

Monitoring and evaluation framework

Lessons from Nature

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October 2011

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1 Introduction

The monitoring and evaluation process of the programme Lessons from Nature is facilitated by Wageningen UR. This document describes the monitoring and evaluation approach. This approach is developed with the participation of the project team members.

Important characteristics of the monitoring and evaluation process are:

- The M&E approach has an emergent design in order to be able to respond to emergent issues.
- Reflection is an important part of the M&E process. Thus the process can become a pedagogical tool that enables participants to become more reflective about what they are doing, how they work and how they can improve the way they are working.
- The input of the partners is very important during the design of the process.
- We strive to optimally embed monitoring and evaluation activities into the project.
- An important ambition, shared by the project team and the external evaluators, is to make the evaluation meaningful, both for the project team members and for the learners.

This report is a work in progress that will evolve over time.

2 Evaluation purpose

What is the purpose of monitoring and evaluation in Lessons from Nature? How do the project team members want to use results of M&E? The main reasons for carrying out the evaluation that have been identified by the project team members are:

Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountability towards the EU. A continuous check on reaching our target. Did we deliver what we promised? ▪ To communicate changes in plan to the EU. ▪ Accountability towards our own organisations. ▪ Justify LfN to other influencers and convince officials.
Improving the process, learning from experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reflect on the process and learn from our experiences. ▪ To clarify our route and results. To check whether we are going on the right direction and change when needed: re-strategize and rethink content and processes when needed. ▪ To really know what works, how and why. ▪ To check the quality of our work. ▪ To enhance the impact of the programme and do it better next time. ▪ To challenge our thinking and assumptions. ▪ To get inspired. ▪ Looking for the unexpected.....
Sharing inspiring results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To involve teachers. ▪ To experience success, to be able to celebrate. ▪ To get more money in the future.

3 The intended use of the M&E results

Key stakeholders who will engage in the evaluation process are the project team members and the external evaluators Arjen Wals and Anne Remmerswaal.

<i>Primary intended users</i>	<i>Intended use of the M&E results</i>
Project team and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to improve the process and learn from experiences. ▪ Project team may change the programme based on results M&E. ▪ To inspire and involve teachers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountability ▪ Results M&E will have consequences for project team and partners when looking for new projects after LfN. ▪ Results can influence gatekeepers.
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountability

Other groups that may use the M&E findings are: schools, teachers, students, parents, subject bodies and boards, exam boards, school assessors, national governments, regional and local educational authorities, other NGO's, business and future funders.

4 Evaluation approach

The monitoring and evaluation process will be a combination of formative evaluation (to learn and improve the process and programme) and summative evaluation (to judge the overall value). Two important points of attention will be:

- Flexibility in the evaluation process regarding the issues addressed: open mindedness, expecting the unexpected and looking for surprise and patterns.
- Making the evaluation meaningful, both for the learners and for the project team members. Our ambition is to use evaluation methods which enhance the learning process of the pupils and teachers, and at the same time offer the project team useful and inspiring results to address the evaluation purposes as formulated in chapter 2.

5 Evaluation matrix

The evaluation matrix summarizes the implementation of the evaluation process. It is a work in progress which will develop over time.

Purpose of the evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountability towards EU and own organisations ▪ Improving the process, learning from experiences ▪ Sharing inspiring results
Key evaluation areas and questions	<p>Process Project team members are enthusiastic and excited (throughput).</p>
	<p>Effectiveness To what extent has the programme attained its intended objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A clear and simple message (output) ▪ Activities are fun, exciting, challenging and inspiring, both for students and teachers (output). ▪ Materials are used, teachers attend training (output). ▪ Process: Are we doing things right? Have the planned purposes, outputs and activities been achieved? Why or why not? To what extent has the programme attained its intended objectives?
	<p>Impact To what extent has the programme contributed towards its longer term goal: learning that contributes to the potential of societal change? Will there be continued positive impacts as a result of the programme once it has ended? Why or why not?</p>
Primary intended users and use	<p>Primary intended users Programme managers, project team members and partners, EU</p>
	<p>Intended use Project team and partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to improve the process and learn from experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team may change the programme based on results M&E. ▪ To involve teachers. ▪ Accountability towards EU. ▪ Results can influence gatekeepers. ▪ Results M&E will have consequences for project team and partners when looking for new projects after LfN.
Baseline data	Baseline research from partners.
Key information needs	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insight in the opinion of students and teachers. How do they experience the activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the message clear and simple according to students and teachers? - How do students and teachers value the Lessons from Nature activities. Are the activities exciting, challenging and inspiring. Why or why not? ▪ Number of students and teachers participating in the programme. <p>A more elaborate description can be found in the evaluation framework (chapter 6).</p>
Data gathering; Methods and sources; Responsibilities	The evaluation framework (chapter 6) describes methods of data gathering and responsibilities. Some methods of data collection still need to be defined.

6 Evaluation framework

This framework is a summary of the monitoring and evaluation process. More elaborate descriptions of different elements of the M&E process can be found in the next chapter.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK				
<i>Level</i>	<i>Subjects and questions</i>	<i>Results M&E, example indicator</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Input Societal context and issues; the means	The pressure on natural resources increases. Project partners observe the need to make significant changes in the way we live and consume, and move towards a more sustainable lifestyle. There is a growing need to promote learning that will change the way we design our economies, businesses, products and the way we live our lives.	-	-	-
Throughput Processes	Project activities, cooperation between partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do project team members co-create a common vision? ▪ How do project team members deal with identified challenges? ▪ Are project team members inspired and challenged? 	Result: Description how project team members deal with identified challenges (dynamic learning agenda). Example indicator: Project team members are able to explain LfN in 1 sentence.	Dynamic learning agenda	Anne: Facilitates sessions, coordinates <u>dynamic learning agenda</u> .
Output Deliverables: the products and direct effects of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What products have been developed? ▪ What kind of learning activities have been initiated? 	Overview		Project team members / coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A clear and simple message 	Result: The clear and simple message Example indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team members are able to explain LfN in 1 sentence. ▪ Partners wear a T-shirt with the message during 		Project team members / coordinator

		meeting 3 or 4, in this way they show the spirit of embodying the message.		
Outcomes Short term results of the output	<p>Quality of learning, motivation and satisfaction of learners and teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do they experience the activities? ▪ How are products and knowledge used by participants? ▪ Are activities embedded? ▪ Do we signal changes? ▪ Do the participants themselves observe change in themselves, in others and in the organizations and networks to which they belong? 	<p>Results: M&E activities are integrated into project activities. Reflection/evaluation as part of activities thus serves a double goal: personal reflection in order to deepen learning + production of results for M&E.</p> <p>Example indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers are able to explain LfN in 1 sentence. ▪ Social media attention. ▪ Diversity of ways in which students express Lessons from Nature 	<p>Possible method: Most Significant Change method</p> <p>How we will do this is not clear at this moment as activities are not yet developed: focus of next meeting</p>	Project team members facilitated by Arjen and Anne (advice, feedback, in between and during meetings)
	<p>Quantitative results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of educators, students and institutions involved ▪ Number of learners using the resources ▪ Number of schools/teachers taking young people outside the classroom ▪ Number of teachers involved in training ▪ Insight into social media attention 	Overview		Project team members (country coordinators) / programme coordinator
Impact Results on the long term, related to societal issue which is addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have conditions for impact been created? ▪ Will project partners continue their cooperation? ▪ Are there indicators that the results contribute to the societal issue at stake? ▪ Are there indicators that the results contribute to a societal change 	<p>Results: Not yet defined.</p> <p>Example indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other teachers, countries are enthusiastic and want to teach LfN: phone calls, questions. ▪ Social media attention continues or grows. ▪ New projects 		Final meeting

7 Dynamic learning agenda: Challenges

The dynamic learning agenda is a tool that helps to link long-term objectives to short-term concrete action perspectives by formulating the challenges that arise, recording these challenges and keeping track of them (Mierlo et al., 2010)

The dynamic learning agenda is a brief document containing the challenges that the project is facing at a certain moment. These challenges are summarised in learning questions. The agenda is a tool to support the dialogue about the challenges faced by the project. It is dynamic because it will develop over the course of the project. When a challenge is no longer relevant the associated learning question disappears from the agenda. Some question may be formulated differently over the course of the project, and new challenges will be added to the agenda.

The dynamic learning agenda will be used to stimulate reflection about the process in order to learn from experiences and to improve the process and the programme.

Proposal learning questions

1. Most teachers are not prepared for an uncertain future. With Lessons from Nature they move from certainty and predictability towards uncertainty and unpredictability, and thus lose control. Lessons from Nature implies a changing role of the teacher: towards facilitator, coach, trainer. How can we address this in the design of our activities and trainings? How can we prepare teachers to deal with uncertainty and unpredictability in a positive way?
2. How can we find the balance between being open, adaptive and experimenting on the one hand and searching for a common framework on the other hand? Project team members feel the hesitation to narrow down or to be restrictive versus a desire for a certain degree of commonness. For us the programme is an exercise in dealing with uncertainty too. How can we balance the two: 1) being open and 2) finding a common framework?
3. Framing. Choosing the right words is crucial. How can we frame our message: How can we express a message that is positive and simple, critically distinct from EE, ESD and also suits the different contexts in the six countries?
4. Can we integrate reflection in our learning activities, in such a way that it 1) enhances the learning process of the individual students and 2) serves to collect data for monitoring and evaluation? Reflection is usually skipped. Can we design the activities in such a way that we can use the results to show the expected impact of our learning activities?
5. Where do values come in? In what way will we address values in the project activities?

Approach

- The project team discusses the dynamic learning agenda in all meetings and adjusts it. Guiding questions are:
 - Which challenges have been identified?
 - How has been dealt with these challenges?
 - Did new challenges emerge?
- A discussion group is initiated on huddle. Here the challenges of the dynamic learning agenda are shared.
- Team members are asked to be alert for new emerging challenges. They can notify Richard or Anne about new challenges they observe.
- Optional: Learning questions can be posed as a thread on huddle, to discuss them in-between meetings.

Further challenges

There are other challenges that are not integrated into the dynamic learning agenda. It is advised to take these challenges into account during the process and during the design of the project activities.

- How much room do we want to create for teachers to make their own interpretation of LfN? Students may come up with new principles.
- How can we ourselves use nature as a mentor: 'When we're not sure about something we should go back to the question 'how would nature...?' Don't lose our own design principle. Keep coming back to the learning from nature principle.

- Finding the balance between hard, tangible, definable outcomes and outputs required by the EU and the emerging character of the project: a challenge for M&E

8 Integration of M&E activities into project activities

M&E activities will be integrated into project activities. Reflection/evaluation as part of activities thus serves a double goal: 1) personal reflection in order to deepen learning and 2) production of results for M&E. How we will do this is not clear at this moment as activities are not yet developed: this will be the focus of the next meeting. The Most Significant Change method is a method which may inspire us.

9 M&E activities

In between meetings

- Adjust dynamic learning agenda when needed.
- Threads on huddle to address and discuss challenges (dynamic learning agenda)
- Discuss: how can we integrate evaluation into learning activities?
- First half of November we will plan a two-week period in which team members can reflect on the process, guided by a set of questions. The feedback will be collected and used as input for meeting 3.

Next meeting: monitoring and evaluation

1. Collective reflection on process:
 - Is everybody enthusiastic, inspired?
 - Did unexpected things emerge?
 - Common vision?
 - How has nature inspired us the last months? How can nature inspire us during the process?
2. Reflect on dynamic learning agenda.
3. How can we integrate evaluation into learning activities?