Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is a systematic approach to track, assess, and learn from interventions and broader social-environmental trends. **Monitoring**, involves gathering system data; **Evaluation**, assesses this data to understand how outcomes perform against key goals; and **Learning**, explores how system interactions influence processesand human behavior, and why particular outcomes emerge.

Learning

Reveals how interventions impact systems, offering insights for continuous improvement and adaptation across contexts or geographies.

Monitoring

Provides information on how the system is being impacted, drawing from data sources closest to the intervention's effects (farmers, community organizations, census data, etc.).

Evaluation

assesses the data to determine the extent to which the intervention achieved its intended goals.

Additional Reference Resources

- United States Agency for International Development: Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning (MEL) Plan
- The World Bank: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework | February 2023
- CGIAR: Monitoring and Evaluating Social Learning: A Framework for CrossInitiative Application

MEL in Action

Tarun Bharat Sangh, an NGO based in western India, used a MEL approach to refine a critical water conservation effort. Using a combination of gauging and photography, the team was able to improve:

- decisions on desilting, structure sizing and placement
- estimations on size-to-recharge ratios
- overall water budgeting, including runoff ratio and recharge rate

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