



Managing 4 Impact

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Strengthening Managing for Impact (SMIP) in eastern and southern Africa April 2009

Managing for Impact

A holistic approach to managing development initiatives amidst complexity and diversity



Why Manage for Impact?

With the changing tides brought about globalization, economic and food crisis's and climate change, today's world requires new ways of approaching development and, often, new capacities and conditions for doing so.

Managing for Impact is a holistic approach to managing development initiatives, drawing upon and integrating a diverse range of existing processes, methodologies and tools for:

- **Dealing with complex situations** which are rarely predictable and developing and adapting strategies directed towards impact;
- **Managing in a holistic manner** and recognizing the inter-dependence between, technical processes (e.g. strategic and operational management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and "people processes" (e.g. managing teams, conflicts and multi-stakeholder processes);
- **Focusing on and promoting results-oriented learning processes** of stakeholders, drawing on sound data and information collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches;
- **Multi-directional accountability systems** that enable a strong sense of responsibility and ownership amongst implementing partners and stakeholders; and
- **Establishing a learning environment** that encourages people to be open, honest and critically question successes and failures and actively share this knowledge between development initiatives in order to contribute to impact.



Strengthening M4I (SMIP) in eastern & southern Africa
SMIP is an IFAD funded regional programme working with pro-poor initiatives in eastern & southern Africa to build capacities to better manage towards impact.



How to Manage for Impact?

M4I has four key focus areas which integrate both "technical" and "people" processes

Strategic guidance towards impact - Ensuring that the strategic design of a development initiative:

- Is based on an in-depth understanding of the particular situation; and
- Well defined and articulated theories of change; and
- Can be adapted with learning and changes occurring within and outside of the intervention over time

Effective operations - Managing the day-to-day operations towards impact, such as financial, physical and human resources

Establishing a participatory & learning oriented M&E system: - Putting in place systems and processes to regularly gather and process the information needed to guide the strategy, ensure effective operations and encourage learning

Creating a learning environment - Establishing a culture of learning amongst stakeholders and a set of relationships that build trust, stimulate critical questioning and innovation and gain commitment and ownership

M4I involves strengthening capacities & conditions for 4 key focus areas



The Capacity Development and Institutional Change (CD&IC) Programme of Wageningen International is working with the 'managing for impact' approach, which entails linking learning, monitoring and evaluation to strategic and operational planning and management. Managing for impact (M4I) is a holistic approach to managing development initiatives. This approach builds on what is described in the IFAD manual 'Managing for Impact in Rural Development. A Guide to Project M&E', to which CD&IC has largely contributed. The approach has been further developed a.o. during a 3-year, IFAD funded programme in East and Southern Africa to strengthen the capacity in the region on the managing for impact. In 2008 this approach has been further strengthened and also documented during the 2008 KB7 project Reflective Practice for Impact. Lessons learned from the regional programme have been documented (e.g. during a writeshop in Nairobi), lessons have been shared with other WUR-partners (KB7 projects WURK-project and RIO project) and boundaries have been enlarged through an international workshop/seminar on navigating complexity. Also lessons learned from a seminar on 'capacity development, institutional change and theory of change' organised by Wageningen International have been consolidated. These processes have not yet reached their end. Further consolidation and deepening of thinking processes is necessary to come to good products. The M4I approach needs to be properly documented for publication with a wider audience.