

MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS

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Summary

This fact sheet is an overview of the monitoring and evaluation process. It outlines why you need to monitor and evaluate community plans, what is the purpose of monitoring and evaluation, who is involved and how it benefits your planning projects and helps you achieve your community's goals.

Keywords: community engagement, reporting back, collecting data, analyzing data, managing the process

What is Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation is a process that helps track and assess the implementation and results of your community's planning projects and decisions, by gathering data and information to evaluate their effectiveness.

Monitoring is the fourth stage in the planning cycle. This step is not the end of the process because planning is a continuous cycle. The results of your monitoring and evaluation will inform changes to your plan and how it will be implemented.

Monitoring is integral to evaluation. During an evaluation, information from previous monitoring processes is used to understand the ways in which the project or program developed and stimulated change.

Why Monitor and Evaluate Your Projects?

Some key reasons are to demonstrate the project's outputs or successes to the community and partners, and to provide data towards the overall understanding of the benefits of your project. It also allows for an **adaptive management approach** to current and future planning projects.

Adaptive Management Approach

The process of exploring alternate ways to meet the objectives based on your project's assessment and reporting.

Monitoring and evaluation plays a key role in the long-term success of planning. It can demonstrate what is going right, what is going wrong, and what needs to be improved. It can also demonstrate your past successful projects and encourage confidence in the planning team's ability to deliver future successful projects.

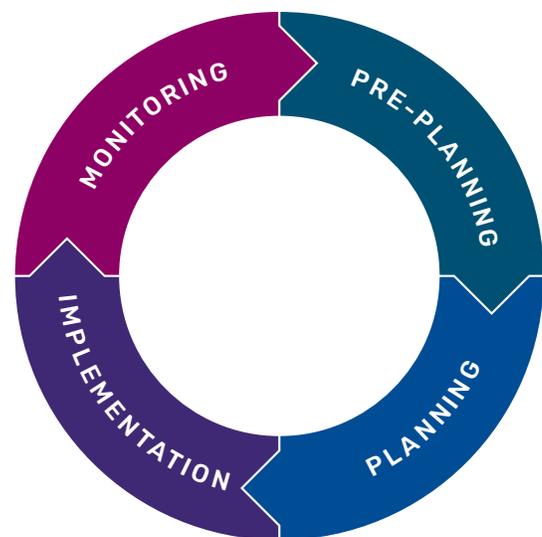


Figure 1 | The planning cycle.

Adapted from (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada / Indigenous Services Canada. "CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia, Third Edition." 2013. Accessed November 17, 2019, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb2013_1378922610124_eng.pdf, p. 14.) Used with permission.

Monitoring

A periodically recurring process that begins during the planning stage of a project or program. Monitoring allows results, procedures and experiences to be documented and used as a basis to guide decision-making and processes. Monitoring checks the progress against plans. The information learned through monitoring is used for evaluation.¹

Evaluation

A process that assesses, as objectively as possible, how well a completed project or program (or a completed phase of an ongoing project or program) is achieving the community’s plan. The results from an evaluation inform strategic decisions, improving the project or program in the future.²

What Are the Steps in Monitoring and Evaluation?

1 Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

A monitoring and evaluation plan should be part of the initial project planning. When setting your vision, goals and action plan, factor in when you want to check-in on the progress and consider how long this will take. Having this established beforehand will hold everyone accountable to the success of the project.

2 Monitoring

Monitoring can be completed at set intervals, such as weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. This should be outlined and scheduled within the plan and the frequency should be determined by the length of the implementation. All monitoring should be documented as this will inform the evaluation process.

3 Evaluation

Evaluation takes place at the completion of the project or program, or a project phase. This should be outlined and scheduled within the plan. Evaluation frequency should be determined by whether there is an end date or the project or program is ongoing.

At the end of the project, conduct a rigorous analysis of how well the objectives and activities went and if your goals have been met.³

4 Report Results to Community and Stakeholders

When your evaluation is finished, a report is completed, and you can share the lessons learned with the community and other stakeholders.

5 Make Changes and Learn Lessons

The next step is to address any changes needed to the existing plan, and consider how the results can inform other ongoing or new projects or programs.⁴

Table 1 | Comparison Chart.

Adapted from (Surbhi, S. "Difference Between Monitoring and Evaluation." *Key Differences*. 2017. Accessed January 8, 2020, <https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-monitoring-and-evaluation.html>)

	Monitoring	Evaluating
Meaning	A routine examination of the activities and processes of a community plan during the implementation phase	A process used to analyze the effectiveness of a project at its completion or at the end of a project phase
Related to	Observation	Judgement
Occurs at	Operational Level	Management Level
Process	Short term and Continuous	Long term and Periodically
Focuses on	Improving efficiency	Improving effectiveness
Completed by	Internal staff, Lands Manager, Chief and Council	Internal management, Lands Manager, Chief and Council, Independent committee

Reasons for Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Make sure your projects are benefiting the community.
- Assess the implementation of a comprehensive community plan.
- Make needed revisions and modifications so your goals and objectives remain relevant and current.
- Inform and excite your community about project results.⁵

Examples of Tools to Keep Projects on Track

1. **Establishing a baseline:** The information and data gathered prior to the implementation stage of a project. It is important to gather this information, it can be used for comparison in assessing the program's effectiveness.⁷
2. **Key performance indicators (KPIs):** A measurement tool that can help determine if your community's planning decisions are achieving the key objectives.
3. **Logic models:** Charts that can help you visualize your planning project. A logic model identifies inputs, audience, activities, outcomes and impacts.
4. **SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats):** Can be used to evaluate a community plan or project by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

What Are You Monitoring?

Monitoring should focus on demonstrating if the project or program inputs and outputs have been achieved.⁶ If things are not going according to plan, monitoring can help project or program staff identify and solve problems quickly.

What Are You Evaluating?

Evaluation should focus on how well the objectives were achieved. An evaluation asks whether a project or program has achieved what it set out to do, and if it is making a difference.

Some questions you can ask are:

- Were there any problems or setbacks during the implementation process?
- What parts of the project went well, and can these strategies be used in other projects?
- Did anything from the plan change over time?
- Are the results what was planned?
- Is the project delivering what it had intended to?

For more information on monitoring and evaluation tools, see the *Understanding KPIs, Using Logic Models for Program Evaluation, and SWOT Analysis* fact sheets.



Figure 2 | Groups of people to include in the process.

Who Should Be Involved in the Process?

Feedback is a major component of evaluating a community plan. Everyone in the community plays a part when reviewing projects. It is important to make sure that voices are heard when things need improving and when there is praise for its success.

Members of the planning team, the Lands Manager, and community members living on- and off-reserve should be involved in the process. This may also include students, Elders, band administration, teachers, and Chief and Council.

Who Will Conduct the Monitoring and Evaluation Process?

Monitoring is regularly carried out by project or program staff, management and the Lands Manager as they are closer to the project and can be on hand to observe the stages.

An evaluation committee can be formed during the planning stage. The committee can be the project staff and management, the Lands Manager, Chief and Council, an external agency, or any combination of the four. External agencies can provide the technical knowhow and are independent to the project. However, using your project staff will build their own knowledge capacity and sense of ownership over the results.

Keeping the community involved will help encourage support and foster their investment in the plan's outcomes.⁸

Engaging the Community

Community members should participate in monitoring and evaluation of work plans. They can provide comments and constructive criticism. Engaging the community will ensure that community members voices are heard, and they can help determine if the project continues to align with community goals and needs.

Some ways to engage the community and encourage participation are:

- Community meetings
- Home visits
- Focus groups
- Open houses
- Surveys
- Newsletters
- Website
- Social media (ex: Facebook)⁹

For more information on community participation and engagement, see the *Engaging Your Community and Using Videos for Plan Implementation* fact sheets.

When Should You Monitor and Evaluate?

Depending on the length of time of your project, monitoring and evaluating can be done at milestones during the implementation process or on an annual basis. The implementation committee should create reports on the monitoring and evaluation findings for council, administration and the entire community.¹⁰ This will help keep the project on track and identify if there is a need to update stakeholders or for seek additional funding or supports.

How to Know When

The size and scale of the project will determine when you will conduct your monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation process should be included in your project's schedule with a date and should be assigned to a person or department.

Example

If your project will take a year from start to finish, an appropriate time to monitor could be at the fourth and eighth month with the evaluation taking place at the twelfth month.

Determining Your Capacity

Your community may not have the capacity to monitor all projects. It is important to prioritize what projects will get monitored. Monitoring will take time and resources so you will want to determine what projects you want to assess; over what time period; and if the ongoing project needs monitoring or an evaluation at the end of the project.

What are some types of evaluation?

1 Implementation

A process of tracking and documenting the implementation of a plan decision. Your report will describe the actions that were proposed and undertaken to implement the project. The report should document actions that were completed and what is still needed to continue the implementation of the project.

2 Effectiveness

You can collect data to determine if the desired outcomes of the implemented project are being met. This requires the development of indicators of changes, thresholds, and time frames.

3 Plan Evaluation

Review of the planning decision and preparation of a monitoring report. This report will determine if your plan decision(s) are still relevant and useful. The evaluation report should be done approximately every five years.¹¹

Final Thoughts

Successful planning needs to be responsive to change. Your planning decisions should be framed in a way to allow your improvements. With new technology or new information, planning decisions may need to be adjusted to incorporate changes.

Monitoring and evaluating your planning decisions is a continuous cycle.

Monitoring and evaluating your planning decisions is a continuous cycle. It will help you assess the progress and measure the effectiveness of the plan, and it supports formal plan review and renewal.

Further Reading

Evaluating Indigenous Programs: A Toolkit for Change by Sara Hudson

This is an in-depth report on program evaluation from an Australian Indigenous perspective. It calls for evaluation programs rooted in Indigenous values, and advice to keep up-to-date with research about good evaluation techniques.

<https://www.cis.org.au/app/uploads/2017/06/rr28.pdf>

Monitoring and Evaluation for Sustainable Communities by School of Geography and the Environment

This is a step-by-step guide to understanding monitoring and evaluation processes. It is a resource on climate change and energy written for community led projects. This resource is informative on the who, what, where and when aspects of monitoring and evaluating small to large projects.

<https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/technologies/projects/mesc/guide-to-monitoring-and-evaluation-v1-march2014.pdf>

Endnotes

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ESTABLISHING BASELINES

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Summary

This fact sheet explains how to establish a set of baseline data to use as an evaluation tool. Baseline data is an important part of evaluation as it gives you a 'before picture' of what you are measuring.

Keywords: collecting data, managing/storing data

What Is a Baseline?

An important part of any plan or program is the process of evaluating your progress. Through evaluation, you are able to judge whether your plan has been a success or not.¹

Evaluation is often thought of as the last step in the process. However, it is important to think about evaluation from the start in order to conduct one properly.²

A key part of the evaluation process is gathering baseline data.³ The baseline data will let you make before and after comparisons. Unlike data that is gathered to measure the

The baseline data will give you a 'before picture' of your community to compare with after plan implementation.

success of your plan, baseline data is gathered before the plan has been implemented. Gathering the data at the beginning of the project allows you to compare any future data to the baseline data.⁴ Making these comparisons allows you to see how the plan has helped to change things in your community.

Why Is Establishing a Baseline Important?

It is important to evaluate your plan regularly to know whether it needs to be updated.⁶ Establishing a baseline is the first step to evaluate whether your community plan has been successful or not.⁵

The baseline data helps you begin to measure how your plan is able to help you achieve goals. The baseline data will give you a 'before picture' of your community to compare with after plan implementation. Without this data, it is difficult to measure the changes that occur after your plan is implemented.

Example

One of the goals of Community ABC's plan is to protect community water supplies so that the quality or quantity of potable water is not compromised.

To measure how effective the plan is, you would want to take samples of the water. It would be important to take water samples from a variety of locations and to make sure each one is clearly labeled.

The quality of the water samples would then be tested onsite or sent to a laboratory. You would need to gather samples for testing at regular intervals (e.g., once a year, or possibly once a season). You will be able to see how the water quality has changed over time by comparing the new water samples to the first water samples you collected.

In this example, the baseline data would be the first water samples that were gathered.

What Is Evaluation and Why Is it Important?

There are four processes involved with land use planning. These are pre-planning, planning, implementation, and evaluation.⁷ Each of these processes should be applied when creating a community or land use plan. As you can see in Figure 1, the manner of moving through these processes is a cycle and continues to circle back to the beginning.⁸ The cyclical nature of the planning process is important because it ensures that the feedback that is gathered is being incorporated into the plan at each step along the way.⁹

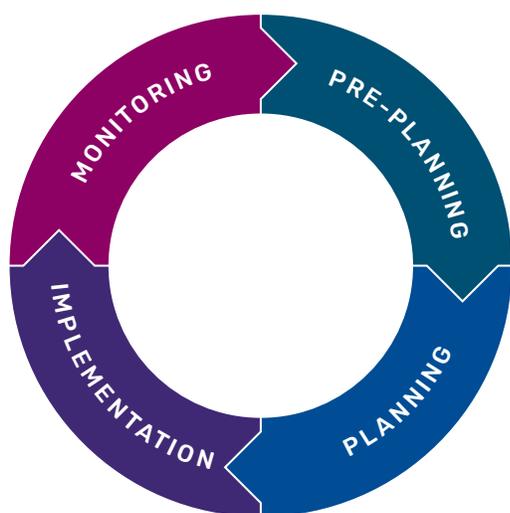


Figure 1 | Diagram of the planning process.

Adapted from (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada / Indigenous Services Canada. "CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia, Third Edition." 2013. Accessed October 24, 2016. http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb2013_1378922610124_eng.pdf. p. 14.) Used with permission.

The process of evaluating a plan consists mainly of gathering data to determine whether your plan is accomplishing what you intended it to accomplish. It is often assumed that this step is something that comes after you have created and implemented your plan. However, the evaluation process should be started as soon as you begin creating your community or land use plan.¹⁰

One way to do this is to establish early on what your process for evaluation is going to be. This includes determining what the goals of the plan are and how you are going to measure your success when considering those specific goals.¹¹

For more information on evaluation and measuring your success, see the *Monitoring Your Progress, Setting Goals and Objectives*, and *Using Logic Models for Program Evaluation* fact sheets.

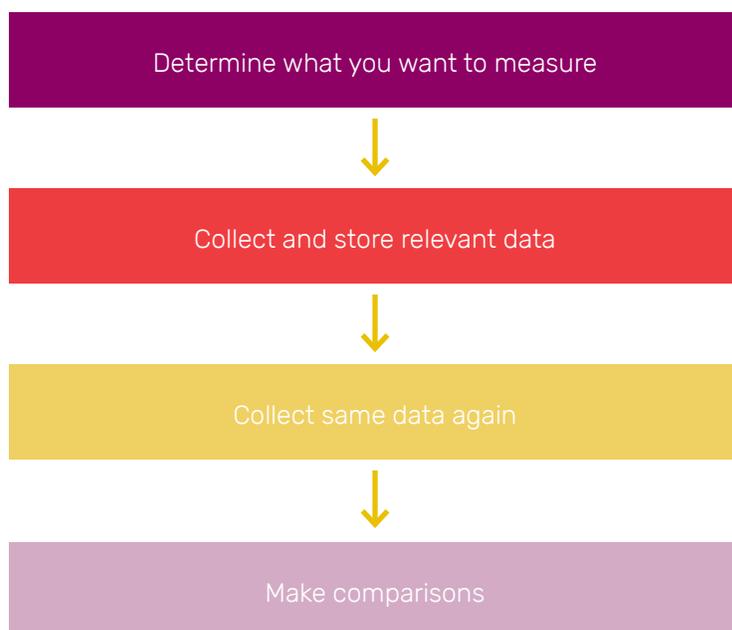


Figure 2 | This diagram outlines the steps that you can follow when establishing baseline data.

How Do You Establish a Baseline?

To establish a baseline you must first determine how you will measure the different parts of your plan.¹² For example, if one part of your plan is focused on housing, you might want to measure how many new houses are completed within a 5-year period. The baseline data for this measurement would be how many houses are present in the community before the plan is implemented.

Part of creating a baseline is collecting, organizing, and storing information that can be used later when you are collecting new data. It is important that the data you collect to establish your baseline is gathered in the same way that data will be gathered after the plan is in place.

Who collects the baseline data depends on what sort of data you are searching for. Some technical data, such as water or soil quality, will need to be gathered by experts. However, there is a lot of data that you can gather on your own. This data includes such things as surveying members on a variety of issues, counts of housing stock and repair, as well as number of students who are registered or graduating each year.

Baseline data often includes things that you can count or measure, such as the number of houses or size in metres.¹³ However, it can also include opinions and attitudes. For example, you might want to know how members feel about the community before and after your community plan is implemented. One way to find this information would be to give members a survey that asks their opinions on different aspects of the community. This would be the baseline data.

You can then give the same survey again a few years after the plan has been implemented to see if members' feelings about the community have changed. It is important to know this information as you will need community buy-in when implementing your new community plan. By comparing the new survey results to the baseline data, you will know if there are any parts of the plan that the community members do not support.

Process/Example

1 Quantitative

Community XYZ is writing their community plan. They have gathered feedback from the community members who have stated that one of their goals is to protect the natural resources on their reserve lands and traditional territories.

One of the first steps toward this goal would be to have an accurate understanding of the current state of the natural resources in the area. To do this, the community uses drone technology and land survey techniques to create a map of the various natural resources on their land. The data collected through these methods, as well as the maps, are the baseline data that all future data will be compared to.

When new data is collected, it is important that it is collected in the same way as the baseline data so that an accurate comparison can be made.

QUANTITATIVE DATA



An amount of something:
5 people

QUALITATIVE DATA



People's comments:
"I think that..."

Figure 3 | Example of quantitative data compared to qualitative data.

Examples of Baseline Data to Collect

Health + Wellness

- # of members treated in the community
- State of repair of health facilities
- # of members served by wellness programs
- Are members satisfied with service?

Education

- # of students registered in each school year
- # of graduates each year
- State of repair of educational facilities

Economic Development

- # of businesses in the community
- Revenue from businesses
- # of members employed
- Average income levels

Culture + Language

- # of people who speak the local language
- # of programs offering language training
- # of programs offering cultural opportunities

Housing

- # of members living in the community
- # of residences in need of repair
- # of members in need of housing

Environment

- Level of pollutants in the water or soil
- # of days per year with boil water advisory

2 Qualitative

Community XYZ members have identified that one of the goals of their community plan is to offer more effective healthcare programming. It is possible to measure this goal using quantitative data. An example of quantitative data is the number of members served by a program. Another example of quantitative data is the amount of money invested in the programming.

However, it is also helpful to have qualitative data. An example of qualitative data is feedback from members regarding what they think about the effectiveness of the healthcare programming. This type of data focuses on what people think and feel about the programming that is offered.

Qualitative data like this can be collected through workshops, town hall meetings, or surveys. Depending on how you gather the information, it can be recorded using scales, graphs, or by grouping quotes from members into themes.

Whichever method you choose, you should use the same method when you go back to collect data again after the plan has been implemented.

Final Thoughts

Evaluation of a community or land use plan is an essential part of the planning process. To ensure that the evaluation is effective, it is important to set up a system for evaluation when you first begin to create your plan.

Part of this system is collecting baseline data, which you can use later for comparisons. This baseline data allows you to judge whether you plan has been successful at achieving the goals it is intended to achieve.

Further Reading

BC First Nations Land Use Planning Effective Practices: A guide prepared for the New Relationship Trust

by Ecotrust Canada

This guide gives an overview of each of the four planning stages and the various steps necessary to complete each stage. The solutions given are specific to the First Nations planning context. <http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/land-use-planning-report.pdf>

Gaining Momentum: Sharing 96 Best Practices of First Nations Comprehensive Community Planning

by Jeff Cook

The 96 best practices shared in the guide follow the four planning stages and offer solutions used by First Nations from across Canada. <http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/comprehensive-community-planning-long-version.pdf>

Endnotes

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UNDERSTANDING KPIS

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Summary

This fact sheet explains what key performance indicators (KPIs) are, how they are used, and why they are helpful for evaluating any community planning process. The final goal of this guide is to provide a general understanding of this project management tool and its application in an Indigenous planning context.

Keywords: reporting back, managing the process

What are Key Performance Indicators?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are a measurement tool that was established by the Project Management Institute (PMI), to determine how effectively a company or organization is achieving a key objective.

This tool can be used in planning work to evaluate a process by engaging the community in the planning process. The community plays an important role in setting and checking KPIs, as they can incorporate traditional knowledge to evaluate planning endeavours such as a Comprehensive Community Plan or Land Use Plan process.

By setting achievable and measurable KPIs, the entire community will be able to track and evaluate the planning process. Additionally, the community will be able to push for improvements in the planning process.

KPIs offer the opportunity for Indigenous communities to be the guardians of any planning process they are working on, as they can track, evaluate and change any aspect of the planning process. By setting clear KPIs, your community will be able to identify problems or delays in any particular aspect of the planning process¹.



Figure 1 | Key Performance Indicators KPIs.

Source: Parmenter, David. "Key Performance Indicators Developing Implementing and Using Winning KPIs." 2015.

Key Performance Indicators

A measurable value that shows how effectively a community is achieving key planning objectives.

Why Should a Community Create KPis?

Any new journey is difficult to start, understand, evaluate and achieve. The same can be said for planning, as it has can require professional expertise and funding, and usually has time restrictions. These factors can make achieving your final goals difficult. Keep in mind that all planning processes open a door for communities to achieve self-determination and self-governance. This can create investment and new opportunities for current and future generations.



Figure 2 | Planning Process & KPis
 Source: Created by Mogollon, Felipe. "Planning Process & KPis." 2019.

The purpose of using KPis is to provide meaningful answers about work progress over a set period. Communities must identify the projects and goals that are most meaningful to them². KPis are a tool that can help communities identify and measure their priorities, keeping the planning process on track. KPis will indicate how well the planning process is going and what has been achieved.

Communities can use key performance indicators during the planning process to evaluate their success at reaching targets.

KPis are an evaluation tool that will empower the community in the planning process. KPis act as guardians between members of the community and the planning team³. Through KPis, the community will evaluate and provide new ideas that will enrich the planning process.

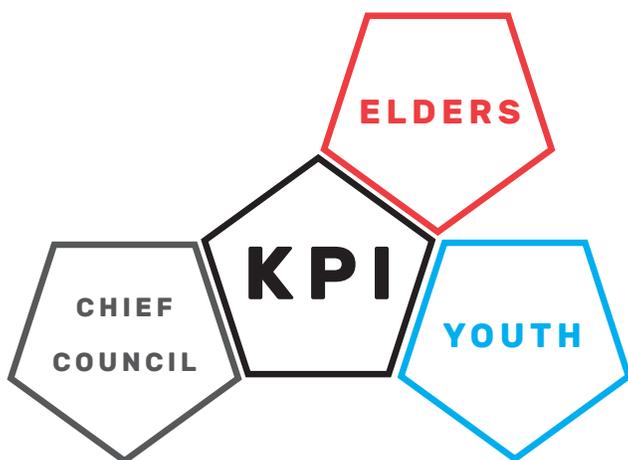


Figure 3 | Who sets KPis?
 Source: Created by Mogollon, Felipe. "KPI Stakeholders." 2019.

Who sets KPis?

If the planning team wants to increase community involvement, their community could set the KPis and monitor them. Chief and Council, Elders, and youth are also important actors, as they can be the facilitators to create and evaluate KPis.

KPI is an excellent way to involve community members to create, control and follow up the planning process of their community.

What Are Characteristics of KPis?

In Figure 4, the common characteristics of KPis are outlined. Keep these 7 characteristics in mind while creating KPis. KPis are considered a form of communication. Therefore KPis should be clear, direct, and expressed in few words.

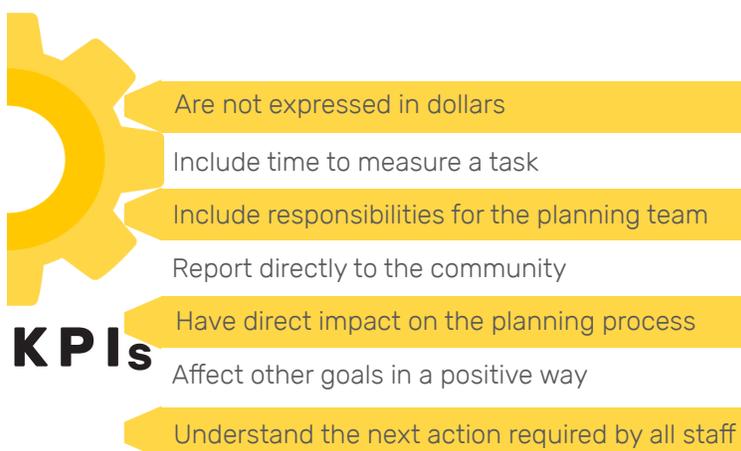


Figure 4 | Characteristics of KPis.
 Source Parmenter, David. "Key Performance Indicators Developing Implementing and Using Winning KPis." 2015.

What Makes a KPI Effective?

To create effective KPis the community should start with a basic understanding of what a planning process is, the people and resources that are needed, community objectives and traditions that should be included, and the time frame.

To answer some of these questions, the entire community could start a process that involves an open conversation about planning in the community. The process should be cyclical over time. Community members and Chief and Council must work together to create measurable KPis that respond to community needs and keep the planning process on track.

To create effective KPis the community should start with a basic understanding of a what planning process is, and what involves.

How to Create KPIS?

Keep in mind that KPIS exist to help you evaluate and achieve specific goals of the planning process. These four questions are here to help you organize your ideas to create measurable KPIS.

- 1 Where are we today?
- 2 Where will we end up?
- 3 Why is this process important?
- 4 How can we get there in a cost-effective and high-quality way?

By answering these four questions, the community will be able to realize the main goal of their project, evaluate where they are, and if necessary, make changes to achieve their goal.⁴

KPIS are a tool that can change and adapt over time. Figure 2 shows the four basic steps of any KPI.

1. Identify: The community identifies a possible KPI that could apply to the evaluation of the planning process.
2. Define: The community and the planning team agree to set a KPI on a goal that is measurable and achievable during a set period of time.
3. Work: The planning team works together with the community to achieve that goal.
4. Review: The community evaluates the goal while the planning team works on the planning process.

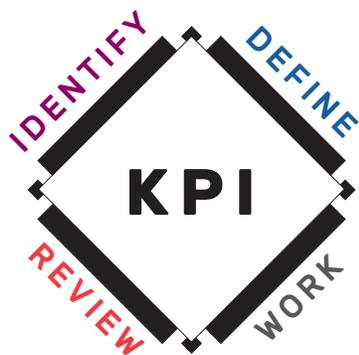


Figure 5 | Process of setting KPIS.

Source (Weaver, J. "What is a KPI Report & How do I create one?" KPI, November 7, 2018, <https://www.clearpointstrategy.com/what-is-a-kpi-report-how-do-i-create-one>. 2015.)

What Are KPIS in the Planning World?

Here are some examples of KPI topics that might be useful to consider as you create your own:

- Project team morale or performance
- Availability of the planning team
- Customer service of the planning team
- Time management of the planning team
- # of people that attended a community engagement meeting

What are KPIS in an Indigenous Context?

KPIS have been used by Indigenous communities and organizations in the past. Here are two examples:

Curve Lake First Nation found that KPIS are a good way to determine if a business is successful or not. They found that by setting clear and measurable KPIS, they were able to report and monitor business success. In fact, KPIS helped them to provide a clear report to stakeholders like Chief & Council, and the Economic Development Committee. Some of the metrics they used included net profit, number of units sold, profit margin, and number of customers.⁵

The **Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada (ATAC)** established a five year plan with four KPIS pillars to measure their overall performance. These are Development, Marketing, Partnerships, and Leadership. This plan is designed to overcome barriers and maximize opportunities. This allows ATAC to achieve its targets and establish Aboriginal tourism as a distinctive segment of Canada's tourism industry⁶.

Final Thoughts

The best KPIS allow a community to feel ownership over its planning process. KPIS encourage you to reflect on the past, present, and future of planning projects. You and your community can identify your biggest goals and break them down into manageable, measurable steps. You gain control over making your dreams into reality.

Further Reading

KPI For Dummies by Bernard Marr

This book is one of the most important resources for professionals in understanding KPIS. It has easy and engaging language, that shows how to create KPIS, what to do and what to avoid, and how to evaluate KPIS.

Key Performance Indicators: Developing Implementing and Using Winning KPIS by David Parmenter

This book provides many approaches to creating KPIS, and includes tools, checklists, and examples that help the reader to understand how KPIS help organizations to create metrics that measure their performance.

Endnotes

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- 6 Aboriginal Tourist Association of Canada (ATAC), "2017-18 Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada Action Plan", Aboriginal Tourist Association of Canada (ATAC), Accessed January 20, 2019 <https://indigenoustourism.ca/corporate/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Overview-ATAC-2017-18-Annual-Plan-1.pdf+&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca>, p. 1.

USING LOGIC MODELS FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

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Summary

This fact sheet discusses what logic models are and how they can help you organize what you have done so far and evaluate whether you are meeting your goals.

Keywords: reporting back, managing the process, analyzing data, communication tools, direction setting

What Is Program Evaluation?

Program evaluation is an organized way to understand the impacts of plans after the plans have been set in motion. You compare your original goals, objectives, and strategies with what is happening now. You can learn about what worked and what needs improvement.

It is very important to learn if your plans are working effectively. Organizations spend a lot of time, money, and other resources on planning for improvement and change. You may also need to do evaluation in order to secure or maintain funding. You need to know if you have used your resources effectively and if your ideas were appropriate.

Through evaluation, you can decide to continue with your plans or make adjustments to help your plans work better. Evaluations help to uncover problems and give you a chance to correct them. Evaluations may also help you learn new things about how your situation is changing. This enables you to serve these needs better.

When Do We Perform an Evaluation?

Ideally, you should perform evaluations on a regular schedule after allowing some time to implement plans. For example, some organizations like to evaluate their programs every 5 years.

You may also perform an evaluation if something is going wrong and needs to be addressed right away. Evaluations that are prompted by neglected problems are often disruptive to an organization or band, and may be costly.



Figure 1 | A planning team meets.

Source (USEPA Environmental Protection Agency. "Local, state, regional, and federal stakeholders work together in planning the future farmers markets and downtown," *Wikimedia Commons*. June 26, 2015. Accessed June 21, 2020. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Local,_state,_regional,_and_federal_stakeholders_work_together_in_planning_the_future_farmers_markets_and_downtown._\(19153622646\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Local,_state,_regional,_and_federal_stakeholders_work_together_in_planning_the_future_farmers_markets_and_downtown._(19153622646).jpg))

Who Can Do Program Evaluations?

Any organization can do program evaluation. Your leadership may call for a program evaluation to learn more about how their projects are doing. They may conduct one on their own or they may hire someone to do it.

What Is a Logic Model?

One way to evaluate a program is through a logic model. A logic model helps you to understand change through systematically thinking about your goals and projects. You can see how each step leads to the next step. The model is an opportunity to think about your project’s many interdependent parts.

Parts of a Logic Model

Inputs: What resources do you need to start and run the project?

Audience: Who is the project intended to reach? What might they need or like?

Activities: What are the tasks of the project?

Outcomes: What are the direct results of the project?

Impacts: What are the long-term effects of your project?

You start by identifying your inputs and your audience. You connect your inputs and audience to specific activities. From looking at the activities, you list your outcomes. Finally, you can identify your impacts.

A logic model can also help you understand that you have different levels of control over different parts of your project. For example, you may have more control over your inputs, activities and outputs. You have less control over your audience and impacts.

Example

A good example for understanding a logic model is evaluating the process of preparing a meal. When following a logic model, try to think about both broad aspects and small supporting details. Sometimes the smallest details have the biggest impact!

Below, you can think about evaluation questions for the different stages of meal preparation.

1. What are the *inputs* for a meal?
This could include food ingredients as well as pots and pans, and even the kitchen itself.
2. Who is the *audience*?
Who are you making the meal for? Friends? Family? An honoured guest?
3. What *activities* go into preparing the meal?
Shopping, chopping, and cleaning up are all good answers.
4. What are the *outcomes* of preparing this meal?
You might say that people are fed, and that you used food resources, energy, and water to cook.
5. What are the *impacts* of preparing the meal?
Perhaps you saved money, or had a healthier meal than you could get at a restaurant. Sharing your meal might help to build community.

Table 1 | Logic model framework example — making a meal.

Goal: Make a Meal				
More Control			Less Control	
Inputs	Activities	Audience	Outcomes	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working stove, refrigerator, & sink, • A knife and cutting board, • Pots, pans, utensils, plates, cups • Knowledge of what people like to eat, • Recipes, • A trip to the store, • Money to buy food, • Food ingredients, • A dining area, • Soap and dishrags for cleaning up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to and from the store, • Choose foods and pay for them, • Read and follow recipe, • Prepare ingredients by chopping vegetables, beating eggs, etc., • Heat food, • Clean up the kitchen, • Serve portions, • Pack leftovers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your friends and family, • Ticketholders at an event, • Unexpected visitors, • An honoured guest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your guests satisfy their hunger, • You use some water and energy resources, • You produce some kitchen scraps and emptied food packages, • There are leftovers for tomorrow, • A gathering occurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You practice your cooking skills or learn new ones, • You participate in the local economy, • Your kitchen scraps end up in a landfill or a compost pile, • Your guests build relationships or make new ones, • You make more plans for another dinner party

What Resources Are Needed?

Building a logic model is an important task that requires some specific resources. The most important resource is *time*. It may take more than one meeting to complete and analyze a logic model. You might choose to have recurring meetings over a few weeks, set aside a few focused days, or even opt for a weekend retreat. A team approach is best. The team should involve dedicated people who are involved in the project. Include people who are able to be fair and objective about the project under evaluation. Keep in mind that this may be an uncomfortable process at times, but the key is to use the process as a learning experience and an opportunity to discover solutions.

Tips for Holding Meetings

- Hold the meetings in a place that is accessible to everyone.
- The meeting room should seat everyone comfortably.
- Build a collection of office supplies for recording ideas and keep it together in a safe but easy-to-reach place.
- Have something to write on that everyone can see. You may use a large pad of drawing paper with an easel or a whiteboard on the wall.
- Bring markers or dry-erase markers and sticky notes.
- Ensure that everyone has a pad and pens/pencils to write down ideas.
- Be ready to take photos of, or record anything that will be erased from a whiteboard.
- A projector that can connect to a laptop may also be helpful.
- Light refreshments are always welcome!

Before beginning, it is very important to gather all relevant information about the project, from the early stages to the current state of things. Both positive and negative feedback about the project should be included. Share this knowledge with everyone on the team, so that everyone can begin at the same place.

Create a schedule for the logic model process. At the beginning of each meeting, briefly review the last meeting so that you stay on track. Have someone take notes for the meetings, and keep their notes in a safe place with the other meeting equipment. You may want to have people take turns, or you may want the same person to take notes each time.

How Do We Succeed at Evaluation?

It is important to be patient and realistic about how much time is needed to evaluate a project. Evaluation works best if it is well-organized from the start. Being organized helps the team to use time wisely. Clear communication among the evaluation team is very important.

For the most thorough evaluation, the project will be examined closely. Team members must be honest about a project's strengths and weaknesses. Teams may need to resolve conflicts and disagreements. Remind everyone of the common goal. Be creative and be caring about people's concerns. Remember that the goal is to make things better and to learn new things about the best way to help.

Most of all, evaluations should happen on a regular schedule, whether it is annually, every five years, or some other timeline that people agree upon. Do not go too long between evaluations. Problems may be brewing, and you will not be aware of them until they become difficult or expensive to fix. Regular evaluation catches problems early. The goal is to be pro-active, not re-active!

For more information on evaluation, see the *Establishing Baselines* and *Understanding KPI's* factsheets.

Final Thoughts

Evaluation is the link between the end and the beginning of a project. Evaluation teaches you important lessons about your work, and helps you to make your future work better. It helps you to see the impact of what you have been doing and makes you feel good about your impacts. You can also learn to face your challenges and develop solutions.

Evaluation can also show you when you need to ask for help. By studying and measuring your outcomes, you can make sure that you use your resources wisely.

Future project participants will also benefit from a clearly recorded history of the work, which ensures continued success and development without having to start from scratch. Finally, you can build problem-solving skills in your community by sharing your lessons with other people who want to do similar projects.

Further Reading

Indigenous Approaches to Program Evaluation by the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health

This article discusses the key parts of program evaluation on a higher level, using the logic model as an example. There is emphasis on adjustability for Indigenous values, and how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can work in a culturally-sensitive way.

<https://www.ccsa-nccah.ca/docs/context/FS-IndigenousApproachesProgramEvaluation-EN.pdf>

Considerations for Culturally Competent Program Evaluation by the Indigenous Child Well-being Research Network

This brief article offers insights into Indigenous values and evaluation. It discusses evaluation components similar to the logic model, and provides suggestions to shape the process to fit Indigenous needs.

<https://icwrn.uvic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Indigenous-Program-Evaluation-annotated-bib.pdf>

Evaluating Indigenous programs: a toolkit for change by Sara Hudson

This is an in-depth report on program evaluation from an Australian Indigenous perspective. It calls for rooting government-led evaluation programs in Indigenous values, as well as keeping up-to-date with research about good evaluation techniques.

<https://www.cis.org.au/app/uploads/2017/06/rr28.pdf>

Endnotes

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