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

_____

_____

_____

Q3: ***Whose resources (funds) do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

_____

_____

_____

Q4: ***Whose formal approval do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

_____

_____

_____

Q5: ***Are any of the stakeholders above unable to help me develop a participation strategy?***

_____

_____

_____

Q6. ***Who can effectively represent the stakeholders in in query 5 in developing a participation strategy?***

_____

_____

_____

Preparation for Participation

Stakeholder Identification Worked Example

1: ***Whose time do I need in order to help manage a participatory approach?***

SO2 Core Team
Regional Contracts Officer

2: ***Whose skills and knowledge do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

FSNs in SO2
Director of STD/HIV/AIDS in MOH
Professional Facilitator

3: ***Whose resources (funds) do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

SO2 Team Leader

4: ***Whose formal approval do I need in order to implement a participatory approach?***

Mission Director

5: ***Are any of the stakeholders above unable to help me develop a participation strategy?***

Director of STD/HIV/AIDS unit in MOH
Mission Director

6. Who can effectively represent the stakeholders in in query 5 in developing a participation strategy?

Director, Planning Unit, MOH
Deputy Mission Director

Once these stakeholders have been identified, the participation manager should present them with his/her rationale for considering a participatory approach and invite them to participate in the design and management of the participatory process.

Preparation Step 3: Designing a participatory approach

So far, the Preparing for Participation process has been an individual effort by Participation Manager. The creation of the Participation Management Team and its' first meeting is an opportunity for the Participation Manager to expand the circle of those who are committed to and responsible for implementing a participatory approach.

The participation manager should convene a Team Meeting, faciltated by a (local) professional facilitator. The purpose of this Team Meeting should be to design a participation strategy. A sample agenda for the Team Meeting is included as Annex 3.

Features of a well-designed participation strategy include:

- ➔ Articulation of a series of causally-related objectives for the participatory approach (participatory activities that will lead to process outcomes which will, in turn, lead to stakeholder actions);
- ➔ Schedule of activities and deliverables;
- ➔ Cost estimate
- ➔ Plans for the engagement of appropriate and important stakeholders in the design and management of the participatory approach; and
- ➔ Development and use of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the success of the participatory approach; and
- ➔ An outline the agreements that were made during the meeting and the roles and responsibilities of each team member and include this with the new Participation Strategy.

Once the strategy has been drafted, the PMT should gain formal (written) approval to proceed from each stakeholder whose authority is required (e.g. Mission Director and Ministry of Health) to do so.

Preparation Step 4: Implementing a participatory approach

While Steps 1 to 3 have focused on generating a rationale for, and commitment to, a participatory approach, Steps 4 and 5 are devoted to the maintenance of the agreement generated at the end of Step 3. The mechanics of the implementation of a participatory approaches are described in some detail in Modules III and IV. Here we describe the role of the Participation Management Team in overseeing this implementation.

An important role of the Participation Management Team is to monitor the implementation of the participatory approach and make corrections as necessary. At least one member of the PMT should be present at every event in the participatory process in order to monitor: progress toward the achievement of program design (see Module III) or program evaluation (see Module IV) objectives; the performance of the facilitators and resource persons; and the cohesion and commitment of design/evaluation teams. The PMT should meet regularly to jointly assess whether the process is on track, and to determine and implement any necessary corrective actions.

Preparation Step 5: Reporting and Feedback

The final responsibility of the PMT is to evaluate, and report on, the success or failure of the participatory approach employed by the operating unit. The team should assess whether stakeholder commitments to program-relevant action were generated by the participatory approach; whether these actions are anticipated to have important positive or negligable effects on program performance; and on whether the outcomes of the participatory approach are worth its cost in terms of time, resources and effort. Further, such an assessment should include analysis of measures that, in retrospect, could have been taken to enhance the success of the process in contributing to stakeholder commitment to the program.

These findings should be disseminated to audiences that may be considering implementing participatory approaches of their own. These will include, principally, the Strategic Objective team responsible for the program; CDIE and PPC in AID/Washington; and the Ministry of Health or National AIDS Control Program (NACP) in the host country.

Module III: Participatory Program Design

Introduction

A design process must respond to a variety of issues including:

Program Issue	Description
The Program Rationale	Definition of desired impact and program rationale.
The Customer	Identification of target client group(s) and the assessment of their needs.
The Action Plan	➔ Development of the plan of action that will work to achieve program impact. ➔ Assessment of financial and human resource opportunities and constraints. ➔ Development of a performance monitoring and evaluation system that is responsive to program objectives.
Performance	Definition of the indicators that will be used to measure progress of program objectives and evaluate the change in the program's customer or in their environment.
The External Conditions	Analysis of the external factors which can potentially affect the realization of program objectives at each program objective level.

A comprehensive participatory design process will produce the following results:

1. A completed Results Framework that details the program hierarchy of objectives (Goal, SO, IR, and Activities), the Monitoring and Evaluation System (Performance Indicators and Benchmarks), and critical program risks and assumptions as they relate to each level of the hierarchy of objectives.

2. A diverse team of stakeholders who are committed to the program objectives and can be assigned specific roles and responsibilities for program implementation activities.

Implementing a Participatory Design

Step 1: Analyze the Environment

An environmental assessment is best done by those who live, work and understand the various factors that exist in and, therefore, affect that particular environment. The more diverse the group of stakeholders involved in the design process, the more thorough the environmental analysis will be. The table on the following page outlines the environmental assessment step of the design process in more detail, describing the components of each step, stakeholders who should be involved in the analysis and decision making processes and facilitation tools and methods that can effectively manage the collaborative process.

Step 2: Explore the Possibilities

The environmental analysis step in the design process provides an assessment of what exists in the sector as a whole. The next step in the design process responds to the question: *what is possible given the program environment?* Asking this question creates a very different model for design: the specific features of the program environment *drive* the identification of the alternative approaches that may be taken by a development program to have an impact on that environment.

The alternative approaches that are identified do not translate into one particular program design. They create, instead, a *sector framework of objectives* which outlines the various objectives that can and should be pursued in order to have an impact on the sector as a whole. This framework provides two important pieces of information for a design process:

1. a "menu of development objectives" from which the USAID program can be selected; and,

2. an identification of the various objectives that all sector implementors can include as part of their particular programs. This framework outlines what needs to be done, who can do it and where coordination can occur.

This analysis is best done by those that conducted the environmental analysis outlined in Step 1. As they are the groups working in and affected by this environment, a diverse stakeholder group can best assess what objectives would be the most effective to achieve a desired impact and the most plausible given the environment.

Process Model for Exploring Program Possibilities

Step	Description and Analysis that Should be Conducted	Critical Stakeholders that Should be Involved	Facilitation Tools and Methods	Benefits of the Method
Explore the Possibilities	With the information provided in the environmental analysis, examine the possible approaches that a development program could pursue to have an impact in the sector. Once possible approaches and alternative program strategies are defined, assess the various means that are available for each approach given the environment (within and outside of the program)	Diverse stakeholder group to include potential: ➔ Customers ➔ Partners and ➔ Critical Affecters	Future Search	Effective visioning tool that can lead a diverse group of interests through the process of creating a commonly shared program vision statement (the goal or Strategic Objective).
			Objectives Tree Analysis	Creates a framework of objectives that respond to each of the problems captured in the Problem Tree framework. Provides a "menu of objectives" from which the program can be selected and a useful framework to assess donor involvement, comparative advantage and opportunities for collaboration.
			Brainstorming	Small group method to encourage creative thinking that breaks out of the "traditional" mode. Provides opportunity to think creatively about the various objectives that may be pursued in a sector to have an impact and ways those objectives might be achieved.

Step 3: Define the Priorities

Given the scope of possible objectives that could be pursued in a sector to have an impact, it would be unrealistic for one

USAID program to address them all. The purpose of exploring possible objectives is to create a framework from which implementors can select their programs. To ensure this selection process addresses priorities, and not just possibilities, the prioritization process "carves out" those objectives outlined in the Framework of Objectives that should be incorporated into the programming of implementors over the short term (5 - 7 years). These priorities are chosen by participating stakeholders.

Process Model for Defining the Priorities

Step	Description and Analysis that Should be Conducted	Critical Stakeholders that Should be Involved	Facilitation Tools and Methods	Benefits of the Method
Define the Priorities	Once alternative program approaches are defined, determine those that will: ➔ Have the most impact. ➔ Be the most plausible and achievable given the program environment and constraints. ➔ Be supported by critical stakeholders. ➔ Work in coordination with other development efforts in the sector.	Diverse stakeholder group to include potential: ➔ Customers ➔ Partners and ➔ Critical Affecters	Establishing Criteria for Selection	Provides opportunity for vested stakeholders to help define program components based on their perceptions of need, importance and criticality, feasibility and necessity. By getting agreement around set of criteria, the selection process will be easier and, because they participated in developing the criteria, stakeholders will understand and support those objectives that are finally chosen for the USAID program.
			Impact Assessment	Using the Framework of Objectives as the analysis tool, assess which objectives will have the most impact on the vision statement created in step 2.
			Rating Process	Provides opportunity for stakeholders to rate each objective based on criteria and impact assessment findings. Selection of possible USAID program components is, therefore, done in a completely transparent and participatory way. Comparative Advantage process (step 4) will finalize the USAID program objectives.

Step 4: Determine Comparative Advantage

In participatorily analyzing USAID's comparative advantage, the analysis should consider:

1) What are our strengths?
2) What are the strengths of other actors and how do these relate to or complement our strengths?
3) What are our weaknesses and how can they be strengthened?
4) What are the comparative weaknesses of other actors and how can these be strengthened?
5) What are the opportunities which exist in the programming environment and how can we capitalize on them?
6) What are the threats which exist in the programming environment and how can they be mitigated?

Process Model For Determining the Comparative Advantage

Step	Description and Analysis that Should be Conducted	Critical Stakeholders that Should be Involved	Facilitation Tools and Methods	Benefits of the Method
Determine Comparative Advantage	Based on an assessment of USAID program constraints and opportunities (human, resource, time), strengths of USAID as a donor and an implementors, weaknesses of USAID as a donor and an implementor and, finally, the programming priorities, strengths and weaknesses of other implementors, define the priorities that a USAID program should pursue.	Smaller group of diverse stakeholders to include: ➔ Customers ➔ Partners and ➔ Critical Affecters This group can be smaller than the one engaged in Steps 1 - 3. This should be a core group of stakeholders that is drawn from the larger group involved in steps 1 - 3. This should also be the group that will work with USAID to develop the Results Framework. A smaller group of stakeholders makes the design process more manageable.	SWOT Analysis	The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis is a tool that assesses the comparative position of an implementor (USAID) as it relates to other implementors and the environment in which that implementation is to occur. Based on this analysis, USAID's Comparative Advantage is defined and it is this that shapes the selection of the USAID program components.
			Implementor Presentations	To understand what other donors and implementors have done in the past, what they are planning for the future and the findings of their programs. This process will help shape the final selection of USAID's program components as well as outlining opportunities for coordination and collaboration.
			Objectives Tree	Use the Possible and Priority Objectives Frameworks developed in Steps 2 & 3 as points of departure for presentations and as the framework from which final USAID program components are chosen

Step 5: Design for Results and for the Customer

The final products of any design process, participatory or not, are the Results Framework and subsequent Results Packages.[4] A results oriented design can be characterized by the following features:

1) Clearly outlines a series of objectives which are *causally related.*
2) Outlines those objectives which are *necessary and sufficient* to achieve the next level objective.
3) Each objective is *measurable and achievable* given the constraints of the program.
4) Each objective is *measured by a series of indicators* which describe some change in the program environment of the programs' customers.[5]

Indeed, a well designed program should contain specific information that makes it easily understandable, causally structured and implementable. The general criteria for a well designed program is outlined below. A Program Design Checklist is included in Annex 1 to assist in the application of this criteria to the program RF.

Clarity of Objectives	Objectives at each of the four levels of the RF (Activities, Intermediate Results, Strategic Objectives and Goal) are clearly stated, measurable, achievable and causally related.
Causal Relationships	Objectives are related to one another causally, not sequentially. IF objectives are accomplished at one level, THEN objectives at the next level will be realized. IF those objectives are realized, THEN the next level will be achieved, etc.
Measurable and Manageable	Objectives outlined are measurable in some way (qualitatively, quantitatively, and temporally), and manageable and achievable given the constraints in which the program will operate.
Monitoring and	The means by which the program will measure the changes that occur as a results of the

[4] Because the Result Packages are developed based on the decisions made in the RF, the RP's can be developed by the OU or SO Team and will, therefore, not be included in the participatory design discussion.

[5] (ie. use, change in behavior, application of new skills or technology/equipment, etc.)

Evaluation Plan	program's objectives are clearly described and feasible.
Assessment of Assumptions	The factors that are outside of the control or influence of USAID and may affect the program objectives being realized are clearly analyzed for each level of the hierarchy of objectives.

The Results Framework is structured based on the above criteria. It outlines the "Hierarchy of Objectives" and relates them causally, it clearly describes the performance monitoring and evaluation system through the development of *Performance Indicators* and the means to verify those indicators. And, finally, it assesses the program externalities, program *Assumptions,* which lie outside of the control of the program team but which may affect program objectives. In short, the RF is a useful tool to capture the decisions made during a design process.

Process Model for Design for Results and Customer Focus

Step	Critical Stakeholders that Should be Involved	Design Issue/Question	Component of the RF	Facilitation Tools and Methods
Design for results and for the customer	Same group of: ➔ Customers ➔ Partners and ➔ Critical Affecters that was involved in step 4.	**The WHY Question:** ➔ Why are we intending to implement this development program? ➔ What impact do we hope to have? ➔ How will our success be measured?	SO and Goal	Problem Tree Analysis Objectives Tree Analysis Future Search Plot responses using Results Framework
		The WHO Question ➔ What individuals, groups or institutions are we hoping to have an pact on? ➔ What does that impact look like? ➔ How is their life and/or environment different as a result of our velopment program?	IR's, SO and Goal	Stakeholder Analysis Future Search Plot responses using Results Framework
		The HOW Question ➔ How will this impact be realized? ➔ Who will play a part in realizing the impact? ➔ What are the necessary and sufficient objectives that will result in at impact? ➔ What are the activities that will accomplish those necessary and fficient objectives?	Activities, IR's	Objective Tree Analysis Critical Path Method Work Breakdown Structure Plot responses using Results Framework and Results Packages

		The HOW MUCH Question ➔ How much change in the program environment will represent ccess? ➔ How will the progress and the achievement of program mponents, Strategic Objective and Goal be measured? ➔ What will be used to measure that progress and achievement?	Performance Indicators, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Plot responses using Results Framework
		The WHAT ELSE Question ➔ What are the external factors and conditions which we cannot ntrol but will have an influence on each level of the program objectives?	Critical Assumptions	Environmental Analysis Plot responses using Results Framework

Step 6: Validate Outcomes

The final step in the participatory design process involves acting on the design decisions the stakeholders made during the design process and communicating these actions to other customers, partners and critical affecters.

Annex 1: Sample Results Framework

Hierarchy of Objectives	Performance Indicators	Performance Monitoring System	Critical Assumptions
GOAL è A long-term development result in ific area to which the program hopes to ute and USAID has identified as an y goal. è Clearly defines a customer and nefit to that customer.	è A particular characteristic or sion used to measure the achievement of al. è Used to observe progress and to re actual results compared to expected . è Describes the quantitative, tive and temporal features of the intended e.	è An organized approach nitoring the performance of a m towards its' objectives over time. è The sources of data d to verify the status of Goal level ors.	è Conditions which are e the control or influence of USAID, hich are likely to affect the ement of the super goal. .
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE è The intended measurable change e program implementors (USAID OU and rs) can materially affect and for which it is to be held accountable. è Happens in the short term (5-8 è Clearly specifies a customer and ange in their behavior that results from the m's IR's and activities.	è A particular characteristic or sion used to measure the achievement of ategic Objective è Used to observe progress and to re actual results compared to expected . è Describes the quantitative, tive and temporal features of the intended e.	è The sources of data d to verify the status of SO level ors.	è Conditions which are e the control or influence of USAID, hich are likely to affect the ement of the Goal. .
INTERMEDIATE RESULT è A key result which must occur in o achieve the SO.	è A particular characteristic or sion used to measure the achievement of al. è Used to observe progress and to re actual results compared to expected . è Describes the quantitative, tive and temporal features of the intended e.	è The sources of data d to verify the status of IR level ors.	è Conditions which are e the control or influence of USAID, hich are likely to affect the ement of the SO.
ACTIVITY An action undertaken to help achieve a program result.			è Conditions which are e the control or influence of USAID, hich are likely to affect the ement of the IR's.

Annex 2: Quality Program Design Checklist

- The program has one Goal statement which happens over the long term, clearly describes a customer and has been identified as a specific goal of the Agency.
- The program has one Strategic Objective (SO) which clearly describes a customer and the change in the behavior and/or environment of that customer that results from the program being implemented.
- The SO is not a restatement of the Intermediate Results (IR's) but occurs as a result of the IR's.
- The SO is measurable, observable and achievable and the OU is willing to take responsibility for its achievement.
- The IR's are the *necessary and sufficient* objectives that must be realized in order for the SO to be achieved.
- The IR's are measurable, observable and achievable.
- The IR's are not simple activities but describe larger, measurable results that did not in exist in the same way prior to implementation.
- The Activities are the necessary and sufficient conditions which will achieve each particular IR.
- The Activities outline all actions that will need to take place in order to accomplish each IR.
- The relationship between each objectives level in the Hierarchy of Objectives is based on CAUSE AND EFFECT.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan outlines specific indicators, framed in qualitative, quantitative and temporal features, that specify a specific change in the environment.
- Each indicator is measurable and the information required to show indicator progress is obtainable.
- Leading indicators, which show program progress throughout the life of the program, are clearly defined.
- The M & E plan defines the sources of data and the M&E processes that will be used to verify the status of the indicators.
- The critical assumptions are clearly defined for each level of objectives and identify all external factors that may affect the realization of program objectives.

Module IV: Participatory Program Evaluation

Development programs will be successful if they are well designed, well implemented, and external risks and assumptions are stable over time. Design and implementation quality and the stability of external factors are rarely known in advance, and periodic re-alignment of these three factors is often required to maximize program success. Such management improvements are only possible if they are based on evaluative information that: (1) determines the level of program performance (success or failure in meeting or making progress toward its impact objectives); (2) identifies the reasons for that level of performance (underlying reasons for the strength / weakness of the relationship between activities and impacts); and (3) assesses the implications for the design, implementation or continuation of the program.

Limitations of External Evaluations

Traditional external evaluations are still the overwhelming norm in development work, because, in theory, they hold the promise of objectivity. There are three fundamental problems with this stance, and these are described below.

1. Evaluation is not monitoring. While monitoring seeks to discover/verify changes in indicator values related to the results in the program's hierarchy of objectives, evaluation seeks to interpret these changes.
   Monitoring is a continuous assessment of program implementation in relation to agreed amounts, schedules and quality standards, and of the use of program deliverables by reputed beneficiaries in relation to intended quantity, quality and timeliness standards envisioned in the design of the program. Monitoring provides managers and other stakeholders with continuous feedback on the state of the program and identifies problems as early as possible to facilitate timely and targeted troubleshooting - indeed, the impetus for evaluation is usually triggered by unexpected changes in indicators as reported by the monitoring system[6]. A performance monitoring plan is the program's early warning system.

[6] The reader will note that as a result of the reengineering process, evaluations are no longer mandated according to an established timetable (e.g. mid-term and end-of-project). In fact, the decision to conduct an evaluation is at the operating unit's discretion - see ADS ___.

The purpose of evaluation, on the other hand, is to interpret the causes of these variations in monitoring data (e.g. "why is this component of the program underperforming?"), and to identify the appropriate adjustments to the orientation, design and operation of the current - or potential future - program. Monitoring simply consists of comparing actual and planned performance at regular time-intervals. An evaluation, however, must select the number and specific nature of the questions to be answered; the sources of information; and the way in which these informants may respond. Further, an evaluation must decide: how the raw information gathered explains past performance and what it means for the future; how to present the findings and recommendations; and who will implement the improvement measures how and by when. These decisions - and therefore the content and outcome of the evaluation - will always be informed by the particular perspective, experience and values of the individual or group assigned to make them. Evaluation, therefore, cannot be value-neutral.

2. Independence in evaluation does not occur in practice. Even if it were, *a priori*, possible for evaluation to be objective, these independent evaluations are not so in practice, because:
   - the Agency prepares the scope of work, thereby unilaterally deciding the areas of emphasis, the investigative methodology, and the key informants;
   - the Agency has ultimate approval on selection of the external evaluator;
   - the evaluation methodology is usually exclusively a syntheses of interviews with the Agency and contractor staff; and
   - draft evaluation reports are subject to approval (and therefore modification) by the Agency[7].

In practice, therefore, external evaluations often represent subjective characterizations of program success from a narrow stakeholder base (Agency and contractor staff). To the extent that customers and partners are involved in traditional evaluations, it is only as informants and never as decision-makers or learners.

[7] Thompson (1988) found that AID project officers preferred evaluators who could "force the counterparts and the implementation team to do what the project officer thought was right". Cited in Thompson (1991).

3. External evaluations are undervalued by potential users**.** Further compounding the problem, the findings and recommendations of independent evaluations are often read and forgotten[8]. To the extent that they are used to improve the design and/or implementation of the program, managers usually choose to implement that subset of recommendations that they personally agree with. Since they only (passively) participate in the evaluation as key informants, managers often only agree with those findings or recommendations that they have themselves provided to the evaluator. From an operational use perspective, therefore, independent evaluations are of questionable value.

In summary, the objectivity sought for in traditional "independent" evaluations is not possible, does not occur in practice, and is not - in any case - desirable. It is in response to these weaknesses that participatory approaches to evaluation have begun to take root in development work around the world.

Participatory Evaluation - Rationale and Structure

Participatory evaluation is defined by shared decision-making in, and accountability for, all aspects of the exercise by program stakeholders[9]. The central idea is that evaluation should be conducted by insiders (i.e. individuals representing institutions and communities with an important stake in the program) rather than by outsiders (i.e. consultants and others that have no stake in the program being evaluated). The premise of such an approach is that since program evaluations are utilization-focused[10], they will be useful to the extent that they maximize both the validity of their findings AND stakeholders' commitment to translating evaluations' recommendations into management action (as reflected in improvements the design, implementation and/or supervision of the program). Stakeholder commitment to the use of evaluation outcomes is, in turn, predicated on the degree to which stakeholders associate the evaluation with a sense of personal and group achievement, involvement, influence, fairness and trust - "process outcomes". These process

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8 The World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department reports, for example, that a full 65% of Bank Group projects in 1995 made inadequate use of evaluation experience. Similar data exists for other international and public development organizations.

9 For key differences between external and participatory evaluations see Table 1

10 Pioneering work in defining participatory evaluation can be found in Stake's (1975, 1980) 'Responsive Evaluation', Gold's (1981, 1983) "Stakeholder-Based Evaluation", Patton's (1978) 'Utilization-Focused Evaluation', and Wholey's (1983) management-centered evaluation concept. Patton's work is especially powerful.

outcomes are in turn a result of stakeholders' participation[11] in the evaluation in a manner - "process characteristics" - that maximizes:

- agreement on the purpose and structure of the evaluation;
- shared expectation that the evaluation will yield valid and important recommendations, and that these will be translated into program improvements;
- the quality of stakeholder representation on the evaluation team;
- the empowerment of stakeholder representatives in evaluation decision-making; and
- the quality of information feedback / dissemination processes.

Table 1: Salient Differences Between External and Participatory Evaluations

	Common current evaluation practice	**Result-focused external evaluation**	**Participatory evaluation**
Evaluation Purpose	Monitoring or audit	Learning and immediate use	Learning and immediate use
Who decides to evaluate?	COTR	COTR	SOT and OU leadership
Who evaluates?	External consultants	External consultants	Program stakeholder representatives
Who develops the scope of work?	COTR	COTR	Program stakeholder representatives
Investigative Instruments	Key informant interviews; Document review	Triangulation of (single or group) interview, (external or participant) observation, and survey	Triangulation of (single or group) interview, (external or participant) observation, and (structured or open-ended) survey

11 For evidence of the strong positive relationship between participatory evaluation and use of evaluation findings, see Alkin et al., (1979); Barkdoll (1982); Bedell et al., (1985); Beyer and Trice (1982); Canadian Evaluation Society (1982); King (1985); Leviton and Hughes (1981);Siegel and Tuckel (1985); Ayers (1987) and many more.

		instruments;	instruments;
Information Sources	Emphasis on suppliers	Triangulation of customer, partner and supplier sources	Triangulation of customer, partner and supplier sources
Reporting	External evaluators report to USAID, Contractor and host government; Single format; Document.	External evaluators report to stakeholder representatives; Customized (audience-specific) Multi-media (documents, workshops, theater etc.).	Stakeholder representatives report to their constituencies; Customized (audience-specific) Multi-media.(documents, workshops, theater etc.).
Who acts on recommendations?	COTR	Primarily COTR	Relevant stakeholders

Based on an impressive accumulation of evidence from motivation theory, evaluation research and international development experience, we suggest a basic structure to participatory evaluation that captures the desirable process and methodological characteristics, promotes the desired outcomes, and maximizes stakeholder commitment to the use of evaluation products. This structure is presented below.

Table 1: Structure of Participatory Evaluation

Step	Function	Feature	Outcome
1	*Operating Unit agreement on a participatory approach to the evaluation.*	Negotiations between SO Team and OU management on the appropriateness and form of the evaluation.	An SO Team empowered to design and implement a participatory approach to evaluation with agreed-upon parameters.
2	*Creation of a stakeholder-based evaluation team*	SO Team identification of of appropriate representatives of customer, provider and partner groups and marketing the evaluation so as to ensure that they are willing to participate.	A high-quality, influential and representative evaluation team.
3	*Collaborative development*	Shared decision-making in defining the evaluation	An evaluation team committed to the purpose

	of the scope of work	questions, methodologies and timing.	and form of the evaluation exercise.
4	*Collaborative research*	Empowerment of evaluation team members through training and technical assistance in evaluation techniques; shared authority in data collection, interpretation; shared responsibility for reporting lessons learned and recommendations.	Team commitment to validity of evaluation findings and the appropriateness of its recommendations.
5	*Stakeholder implementation of evaluation recommendations*	Shared stakeholder responsibility for implementing evaluation recommendations.	Improved re-design and/or implementation of the program, and improved management of the program's environment.
6	*Feedback activities*	Thanks for the time, effort and commitment that each team member devoted to the evaluation.	Continued commitment of the stakeholder-based evaluation team to participating in future evaluation activities.

Needless to say, the degree of stakeholder commitment generated by the use of this basic structure will be determined by the quality with which the features in each step are executed. While participatory evaluations are likely to be as different as the contexts of programs they are assessing, there are nevertheless some key principles that must remain constant. These are explored in the section below.

Implementing a Participatory Evaluation

A participatory approach to evaluation is not desirable without an accompanying attention to the quality of the information that such an evaluation exercise will yield. It is, after all, worse to motivate people around invalid findings than not to motivate them at all. Participatory evaluation, however, need not make any compromises with respect to those methodological standards that will yield accurate and valid evaluative information. In fact, participatory evaluation works best when these high technical standards are maintained - and a full complement of stakeholder perspectives will often encourage the use of more rigorous protocols than would the lone COTR unilaterally developing the evaluation scope of

work. In each of the steps to participatory evaluation that are elucidated below, quality checklists for both process and content aspects of the evaluation exercise are provided.

Step 1: Operating Unit agreement on a participatory approach to the evaluation

In organizing for an evaluation, the core team is faced with two preliminary issues. The first issue is **content**-related, and concerns the extent to which the program is evaluable[12]. A program is evaluable if :

- the program's activities have been implemented in sufficient amount and over a sufficient period as to reasonably expect some intended impact [**Timing**];

- it has been designed in a such a manner as to lay out a results framework that identifies the hypothesized causal relationships between specific impacts, deliverables and activities, regulated by an equally precise set of important risks and **assumptions [Design quality**]; and

- a monitoring system exists - that parallels the results framework - and has collected baseline and subsequent trend data relating to important program indicators, and this monitoring data suggest that one or more important variables are behaving unexpectedly [**Purpose**].

Prior to determining whether an evaluation is appropriate, the Strategic Objective Team (SOT) should conduct an evaluability assessment using the checklist in Table 2. This evaluability assessment is not a trivial exercise: current Results Frameworks may lack causality, specificity of objectives, and/or articulation of assumptions. Strategic Objective plans may not have made provision for the systematic collection of indicators relating to the complete set of important factors (strategic objective, intermediate results, sub-results, assumptions) in the development hypothesis. Addressing these weaknesses is a fundamental precondition of attempting a high quality program evaluation.

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12 See JS Wholey (1979, 1987); Rutman (1984) and MF Smith (1989).

The second issue is **process-related**: several actual and perceived features of a participatory approach to evaluation are likely to raise concerns within the Operating Unit[13] (OU). Understanding and addressing these concerns is critical before embarking on a participatory evaluation. The most common of these concerns, and possible responses to them, are laid out in Table 3.

The SOT should prepare and disseminate (to OU colleagues) an articulate rationale for conducting a participatory evaluation. This rationale should describe:

- *the reason for conducting the evaluation* (refer to monitoring information about underperformance or changes in assumptions);

- *the expected relationship between stakeholder participation and the use of evaluation findings* (specify particular stakeholder groups, and the potential contribution that they could make to program improvement);

- *an explanation of what participatory evaluation is and is not* (it is shared authority and responsibility in the design, implementation and dissemination of the evaluation by specific individuals representing relevant stakeholders - it is not a particular technique such as Participatory Rural Appraisal nor is it "talking to everyone about everything");
- *the anticipated and articulated concerns about the risk, time and cost implications of participatory evaluation* (see Table 2).

At the conclusion of this stage, in order to proceed with a participatory approach to evaluation, the core team leader should gain the consent of OU leadership in the form of a memorandum detailing the time, budget and process parameters.

[13] Bureau, Office, Mission, Division or other organizational entity that is responsible for the program

Box 1: Program Evaluability Checklist

1. **Clarity**: The strategic objective, intermediate results, results and assumptions are all clearly stated, and are accompanied by indicators that each set unambiguous qualitative, quantitative and temporal targets for performance;
If not: reformulate the objectives, the indicators and the relationships between them.

2. **Causality**: Objectives at higher levels are not reformulations, or aggregations, of objectives at lower levels - i.e. the development hypothesis is not tautological, and that causal (if/then) relationships among objectives are logical and do not skip important steps;
If not: reformulate the causal relationships in the program theory

3. **Accountability**: Every objective in the results framework is associated with a responsible stakeholder individual/group/institution, and describes that stakeholder's behavior or performance;
If not: assign stakeholders to each objective and assumption

4. **Necessity & Sufficiency**: The intermediate results and the assumptions in the results framework are both necessary and sufficient conditions for the accomplishment of the strategic objective;
If not: articulate the assumptions missing from the program theory.

5. **Targeted Measurement**: The indicators measure the objective to which they are related, and not objectives at lower levels in the causal hierarchy;
If not: ensure that no gaps remain after reshuffling indicators to appropriate places.

6. **Availability of Monitoring Information**: A monitoring system is operational, and has collected (accurate) baseline and regular subsequent information for each and every indicator in the development hypothesis;
If not: establish a performance monitoring system. Evaluate later.

7. **Timing**: Sufficient time has elapsed since operationalization of the results framework as to plausibly expect some impact of activities on results; and the monitoring system indicates either that progress toward the achievement of these results is significantly above or beneath expectations, or that the assumptions in the results framework are no longer valid; and
If not: evaluate later, when trend data is known

8. **Purpose**: An evaluation is needed either to make decisions to re-orient or improve the on-going program (formative evaluation), or to make a decision about whether a follow-on project is appropriate (summative evaluation).
If not: do not evaluate.

Table 2: Addressing Operating Unit Concerns about Participatory Evaluation

Stakeholder	Concern	Possible Response
OU leadership	*STAFFING*: Who will fulfill the SO Team member's daily duties if he/she is full-time member of the evaluation team? *MONEY*: Scarce Operating Expense resources will be consumed by SO Team member travel and other expenses implied in participatory process; *TIME*: A participatory approach takes too long, and we need to obligate money before x date.	_ SO team members drawn from USAID should be prepared to fill in while their representative is conducting information-gathering activities (Step 4) in the field. _ The return on investment of OE funds (in terms of use of evaluation findings to improve program) are expected to be important; OR _ OU representative in the evaluation should be a program-funded staff member. _ There is absolutely no reason to believe that participatory evaluation take longer to implement that traditional evaluations. The two approaches differ only in the identity of evaluation team members. In any case, timing can be a parameter to be negotiated with OU leadership and be presented to the evaluation team.
SO Team Leader	*RISK*: Outside scrutiny of the program may expose me and/or my program to unfair criticism; *BIAS*: Participants in the evaluation may simply advocate their own parochial positions (both defensive and offensive) rather than acting in the interest of the program; *INTEREST*: Counterparts, other-donors will simply not be interested in being a part of the evaluation, and besides they are too busy; *CAPACITY*: Community representatives and other local stakeholders are not technically competent to participate as members of an evaluation team.	_ The advantage of participatory evaluation is that in fact it precludes all but constructive criticism. Evaluation team members participate not to disparage but to improve the program (Step 2); the OU is represented in the team (Step 2); and the evaluation is founded on objectively verifiable monitoring data (Step 1). _ There is no escape from differing perspectives. However, synthesis, consensus and validity may attained by triangulation of data sources, of data gathering methods and of analysis perspectives (Step 3). _ The evaluation team need not consist of the most senior persons in the stakeholder institutions (Step 2) but of the most useful; and involving these stakeholder representatives in the design of the evaluation scope of work (Step 3) maximizes their motivation for participating in it. _ It is probably inaccurate to assume that beneficiaries are not competent to discern patterns in their own behavior or lives, and therefore the presence or absence of a program's design or impact. AND _ It is unlikely that any team member will be fully knowledgeable abut the vast array of evaluation methods, and an evaluation specialist will be available (Step 3) to assist the team in selecting among and using data gathering methodologies.
Other SO Teams	*PRECEDENT*: If you do this now, I may be expected to do it in the future.	_ Make clear that this participatory approach to evaluation is being conducted because it is right for your program. If it is successful, other SO teams may decide to follow your example. If it fails, they will not. In any case, each SOT should be empowered and accountable for the management choices that it makes.

Step 2: Creation of a stakeholder-based evaluation team

If evaluation is a decision-oriented inquiry, the purpose of a participatory evaluation is to answer stakeholder questions about the progress of a program in order that they may make informed decisions about its future. The second step in participatory evaluation, therefore, is to identify the primary intended users of the evaluation. These intended users should form the evaluation team.

Three general guidelines should inform this identification process:

I. Evaluation team members should be drawn from the program's stakeholder groups (i.e. should represent customers, partners and suppliers). The more specific the component of the program being evaluated, the more important it is to include stakeholders specific to that particular agreement triangle;

ii. Individuals, and not organizations, use evaluation information. The formal position and authority of the individual in their stakeholder organization is only a partial guide in identifying team members. The challenge for the evaluation team leader is to identify those individuals from the stakeholder groups who are strategically located, competent, committed to the program, and assertive; and

iii. Experience suggests that there is a consistent relationship between group size and quality of participation, and the recommended optimal size for the evaluation team is 5 or 6 members.

1. Is this individual strategically located in a stakeholder/interest group? Can he/she use the evaluation information?

2. Does this individual care about the program?

3. Is this an individual to whom information makes a difference?

4. Does this individual have questions about the program that they want to have answered?

5. Can this individual devote the time required for this effort?

6. Does the evaluation team represent a balance of customer, partner and supplier interests?

Box 3: Checklist for a Team Membership Invitation

Once the potential team members have been identified, the next task is to encourage them to participate in the evaluation. This not an easy task[14]: counterparts often view evaluations as a device for serving only donor needs for control[15], and not their own needs of improving development outcomes. Their reaction, in such cases, is typically to protest that they have too much other work to do. An effective approach to maximizing their interest in participating as members of an evaluation team is send formal invitations for team membership to each identified individual that according to the outline in Box 3.

It includes:

1. the purpose of the evaluation.

2. the rationale for why that individual has been targeted for team membership.

3. the names and identifying characteristics of other individuals who have been invited for team membership.

4. the manner in which decisions relating to the design, evaluation and follow-up of the evaluation, will be reached.

5. an invitation to an evaluation team planning meeting?

14 Binnendijk (1987) found that a major characteristic of USAID evaluations has been the low level of involvement of host country counterparts in either evaluation design or implementation. She also reports low host country understanding of, and commitment to, evaluation; and that host-country counterparts do not share the same perception of evaluations as USAID staff.

15 Bamberger (1989) and OECD (1986) have found that host country counterparts and program staff perceive evaluation as an audit, which is therefore threatening.

Step 3: Collaborative development of the Scope of Work

There are two sets of important technical choices that the evaluation team has to make prior to the conduct of information-gathering activities - (a) the specific questions that the evaluation will seek to answer, and (b) the methodology by which information that may illuminate the possible answers will be gathered. Each of these are addressed in the sub-sections below.

- Do the team members want or need information to answer the question?
- Do the team members want to answer the question for themselves, rather than for someone else?
- Do the team members care about the answer to the question?
- Is it possible to bring qualitative and/or quantitative data to bear on the question?
- Is there more than possible answer to the question?
- Can the team members indicate how they would use the answer to the question?

3.a. Collaborative Selection of Evaluation Questions[16]

The team leader should convene an initial team meeting to collaboratively identify and prioritize the questions to be answered by the evaluation. This should serve to provide the participants with a taste of the participatory nature of the evaluation exercise, as well as promoting their interest in the content of the program itself. Evaluation questions are of two types: (a) what is the relationship between the deliverables of the program and the development results that those deliverables were intended to realize?; and (b) what are the implications of this relationship for the future? It is, however, often necessary to focus evaluation questions on investigating those specific issues that are perceived as particularly telling about the nature of the program-to-result relationship and its implications.

At the first team meeting, the team leader should:

- describe the budgetary resources available and other parameters for the evaluation;
- present draft criteria for the selection of evaluation questions;

16 For strong evidence on the importance of stakeholder identification of evaluation questions to subsequent implementation of recommendations, see Gold (1983), Guba and Lincoln (1981), McClintock (1987) and Patton (1978).

- gain agreement on the process by which the full set of questions should be prioritized (Delphi Technique or Multivoting - see Appendix);
- facilitate the decision-making until there is agreement on the final list of evaluative questions; and
- gain agreement from the team on the date of a second meeting to agree on evaluation methodologies.

BOX 5: Information Quality Criteria

3.b. *Collaborative Selection of Evaluation Methodologies*[17]

The team members should reconvene at a second meeting to select among data gathering methodologies and tools for each evaluation question on the prioritized list. Stakeholders will often trust evaluative information to the extent that they trust the methods by which the data is gathered. Collaborative selection of these methods is therefore an important step in generating trust and the perceived utility of the evaluation exercise. There are three methodological choices to be made:

- What are the characteristics of the evaluation **information** that we need?
- What **instruments** shall we use to generate this information?
- What **sampling** strategies are most appropriate?

In order to facilitate these choices, the team leader should hire an evaluation specialist to outline alternative methodological options (see Tables 4 & 5) to the team. Team members should use the Delphi Technique, Multivoting or some variant to select the methods to be used for each question. The evaluation consultant should:

- indicate where multiple methods may be valuable;
- keep running totals of financial and time costs of the methods selected; and
- facilitate the decision-making process until consensus on a final list of information gathering methods is reached.

- **Credibility**: information that is believable to stakeholders because it is accurate, was produced by competent & trustworthy people by the use of appropriate instruments and derived from relevant sources;
- **Practicality**: Information that is timely and has the potential to form the basis for decisions (that has explanative power).
- **Accuracy**: Information that is not flawed with errors due to sampling, collection, processing or analysis methods, and that is consistent with monitoring data.
- **Clarity**: Information that is unambiguous and understandable.
- **Balance**: Information that does not inordinately represent one point of view, value, perspective etc..(e.g. collecting only the perspective of providers).

[17] For evidence on the importance of stakeholder-perceived credibility of the information to be obtained, see Greene (1983), Krause and Howard (1973), Leviton and Hughes (1981) and Patton (1978).

Table 3: Sampling Options

Sampling Strategy	Feature
No sampling	Permits information collection from an entire population of beneficiaries, or implementors.
Probability sampling	Facilitates the collection of information that is statistically significant.
Intensity sampling	Facilitates learning from information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely, such as good performance/poor performance;
Maximum-variation sampling	Involves purposefully picking a wide range of variation on dimensions of interest to identify important common patterns that cut across variations;
Typical Case Sampling	Illustrates or highlights what is typical;
Stratified Purposeful Sampling	Illustrates the characteristics of particular subgroups of interest;
Critical Case Sampling	Permits logical (rather than statistical) generalization and maximum application of information to other cases because if its true of this one case, its likely to be true of all other cases;
Criterion Sampling	Involves picking all cases that meet some criterion of interest;
Theory-based Sampling	Involves finding examples of theoretical construct of interest (e.g. hypothesized reason for failure) so as to elaborate and examine the construct;

- **Freedom from unwanted bias**: Ensure that some unplanned or unknown factor will not biased the information that is obtained;
- **Efficiency**: Samples should be no larger than what is necessary to obtain the desired level of certainty;
- **Characteristics**: Sample should consider characteristics apparent in monitoring data, such as known incidence rates, distributions and proportions in the population;
- **Replicability**: Sampling strategies used should be identified so that other can repeat the procedure.

The team leader should make a commitment that the team's decision on the information gathering methodology is final, and explain that the next step is to gather the question-specific information.

Team members should indicate whether they will:

- personally participate in the data gathering activity,
- nominate an alternate to represent them in this activity, or
- accept the information gathered by other team members or their alternates.

The team leader should encourage all team members to choose among these three options. The team should agree on the schedule of activities for this activity. Finally, the Team Leader should summarize the decisions made so far (Questions, Methodology, Investigators and Logistics) as an Evaluation Scope of Work. This SOW should be disseminated to the evaluation team, to the SO Team and to OU management[18].

[18] Greene (1987)

Table 5: Information-Gathering Instruments

- **Content**: Does the instrument have the potential to reveal information relevant to the evaluation question being addressed?
- **Validity**:Will use of the instrument provide truthful, useful and authentic information about what it measures or records?
- **Precision**: Will the instrument yield information that is precise enough for analysis, interpretation and decision-making? Will it yield information that is too precise?
- **Norms**: Are there any official obstacles to the use of this instrument? Are these obstacles difficult to overcome without compromising the quality of information collected?
- **Non-reactivity**: Does use of the instrument adversely change what it measures and records?
- **Cost**: Can this instrument be used within the constraints of the evaluation budget?

Instrument
INTERVIEW Key Informant interviews Group interviews Village Imaging/VIPP
OBSERVATION Direct observation Participant observation
SURVEY Open-ended surveys Closed-ended surveys

Step 4. Collaborative research

4.a. Training & Technical Assistance to the Team[19]

Evaluation team members will make considered judgements on the methodologies to be used to the extent that they are aware of the nature of the choices that they face. The quality of information generated by an evaluation exercise is determined in part by the propriety of the methods used to collect it. While some methods may be very simple to understand and use, few people have a detailed grasp of the entire range of tools used in evaluations. Team member training in these methods by an evaluation specialist should be an early priority. Further, such an evaluation specialist should act as a resource to answer methodological questions and provide guidance to the evaluation team as necessary, as well as to develop interview and observation guides for use by the team as necessary.

4.b. Collection, analysis, and interpretation of information and formulation of recommendations[20]

While specific guidelines for participatory information-gathering activities vary with the methodology used, there are some general guidelines that are applicable regardless of instrument:

I. **Information relating to the higher levels** of the causal hierarchy in the programs development hypothesis **should be analyzed first**. This permits team members to make further - more focused - decisions about the kinds of questions they should be asking in the evaluation, and therefore continuously improve the quality and relevance of the evaluation [e.g. finding out why beneficiaries of IEC campaigns did not adopt safer sexual behaviors before prior to investigating whether and why the IEC provider's program was technically inadequate];

ii. It should be an established norm that informal data **interpretation should occur while the data collection activity is underway,**

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19 Where participatory evaluation has been attempted and not succeeded to the degree anticipated, a major explanatory variable has been the lack of technical assistance and/or training provided to the evaluators.

20 For evidence in support of the ideas in this section, see Hegarty & Sporn (1985); Alkin et al. (1979); Guba & lincoln (1985)

and should continue until all team members are comfortable with the interpretation of the findings. The alternative is the risk of conflict that unanticipated findings may generate.

A team meeting should be organized for formal and collaborative analysis and interpretation of the data. While data interpretation is value-laden, differences among team members are, by this stage, likely to be small. Team members have already: a) had access to monitoring data; b) collaboratively selected the questions to be answered; c) chosen the methods to be used for information gathering; and d) participated (directly, or indirectly through an alternate) in the collection of the information. This collaborative effort will have generated in each individual trust in the perspective of the other team members and in the methods used, a sense of shared interests, and confidence in the process. Further, the information gathered in each evaluation question is triangulated (i.e. customers, suppliers and partners present their own perspectives on the answer to each question), thereby increasing its *prima facie* credibility.

- **Deal with multiple and conflicting evidence**. Where the information points to different conclusions, present the alternatives rather than attempting to force-fit a single conclusion.

- **Look for confirmation and consistency with other sources of information**. Refer to previous evaluation reports, sector studies and monitoring information to confirm the validity of the interpretation;

- **Know when to stop**: Interpretation should stop with probability analysis when the team arrives at a level of certainty that it is willing to defend; with purposive analysis interpretation should stop when the team encounters redundancy or regularity.

- **Consider and cite limitations of the analysis methods used**: There are limitations to all analysis techniques, and these should be cited.

I. **Practical:** Recommendations that are obviously impractical for cost, political or other reasons should be avoided. Not only will they not be implemented, but they will cast doubt on other recommendations of the evaluation.

ii. **Actionable**: Every recommended action should be associated with the stakeholder responsible for implementing it. If that stakeholder entity is represented on the evaluation team, the representative should make public his/her commitment to it, and should take responsibility for ensuring its enactment. If the stakeholder entity is not represented on the evaluation team, a plan should be proposed for influencing the enactment of that recommendation by the missing stakeholder.

iii. **Specific**: all recommendations should be framed in terms of actions with a qualitative, quantitative and temporal dimension, so that their enactment may be monitored in the future.

iv. **Backward Linkages**. Recommendations should be explicitly linked to the findings from which they arise.

v. **Forward Linkages**. Recommendations should be explicitly linked to a resultant proposed improvement in program performance.

4.c. Reporting[21]

The evaluation team members are unlikely to constitute the entire set of decision-makers necessary for the implementation of evaluation recommendations. As a first step, therefore, it is necessary to report the findings and recommendations of the evaluation to the wider stakeholder audience.

Evaluation reporting should rarely take the form of documentation alone. The importance of the a "structural match" of information content and format to the use of evaluation results is not only intuitively plausible, but is underscored by a large body of meta-evaluation research[22]. The central principle is that reporting format should be customized to fit the characteristics of the people to whom the information is presented, and the organizational contexts to which the information is contributing. Given a multiplicity of users of evaluation information in development programs, variety, creativity and multiplicity in communicating (reporting) evaluation results (e.g. theater, workshop, oral presentations, models etc.) is important[23].

While an external facilitator is likely to be necessary for some reporting modes, it is imperative that the evaluation team members act as the principal experts and resources on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

An advantage of using a workshop format to reporting is that there is an opportunity for the exercise to conclude with agreements

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21 For the evidence on the importance of evaluation feedback characteristics, see Cousins & Leithwood (1986); Davis & Salasin (1975); Leviton & Hughes (1981); and thompson & king (1981); Stake (1986); Greene (1988)

22 Datta (1981); Cronbach & Associates (1980); Lee & Holley (1978)

23 Alkin et al (1979); Lee & Holley (1978); Weiss (1984); Cronbach & Associates (1978); Smith (1982); Nowalsky (1985); and Hendricks (1985).

between the team and the wider stakeholder group to implement the recommendations of the evaluation.

Step 5: Stakeholder enactment of evaluation recommendations

There are two types of challenges in facilitating the implementation of evaluation recommendations. Stakeholders will act if and only if they are motivated to do so (commitment issues), and they can (capacity/empowerment issues). In conducting a participatory evaluation, the OU has minimized the likelihood of motivational constraints to the enactment of recommendations, especially among the stakeholder entities represented on the evaluation team. Capacity issues, however, are not addressed by a participatory approach. The OU should be prepared to support a stakeholder's motivation to act through the provision of technical and/or financial assistance necessary to implement the recommendation. This can be accomplished by a one-day action planning meeting.

Further, the operating unit should act as coordinator for the implementation of evaluation recommendations - ensuring that each stakeholder knows, in detail, the quality, quantity and time-line of the improvements that it is expected to achieve and keeping each stakeholder up-to-date on the progress of the implementation of other stakeholders' improvement measures.

- the evaluation was **appropriate and timely** - Check against Box 1;
- the **right questions** were asked - Check against Box 4;
- the **appropriate methods** were used for information gathering and analysis - Check against Boxes 6,7,8 & 9;
- **valid answers** were produced for each evaluation question - Check against Box 5;
- **stakeholders believe the findings** - Check workshop and questionnaire responses;
- all relevant **stakeholders implement the recommendations** - Check against action plan for implementing recommendations;
- **program activities, results environment, or impacts (as relevant) improve** after implementation of the recommendations - Compare performance monitoring system data before and after the evaluation.

Step 6: Feedback activities

The evaluation team members and the institutions that they represent have spent an enormous amount of energy, time and thought in reaching findings; the suggestion of recommendations; and the lobbying for, and coordination of, the implementation of program improvement measures. The feedback mechanism seeks to recognize this effort, and the important contribution that the evaluation exercise has had on the chances of increased program impact. In so providing feedback, it serves to reinforce the commitment of the evaluation team members to participating further in the participatory management of the program throughout its life[24]. There are four audiences/mechanisms for this feedback. These are listed below and should all be used:

- **the individual team member**: communicate knowledgeable appreciation of the individual's contribution (in time, process and content terms); mechanism should include both a debrief conversation between the individual and SO Team Leader and OU Head, and a formal letter of appreciation;

- **the team as a group**: communicate appreciation for the important role that the team has played in maximizing the probability of a coordinated and considered response to the issues raised in the evaluation. Promise regular reports on progress in the implementation of recommendations, and future opportunities for the team's involvement in assuring the success of the program;

- **each team member's supervisor**: communicate the value of the team member's contribution to the evaluation effort. Thank the supervisor - both orally and by letter - for making the team member available, and (if appropriate) for agreeing to implement the recommendations arising from the evaluation; and

- **the wider stakeholder community**: disseminate - by newsletter or other public fora - the evaluation team's collective contribution to the program.

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24 Motivation and Job-enrichment theory is replete with evidence for the relationship between feedback and commitment. See, for example, Hackman and Oldham (1979).

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