

https://dspace.org/

Staff of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) Training Report

CLEAR-AA

2017

CLEAR-AA
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/28481

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/



Training report

Kieron Crawley

August 2017

Five-Day Training

on

Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation

for

Staff of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)

7th – 12th July 2017, IILRI Campus, Nairobi, Kenya

Table of Contents

RESULTS BASED MONITORING AND EVALUATION - A 5-DAY COURSE FOR STAFF OF THE AFRICAN AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION 5

AATF 5

Course background 6

CLEAR-AA's experience in training 6

Course structure, approach and delivery 6

Course objectives 7

Course design 7

Mode of delivery 7

Anticipated outcomes 7

Course schedule 8

Group exercises 11

Pre- and post-training assessment 13

Participant feedback and satisfaction levels 13

Feedback on Facilitation 15

REVIEW OF COURSE CONTENT, SCHEDULING AND RECOMMENDATIONS 15

REFLECTION ON AATF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN M&E 17

Current Opportunities and challenges 17

Analysis 20

Notes from diagnostic and M&E strategic planning session 20

FACILITATOR PROFILES 23

Kieron Crawley 23

Chris Manayama 24

Appendix A – Participant List **25**

Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation - A 5-Day Course for Staff of the African Agriculture Technology Foundation

AATF

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates and promotes public/private partnerships for the access and delivery of appropriate agricultural technologies for sustainable use by smallholder farmers in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) through innovative partnerships and effective stewardship along the entire value chain.

The Foundation is a one-stop-shop that provides expertise and know-how that facilitates the identification, access, development, delivery and utilisation of agricultural technologies.

AATF works towards food security and poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa, and its structure and operations draw upon the best practices and resources of both the public and private sectors.

It also contributes to capacity building in Africa by engaging African institutions in the execution of tasks that contribute to the Foundation's mission.

AATF is a registered charity under the laws of England and Wales and has been given a tax-exempt status in the USA. It is incorporated in Kenya and in the UK and has been granted host country status by the Government of Kenya where it is headquartered.

Projects

The project development process is managed by AATF in consultation with its partners. Once approved and funded, a Project Manager recruited by AATF or seconded by a partner institution typically manages product development and deployment activities. The Project Manager reports to AATF through the AATF Technical Operations and is under the supervision of a Project Steering Committee made up of stakeholder representatives. A host of experts in various disciplines relevant for project implementation, referred to as Technical Advisors, are selected to provide, on a voluntary basis, technical advice to the Project Manager.

- Striga control in Maize
- Cowpea productivity improvement
- Protecting Bananas and Plantain from Bacterial Wilt Disease
- Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA)
- Raising the productivity of rice in Africa
- Mycotoxins in food grains
- Improving cassava productivity on smallholder farms

Enabling Initiatives

Experience gained and lessons learned during indicate that the AATF core business goes beyond the traditional negotiation for access of technologies and delivery through available channels. AATF recognises that driving projects through the full crop value chain and ensuring product uptake by farmers requires specific proactive action on some strategic elements that impact or may impact the eventual success of its activities. These elements – information and knowledge management, trends monitoring of intellectual property, biosafety regulations, seed regulations, R&D priorities in SSA

and value chain management for delivery of agricultural technologies – are ingrained in AATF's role of facilitator, catalyst and responsible party in technology access and delivery.

- Monitoring Trends in Intellectual Property
- Monitoring evolution of the regulatory environment for GM crops in African countries
- Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB)
- Monitoring Seed Systems in Sub-Saharan African countries[1]

Course background

The Rockefeller Foundation, United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) through UK aid, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are among the original funders of AATF. The funding they provided enabled the establishment of the Foundation, initiation and implementation of projects, and building capacity to leverage additional support from other investors for both core and projects [2]. While investors and donor partners remain committed to ATTF's work there is an increasing demand for the foundation to demonstrate results at outcome and impact level and in particular to demonstrate tangible benefits to the foundations core target group – smallholder farmers in Africa. As part of the phase three DFID support to AATF, the foundation agreed to develop a strategic road map for M&E and impact evaluation. It also agreed to train AATF staff on current evaluation and impact assessment approaches by October 2017[3]

CLEAR-AA's experience in training

Since its inception in 2011 the CLEAR Anglophone Africa Centre has delivered over fifty short courses on Monitoring and Evaluation, and Results Based Management using CLEAR staff and a range of experienced and qualified academic associates. These capacity building initiatives have benefitted managers from both the public and civil society sectors. Collaborating with our partners, GIMPA in Ghana and KSG in Kenya, participants in CLEAR AA programmes have been drawn from fifteen African Countries as well as Europe, East Asia and the Melanesia.[4]

The M&E capacity building courses have been delivered to participants from all the major sectors including Agriculture, Education, Health, Human Settlements, Public Works, Private Sector, Social Services, Security and Transport. Within the HIV sector courses have been run for managers who are engaged with government, national coordinating bodies, academic institutions and civil society organisations.

CLEAR courses draw on international best practice and learning generated through research from across the continent of Africa by the CLEAR-AA centre, as well as research carried out by the CLEAR network across five continents.

Course structure, approach and delivery

The course was delivered over five days (Monday to Friday) by two qualified and experienced M&E academics/facilitators using a combination of lecture, group work and practical exercises. The course made particular use of case studies to enhance and deepen learning.

[1] Information on AATF programmes and projects source from http://www.aatf-africa.org/projects-programmes
[2] Information sourced from AATF website (http://www.aatf-africa.org/about-us/governance/our-donors)
[3] Performance Related Funding Indicators for Phase III of DFID support to the African Agricultural Technology Foundation.

[4] Participants on CLEAR courses have been drawn from Botswana, Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Netherlands, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Drawing on the Centre's tried and tested approach to adult learning, participants were encouraged to share prior knowledge of the subject and to engage in peer learning to ensure that the knowledge acquisition process was both rich and contextually relevant. The training was participatory and practical in nature utilising real case studies developed in advance by facilitators and informed by the profile of participants drawn from across a range of participating countries.

Course objectives

The aims of the course (referred to in the training guide) were to:

- Equip AATF staff with skills for the institutionalisation of results-based monitoring and evaluations systems and practices as well as developing robust M&E plans;
- Prepare programme and project managers to plan and manage evaluations
- Develop a clear understanding on how AATF will undertake evaluations across projects and share lessons

Course design

The course was designed with a series of sessions delivered over 5 days covering the following elements:

Key Concepts in M&E

The sessions cover a number of concepts that are key in understanding monitoring and evaluation;

- Key M&E definitions
- Different types of survey and their importance
- Administering a survey including importance
- Key outcome and impact indicators in agriculture
- Designing a Results Framework or log frame-what to include
- Theory of Change
- Types of evaluations and their benefits (an introduction)

Situating monitoring and evaluation in development interventions and institutions

The module introduced the participants to developmental issues, how monitoring and evaluation indicators are important and specifically with relevance to agriculture and food. Further sessions in this section covered frameworks to guide the institutionalising of M&E within institutions.

Mode of delivery

The course was delivered through a combination of lecture presentations, individual exercises and group work (including group presentations based on the current practical environment within which the participants operate). Training materials, including case studies and task sheets, were be prepared and provided to participants during the course of the training.

Anticipated outcomes

On completing the course, it was anticipated that participants would be able to:

- Adopt a results based approach to project design,
- Interrogate and critique the theory of change within a proposed project,
- Craft a set of robust results statements at output, outcome and impact level as the basis of a results framework,
- Show awareness that tracking mechanisms and evaluation systems and work processes can contribute to alignment and integration between different levels of planning,

- Convincingly argue for the need to integrate monitoring and evaluation into planning for development interventions,
- Assess the readiness of their organisation to undertake evaluations,
- Develop effective evaluation plans and associated documentation that supports the execution of quality evaluations that are amenable to use and
- Apply a range of tools to support more effective use of monitoring and evaluation information in organisational decision-making processes

Course schedule

DAY 1

08:30 – 09:00	Registration and pre-course assessment	
09:00 – 09:15	Opening Remarks by Executive Director -(AATF)	
09:15 – 09:30	Pre-course assessment, overview of course	
09:30 – 10:00	Introductions, Ice-Breaker	
10:00 – 10:30	Our Expectations	
10:30 – 11:00	*Tea Break*	
MODULE 1 - Situating monitoring and evaluation in development interventions		
11:00 – 13:00	**Session 1**	Background to and Evolution of M&E and RBM • Challenges in development and public sector management • National development planning and the emergence of the outcomes-based approach • Development Strategies and the link to RBM
13:00 – 14:00	*Lunch*	
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 2**	Principles and Key Concepts • Monitoring and Evaluation • Rationale for RBM • RBM systems versus traditional/implementation-focused systems
15:00 – 15:30	*Tea Break*	
15:30 – 16:30	**Session 3**	Principles and Concepts • The Results Chain • Indicators

16:00 – 16:30	Group assignment on indicators derived from AATF	

DAY 2

08:30 – 09:00	Overview of Day 1 & Group Presentations	
09:00 – 10:00		Group Presentation on Indicators
10:00 – 10:30	*Tea-Break*	
10:30 – 11:30	**Session 4**	• Data Quality • Exercise on data quality
11:30 – 13:00	**Session 5**	• Introducing the Theory of Change (TOC)
13:00 – 14:00	*Lunch*	
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 6**	• Logical Frameworks / Results Frameworks
15:00 – 15:15	*Tea Break*	
15:15 – 16:30		• Group Work/exercises & presentations

DAY 3

08:30 – 09:00	Overview of Day 2	
09:00 – 10:30	**Session 7**	• Concepts of attribution versus contribution
10:30 – 11:00	*Tea-Break*	
11:00 - 13:00	**Session 8**	• Evaluations, different types of evaluations
13:00 – 14:00	*Lunch*	
MODULE 2 - Organisation-wide monitoring and evaluation systems and supportive environments		

14:00 – 15:00	**Session 9**	• Impact evaluation • Randomized Control Trial
15:00 – 15:15	*Tea Break*	
15:15 – 16:30	Group Assignment Planning/Preparation	

DAY 4

	Overview of Day 3	
08:30 – 10:30	**Session 10**	• Summarize with Ten steps to a results based monitoring and evaluation system
10:30 – 11:00	*Tea-Break*	
11:00 – 13:00	**Session 11**	Components of a Functional M&E system from Gorgens, M. and Kusek,
13:00 – 14:00	*Lunch*	
14:00- 16:30	**Group Assignment Planning/Preparation**	Exploring our M&E systems using the frameworks from above

DAY 5

08:30 – 09:00	Overview of Day 3	
09:00 – 10:00	**Session 12**	• Managing evaluations
10:00 – 10:30	*Tea-Break*	
10:30 – 13::00	**Session 13**	• Standards in evaluation
13:00 –	*Lunch*	

14:00		
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 14**	Group Reflections
15:00 – 15:15	*Tea Break/Security briefing*	
15:15 – 16:30	Course evaluation/post-test End of day Closing Remarks	

Group exercises

The training course made extensive use of group exercises. A selection of exercises used during the training is described below.

Group Exercise 1 – Defining why is it important to use a monitoring and evaluation system within AATF? (Workshop Technique)

Participants (in groups) were asked to reflect on the focus question, they then transcribed responses to the question onto A5 cards. The facilitator led a process whereby cards were progressively mapped and clustered in order to draw out group consensus around the topic. The results of the exercise demonstrated that AATF staff felt that it is important to use M&E in order to;

- Monitor progress (6)
- Demonstrate impact (5)
- Document accountability to investors (5)
- Support learning and sharing (4)
- Conduct evaluations (4)
- Remain relevant and competitive (1)
- Track contribution to broader development objectives (1)



Figure 1 Defining why it is important to use an M&E system within AATF

Group Exercise 2 – The results chain

This exercise draws upon a detailed case study and requires participants to progressively construct a results framework consisting of,

- A correctly sequenced chain of results at input, activity, output, outcome, and impact level,
- Results statements for each of the levels above,

- Performance indicators correctly aligned with the results statements,
- Assumptions that are necessary to allow a flow of results along the chain,

Group Exercise 3 – Strong and weak results statements

Participants working in pairs examined a list of pre-prepared results statements and critiqued them based on criteria introduced during the previous session. The group suggested ways of strengthening results statements so that they were more robust and trackable.

Group Exercise 4 – Critique of summary results statements from AATF projects

Participants were invited to review and critique summary result statements from selection of AATF projects as communicated through project information publications.

Group Exercise 5 – Analysis of performance indicators drawn from the AATF DFID results frame

Participants, in groups analysed and critique the results statements and performance indicators within the AATF DFID results framework. In particular participants discussed the degree to which indicators were CREAM (clear, relevant, economic, attributable and monitorable).

Group exercise 6 - Data quality

Using a series of case studies, participants working in groups had to determine the major issue of data quality within the data processes described. In particular participants had to determine whether the major challenge to data quality was one of, validity, reliability, precision, integrity, timeliness and/or completeness.

Group exercise 7 - Theory of change

In this exercise participants were asked within working groups to extract the theory of change from three AATF projects; Striga control in maize, early generation seed, pod borer resistant cow pea and to communicate them using a visual graphic. The larger group then critiqued the TOCs for clarity and for the extent to which they truly represented the logic behind the project.

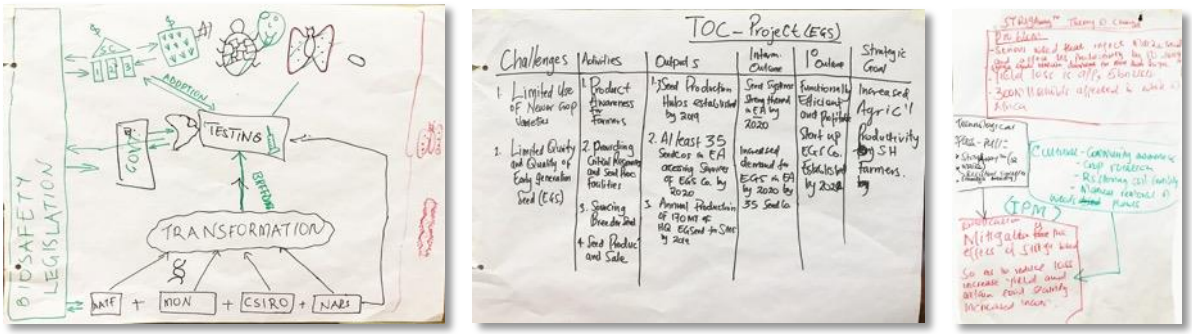

Figure 2 Output from the TOC exercise

Group Exercise 8 – Interpreting an evaluation

Participants working in groups were asked to examine an AATF evaluation and to determine;

- The **rationale** for the evaluation,
- The **questions** that the evaluation seeks to answer,
- The key **recommendations** that flow from the evaluation,
- The **implications** that are anticipated,

Group exercise 9 - Randomised Control Tests

The group exercise engaged participants in a simple arithmetic test to demonstrate principals behind randomized control trials including, *baselines and counterfactuals, random selection, attribution, contribution, contamination* and *leakage*.

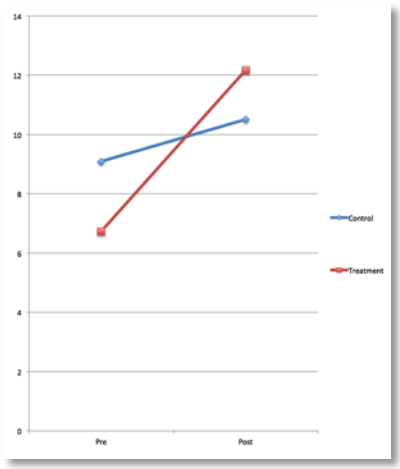

Figure 3 RCT exercise results

Group exercise 10 – Institutionalising M&E

Participants were asked to reflect on the *12 components* and the *six-spheres frameworks* and to use them to identify strategic priorities for institutionalising M&E within AATF. A summary of the outputs from this exercise are summarised below.

Group Exercise 11 – Critiquing an terms of reference for an evaluation

Following a presentation around a model template for an evaluation terms of reference (TOR), participants were asked to critique a selection of TORs produced by AATF in recent months.

Pre and post-training assessment

Format of test

Participants were invited to complete a pre and post-test to measure knowledge of the subject before and after the training course. The pre-test was carried out on the morning of the first day before teaching material was presented; the post test was carried out on the afternoon of the last day once the final group assignment had been completed. The test comprised a set of thirty multiple-choice questions that covered the range of topics covered during the training.

Results

The majority of participants performed amply in both the pre and post-training assessments, with mean scores of 65 per cent and 78 per cent respectively. The difference between the pre and post training assessment scores (a reflection of the level of learning) was a notable 13 percentage points. Twenty participants averaged a score of over 70% in the post-test, fourteen scored over 80 % with one participant scoring 97 per cent in the post-test.

An analysis of individual questions in the pre- and post-test suggests that greatest learning took place around*;*

- *TORs for evaluations (52% increase in scores)*
- *Factors that pose a challenge to demonstrating causality (28% increase in scores)*
- *Components of the results chain (20% increase in scores)*

Participant feedback and satisfaction levels

Feedback from participants was measured using a standardised CLEAR evaluation form. Responses were received from 21 participants. A summary of this feedback is presented below. All respondents identified themselves as participants and almost all but five noted that they had attended the course in its entirety[5].

[5] Some participants were obliged to attend a meeting to sign a new agreement concerning programme funding.

Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction levels for the training averaged 8.8 out of 10. Highest satisfaction levels were expressed in relation to the *Overall usefulness of this course* (9.4). Lowest satisfaction levels (but still within the upper quintile) were expressed in relation to *Opportunity to develop new networks for future collaboration and knowledge sharing (8.1 out of 10).* This may be explained by virtue of the fact that all participants known to each other and drawn from within AATF. Satisfaction levels are reflected in the table below;

Course criteria	(Score out of Ten)
Overall quality of the course	9.3
Overall usefulness of this course	9.4
Extent to which you expect to apply learning from this course to your current work	9.0
Extent to which you have acquired information that is new to you	8.4
Extent to which this course fulfilled your learning needs	8.7
Extent to which this course increased your current level of knowledge/skills in the topic	8.6
Effectiveness of the way the content was presented	9.2
Opportunity to develop networks for future collaboration and knowledge sharing	8.1
Mean	**8.8**

Other comments

Participants made the following specific comments related to the course all of which may be considered as positive. Comments have been clustered under appropriate headings. Of interest is the feedback on the venue for the training that five participants felt should in future be held "off campus".

While the course was presented as an introduction to results based monitoring and evaluation with a focus on measuring impact there would appear to be an opportunity for follow up training with more detail on the use of RCTs and content tailored specifically around AATFs specific agricultural projects.

Logistics

"The logistics part of the training was well organized"

"The logistics were well prepared"

Course venue

"The training could have been done outside the AATF to avoid distractions"

"Training should have been scheduled away from the workplace to avoid interruptions"

"There is need for off campus training to avoid noise"

"Should be held away from the campus for maximum concentration"

Suggestions for future content

"*There is need for more content on data analysis techniques"*

"Need for more time on case studies"

"There is need to go over different types of logical/results framework"

"Inclusion of practical examples of RCT"

"More time on RCTs"

"More examples of M&E in the agriculture field"

"More sector specific examples"

Overall

"Content was very good"

"It was a great course with a lot of practical use in my project management role"

"The workshop helped me to understand lots of previously confusing concepts and terminologies"

"Excellent, included practice and interactive exercises - I loved the sessions"

"Content was specific and perfect"

"The workshop was very important to my work and organisation"

Course duration

"The length of the training was very adequate"

"The length was perfect, if it goes beyond 5 days, it may become tiresome"

"The length was appropriate and enabled interaction between participants"

"Workshop can be longer to allow more learning on different concepts"

"There is need to increase time to cover concepts in-depth"

Feedback on Facilitation

Facilitators were scored nine out of ten in participant's feedback. All feedback comments were positive with participants highlighting the level of expertise, ability of facilitators to encourage participation and motivate learners and the use of practical examples to illustrate concepts. One participant commented *"the facilitator takes time to explain concepts which allows for better understanding"* while another stated that facilitators were *"very knowledgeable in the area of M&E"*.

Review of course content, scheduling and recommendations

Content

The course was designed and delivered in three sections. The first dealt with challenges in development and public sector management and the move towards rationale for M&E within a results based development programme. The second section looked in detail at some of the technical

concepts and definitions within a results based M&E system. The third section explored challenges and opportunities to institutionalising a results based approach within a modern organisation.

On the whole the course content across all sections seems to have been well received. The rationale for results based M&E was felt to be particularly pertinent to AATF who together with investors and donor partners is keen to demonstrate the impact of its work. The section on M&E concepts (including impact evaluation techniques) was deemed to have cleared up a number of misunderstandings and to build clarity around the nature of the results chain, the importance of results statements, performance indicators and the need to measure baselines and set realistic targets.

Given the time allotted to the course, impact evaluation and the use of RCTs was presented as an introduction. This included a short group exercise to demonstrate the use of experimental approaches to programming and Randomised Control Tests (RCTs). While Impact Evaluation (and experimental approaches to programming) is somewhat technical when taught in detail, there was significant interest in this area and a large number of participants suggested including more on this topic in future course. Given the push towards demonstrating causality within development programming in general, this is something that AATF may wish to consider.

The third section of the course; institutionalising M&E within the organisation was deemed particularly valuable given that AATF has recently embarked on an exercise to develop an M&E strategy.

Pending further needs assessment the CLEAR team recommends that thought be given to future targeted capacity building for key staff around a strategy to measure outcome/impact of individual projects and the specific techniques that might be used to achieve this. This would involve looking in detail at the unique context within which AATF works and the challenge that engaging with the agro-product seed market entails.

Overall participants were motivated and keen to learn. The most ambitious aspect of the course was undoubtedly the Impact evaluation section and in particular the application of RCTS to the agricultural sector, however participants demonstrated an enthusiasm to take on board new concepts and generated ideas themselves as to how this might be tackled.

Group learning activities

Effective adult learning must introduce training participants to concepts and ideas that are relevant to their work. It must also incorporate approaches that allow participants to consolidate learning through reference to prior knowledge and workplace experience. Facilitator presentations provide the former while group learning exercises address the latter.

The group learning activities worked well throughout the course and benefitted from the fact that groups were arranged to bring together participants in groups that they may not otherwise choose. Where possible facilitators used actual AATF documents (DFID phase 3 Support Programme Log Frame, Project Summary Results Statements, AATF Evaluations and Evaluation TORs,)

The penultimate group exercise was designed to explore strategic actions that would help institutionalise M&E within AATF. This was deemed to be particularly useful and the outputs have been summarised and included as an annex to the training report.

The balance between group learning activity and lecture-style presentations according to participants worked well with each session typically broken down into a “mini-lecture” followed by AATF context specific group exercise.

Scheduling and venue

The course was scheduled to run from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm each day over six days, concluding at lunchtime on Day 5 (Friday). Energy levels amongst participants (and facilitators) drop naturally

during afternoon sessions and the use of energisers (often instigated by participants themselves) help to sustain participants' focus. Facilitators were flexible in scheduling their material based on interpretation of participants learning pace and energy levels. Overall, the timing and duration of the course was deemed appropriate.

While the workshop and training facilities at the ILRI campus were excellent and the team received important logistical support, a number of participants indicated that conducting the training at a remote site might lessen inevitable disruptions that occur when staff are called away to urgent meetings and job related tasks.

Numbers and profile of participants

The number of participants (25) worked well in terms of participative classroom dynamics, and for group work (numbers allowed five groups of five participants). We continue to recommend this number of participants (or thereabouts) for any future courses.

Participants were drawn entirely from AATF (albeit from a range of country offices and sections), which ensured a common technical language and work context experience amongst them. While participants varied widely in terms of knowledge and experience, facilitation and active participation made for a rich peer learning experience.

Further reading, and online file storage

A list of further reading materials as well as course-related information was made available to participants using an online "Drop Box" facility. While familiarity with Drop Box and other online "Cloud" Folder technology as a means of sharing learning materials is still growing, it promises to be the most cost effective way of giving access to learning materials and significantly cuts down on the cost and logistics for having to provide participants with hard copy materials.

Reflection on AATF institutional capacity in M&E

Current Opportunities and challenges

The following points were raised during group discussions around the use of evaluations to measure outcome and impact of AATF programmes;

- Outcome and impact results take particular time to mature within agricultural sector and are closely related to growing cycles and seasons,
- Donor reporting cycles not always in step with seasonal production cycles leading to challenges in the timeousness of measuring outcome results,
- Partnering with private sector brings complexity particularly around purpose and values,
- The natural dynamics of the market where demand and supply lead to a "market price" for products, which are by definition "affordable" can sometimes fail,
- Agricultural market systems are complex and results chain assumptions are important to determine results e.g. the assumption that increased yields will lead to increased income do not always hold true (one participant related the case of a significant, increase in local tomato production leading to a glut and a dramatic fall in market price,
- There are on-going questions as to whether impact of AATF should be measured at seed company level or at small farmer level. At Seed Company level AATF still has reasonable control and agency whereas at smallholder farmer level it does not. Improving the wellbeing

of smallholder farmers is however central to AATFs mandate as a developmental not for profit development agency and needs to be kept within the organizational TOC,

- It was recognised that while small holder farmers remain central as AATF beneficiaries, AATF needs to ensure that programme results frameworks define impact at a level which can be controlled and measured,
- Potential quantitative indicators at outcome level for AATF might included; availability, accessibility, level of demand, adoption rates, extent of use, production rates, and effectiveness (yield),
- Potential qualitative indicators at outcome level might include reasons as to why farmers are growing? (or not growing) AATF products.
- There is important work that takes place within *field trials* of new products. This often is carried out using smallholder farmers. Field tests are used primarily to demonstrate the benefits of new products (such as improved yield, drought tolerance or pest resistance) and act as a justification for seeking regulatory approval for sales from government. It was felt that these trials could be strengthened to become more experimentally rigourous (although sample size remains low) and used as a means to demonstrate potential impact of the product.
- A more detailed TOC for each programme (and/or project) may help in defining the various stages in the anticipated results chain, how AATFs agency and control changes along the results chain and what measures and resources are needed to realistically measure outcome and impact at each stage.

AATFs programme and the challenge of demonstrating impact

From interaction with AATF participants it is clear that there is increasing pressure from investors and donor partners to demonstrate impact of development programmes that they are funding. This is driven in turn by pressure on donor partner development budgets and a growing accountability of those partners to citizens in their respective countries. While this is a general trend across the development spectrum, the resources and expertise needed to design programmes to which outcome and impact can be reliably attributed remains a challenge. Not only does technical capacity to design and evaluate such programme vary significantly across countries and sectors; development programmes themselves have inherent contextual and technical specificities that determine the ease (or difficulty) with which outcome and impact can be established.

AATF works in the Agricultural sector where it facilitates public/private/NGO partnerships to increase access to improved agricultural technologies for sustainable use by smallholder farmers. Central to this is the partnering with African scientists and research institutions to produce improved products that have potential for replication and up scaling. The latter is carried out invariably by introducing new and improved products to the mass market through awarding licenses to commercial companies. This process requires "sensitive negotiations among and between organisations with divergent institutional purposes and values" to ensure that products are affordable and accessible to resource poor farmers.

The "results chain" for AATF therefore straddles a sequence of institutional environments that vary not only in terms of their characteristics, levels of organisational formality, incentives and motivations, but importantly (for impact measurement) the level of control that AATF as the programme custodian, has over them.

The challenge in measuring outcome and impact across AATF programmes is illustrated in the graphic below. The programme results chain is illustrated at the top of the graphic moving from left to right from *"Improved Agricultural Products"* to *"Improved livelihoods of Sub-Saharan African*

farmers" on the top right. This latter *impact statemen*t is presented as an institutional goal on AATFs web site under the section on *mission* and *strategy*. It is consequently an impact level result against which the organisation is asked to provide evidence of achievement by investors and donor partners. It is the challenge of securing evidence of performance at this level that has prompted the current capacity building initiative of AATF in M&E.

An analysis of the results chain for AATF shows that while relationships with partners are well defined and formalised within the phase that represents the *"development of improved agricultural products"*, these relationships are increasingly constructed at "arms length" as the phases of the results chain move from left to right. At the point at which benefits accrue to smallholder farmers in terms of *"improved livelihoods"* there is no formal relationship with stakeholders or indeed control over the programme outcomes.

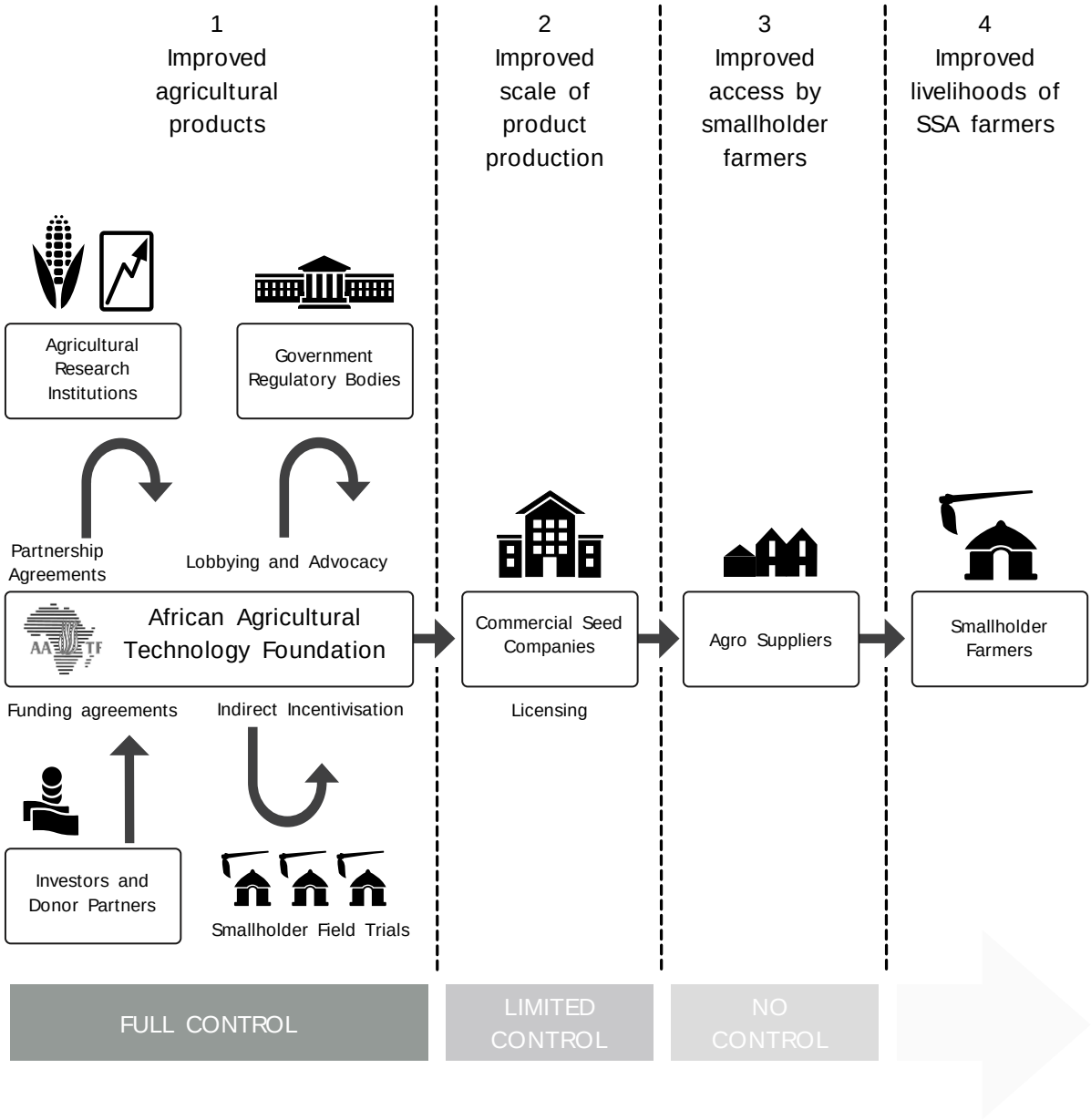

Figure 4 The AATF Results Chain

In phase one of the results chain relationships are defined by funding agreements (Donor Partners and Investors), partnership agreements (research institutions), processes of lobbying and advocacy

(government regulatory bodies) and indirect incentives (smallholder field trials). At the second level relationships with commercial seed companies are formalised through licence agreements. At phase 3 and 4 there are no formal mechanisms to define relationships with stakeholders. The context is further complicated by the fact that these stakeholders fall within the market system and are therefore subject to market dynamics over which AATF has no control.

Analysis

In order to improve measurement of outcome and impact there are a number of options that AATF might explore;

Capitalise on the smallholder field trials of improved products

This component is within AATFs control and forms part of the process of demonstrating the benefits of AATF products for approval by government. At present field trials are typically carried out with between 7 and 10 smallholder farmers. Formalising this process, ensuring a robust treatment and control group and increasing the sample size may produce data that is robust enough to demonstrate results of improved output and smallholder income. These would still need to be extrapolated to demonstrate impact at a wider population level.

Develop relationships and agreements with product supply chain stakeholders to track data at smallholder farmer level

Commercial Seed companies are engaged using license agreements for AATF products. At present AATF relies on the goodwill of licensees and their downstream counterparts to share sales information. It may be possible to develop relationships with seed companies and together devise mechanisms to track downstream data that moves beyond simple sales figures and allows the profiling of end customers. The use of ICTs, barcoding and SMS survey techniques may even allow for end user surveys to be carried out with a sample of smallholder farmers.

This level of data tracking requires both innovation and investment. Careful thought must be given to the incentives that may be necessary to motivate stakeholders into cooperating at this level.

Notes from diagnostic and M&E strategic planning session

The following notes were collated during group presentations of the diagnostic and strategic planning session.

Group 1

Human resources

AATF should mainstream M&E in all projects right from the design stage. Human resources are currently OK with the recent recruitment of an M&E officer but should be monitored to ensure that resources are sufficient,

Partnerships

AATF should work with M&E officers in partnering organisations where they exist. The resources should be tapped and M&E officers involved in joint design of all future projects. AATF should Partner with external organisations that specialize in M&E

M&E Plan

An M&E plan should be developed and operationalized, within each project and across the institution. AATF is not starting from scratch here, the Amelia system exists but requires work to develop it.

The M&E plan should be costed and resourced so that it can form part of negotiations around programming with donors. If there is no allocated resources money then it will be difficult to do anything.

Advocacy for an M&E culture

Currently energy and interest in M&E within AATF is high. This can be sustained through training, the embedding of performance management systems, annual planning and leadership at multiple levels within the institution. Advocacy should start at the highest office and M&E dashboards should be used there.

Routine monitoring

Regular M&E monitoring reporting should be incorporated within the annual review meeting. It should not just report on process but outputs and outcomes where possible. This process is not absent at present but needs to become more focused.

Back to office reports

AATF should encourage the reading of these reports and ensure that they include information relating to output results. BTO reports should be accessible and possibly set out over a single page one page. AATF should set up a system to implement the action points contained therein and place responsibility on supervisors to implement and follow up. Where action points relate to other people there should be a system of follow up. It may be possible to include BTO reports within the Amelia system and make them accessible through the intranet. In terms of format a one pager with points that have been achieved (preferably figures) would aid addition to AMELIA. AATF needs to look at how information from BTO reports are used to implement action.

Periodic surveys

Periodic surveys should be used to create baselines before and comparisons after the deployment of products. They should become standard practice, and resources must be allocated. AATF ought to be cautious however of farmer fatigue with surveys.

Databases

The Amelia system could be used to develop an AATF dashboard. The current annual report could be used to place activities onto the intuitions website. The dashboard should be updated regularly.

Supportive supervision

AATF should strive to build top leadership support for the M&E function.

Evaluations

AATF should explore the possibility of designing a customized impact evaluation framework and associated tools that is appropriate for the sector and country contexts within which it works..

Using evaluation to improve results

Feedback from the AATF M&E system should go to the CEO who follows up with relevant units. The use a red, orange, green system (traffic lights) may help in streamlining information and prioritising decision-making.

Group 2

Strengthening the M&E system

- Strengthen M&E component to comprise project level and organization level budgeting in the 2018 - 2023 strategy

- Improve the linkage between project level M&E and institutional goals by October 2018
- Strengthen the M&E process for new projects from the concept development stage.
- Develop an M&E framework for existing projects by January 2018
- Use routine monitoring to generate bi-annual progress performance reports for all projects and come up with areas for improvement
- Develop an M&E database/platform by December 2017
- Create an enabling environment with M&E functions consolidated in one office.The business development unit currenlty does adoption and baselines, should be put together with M&E unit implemented in quarter 4 of 2017.
-

Group 3

Human Resources

The M&E function should be upgraded to above officer level by June 2018 or quarter 3 of next year. This is a high priority.

M&E personnel could be increased and/or enhanced; 14 projects in 13 countries may be asking too much for one officer. This is medium priority and the upgrade of the unit should be completed by quarter 4 of next year.

Trust and collaboration between partners

Build Trust with partners to allow free flow of information; this is an on-going and high priority. Ideas on how to accomplish this already exist and will be further developed. Relationships must be built, this is high priority but will take time.

M&E Plans

Rigorous project and institutional M&E plans with timeframes are required. These should be developed by quarter 3 of 2018.

M&E culture

In terms of culture the need for M&E is already appreciated but not deeply embedded; it sometimes appears to be donor driven.

Data mechanics

Enhanced utilization of routine monitoring feedback at output level should go back to planning for decision-making and not just to the Amelia system for compliance. Active use should be made of BTO reports.

Strengthen TORs for periodic surveys to get best out of them (weak TORs have led to problems in the past) There is potential to develop and use a template which clearly stipulates minimum requirements. The template should be developed by experts. TORs are generally developed rapidly and lead to problems down stream. The process tends to be ad-hoc.

Supervision and linkages

Enhanced supportive supervision of M&E duties is required as are linkages between M&E staff and project staff that work both ways. The M&E unit needs to be guided in generating reports that can be acted upon for implementation (On-going)

Impact evaluations

A programme of structured external impact evaluations of AATF interventions should be initiated by quarter 1 of 2018. This may form part of the EPMR (external programme and management review). Rigorous impact assessments can be used to inform other projects.

Information use

AATF should aim for enhanced utilization of evaluations, research, feedback, monitoring by management.

Group 4

Principles and values

Strengthen understanding of principles and values around use of M&E and create a level playing field for all amongst all employees.

Leadership

Establish commitment of leaders within management to allocate resources, time, money and human capacity (September 2017 – February 2018) in line with the cycle of annual review meetings,

Institutional environment

Embed and institutionalise M&E using an M&E strategy

Have management present to staff how they plan to actualise M&E so that teams are assured of resources and know how much has been allocated,

All projects should have M&E budgets and plans that feed into the institutional M&E strategy. There is a current strategy but is not widely adopted or known about (February 2018) (reviewed annually). Short timelines demonstrate the urgency of these strategic actions. This will help to build a culture of M&E within thee institution.

Working with partners

Increasingly sensitise partners to the importance of M&E by communicating information, providing supportive supervision and data auditing.

Use of evidence

Increase use and application of findings (from M&E) to improve programmes, projects and organization. Keep the process running in a cycle.

Facilitator Profiles

Kieron Crawley

Kieron Crawley is formerly a senior lecturer and senior technical advisor with the CLEAR centre at the Wits School of Governance. He is currently undertaking a PhD and is a honorary research fellow at the CLEAR centres at the University of the Witwatersrand. Graduating from the School of Public and Development Management, Kieron obtained a first class Masters Degree in in Public and Development Management, with distinctions in Monitoring and Evaluation, Scenario Planning, Strategy and Leadership, Managing Information and Communications, Public Policy, Economics and Public Finance and Programme and Project Management.

Kieron’s background within the INGO sector has provided him with experience in developing and managing multi-sectoral poverty alleviation programmes in East and Southern Africa, the Caribbean

and South Asia. His country experience spans Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the Gambia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Haiti, Honduras, Peru, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Kieron's role has included the overseeing of Monitoring and Evaluation of projects funded by amongst others DFID, DANIDA the European Commission, SIDA, USAID and the World Bank.

Christopher Manyamba

Christopher Manyamba is a PhD Finalist at the University of Pretoria, Institute for Food, Nutrition and Well Being, focusing on Food Security and Women's Empowerment in Agriculture. He is a PhD Research Fellow of the 2012 USAID/IFPRI Dissertation Fellowship award http://www.ifpri.org/blog/fellowshipsgender-and-agriculture-awarded?print) . His PhD project focuses on establishing if empowering women in agriculture have an effect on improving household food security.

He holds a Master's Degree in Demography (UKZN, 2011) and a Bsc (Hons) in Applied Statistics (University of Malawi, 1995). In collaboration with UNFAO-Rome, and through the Voices of the Hungry (VoH) project, he has worked on a number of food security scales including validating the recent Food Insecurity and Experience Scale (FIES). http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/ess/voh/MALAWI_FIES_Language_Adaptation_Report_Aug2013.pdf. He has worked for the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems-Southern Africa, where he worked on Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme indicators from the SADC region http://www.nepad.org/cop/comprehensive-africa-agriculture-development-programme-caadp. He has carried out baseline surveys in Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and in South Africa. He is currently a TWG member for the SA Sustainable Development Goals Domestication process, and currently provides technical support to the National Department of Health on District Health Information Systems core indicators progress tracking.

Appendix A – Participant List

	Family Name	First Name	Email address
1	Achando	Jane	j.achando@aatf-africa.org
2	Cole	Tejan	A.Tejancole@aatf-africa.org
3	Juma	Nancy	n.juma@aatf-africa.org
4	Kimani	Alex	a.kimani@aatf-africa.org
5	Kinyua	Jacquine	j.kinyua@aatf-africa.org
6	Kollo	Issofou	I.Abdourhamane@aatf-africa.org
7	Kouko	Edith	e.kouko@aatf-africa.org
8	Makoha	John	J.Makokha@aatf-africa.org
9	Marechera	George	g.marechera@aatf-africa.org
10	Mathagu	Abed	a.mathagu@aatf-africa.org
11	Mavindidze	Donald	d.mavindidze@aatf-africa.org
12	Moussa	Adam	m.adam@aatf-africa.org
13	Muchiri	Caroline	c.muchiri@aatf-africa.org
14	Muinga	Grace	g.muinga@aatf-africa.org
15	Munyaradzi	Jonga	j.munyaradzi@aatf-africa.org
16	Musyoka	Peter	p.musyoka@aatf-africa.org
17	Nang'ayo	Francis	f.nangayo@aatf-africa.org
18	Oikeh	Sylvester	s.oikeh@aatf-africa.org
19	Okeno	James	j.okeno@aatf-africa.org
20	Omanya	Gospel	g.omanya@aatf-africa.org
21	Onyekachi	Francis	f.onyekachi@aatf-africa.org
22	Rotich	Ruth	r.rotich@aatf-africa.org
23	Situma	Evelyn	e.situma@aatf-africa.org
24	Tarus	David	d.tarus@aatf-africa.org
25	Wavomba	Edgar	e.wavomba@aatf-africa.org