MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING FUNDAMENTALS

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Session Objectives

- To provide ARC learning workshop participants with the fundamentals of ME&L:

A comprehensive overview of key M&E concepts for enhanced project/ program performance

An overview of S.M.A.R.T. principles in M&E

Examples of M&E concepts and principles in practice

Session Overview

PART 1.
Introduction to M&E

- Results Based Management:
  - What is results-based management (RBM) & Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)?
  - How are Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning different?
  - Program Cycle Management & M&E

- Advantages of applying MEL in program management

PART 2.
Application of M&E in Practice

- M&E principles in Practice:
  - Essential elements addressed by routine M&E
  - Use of SMART principles in setting goals, objectives and indicators
  - Key elements of a Logic Model
  - Types & Use of Evaluations in M&E

- Developing an M&E plan

INTRODUCTION TO MONITORING & EVALUATION
PART 1.

RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT (RBM)

What is results-based management and how does M&E fit in?

Results-based management (RBM) is a common approach used by managers to improve project/ program performance and internal accountability by:

○ Applying **a clear, logical framework and plan** on how you intend to measure and achieve desired results using a specific intervention of choice

○ Advanced **determination of intended results (targets)** within a certain time frame help in planning activities to track progress

What is Monitoring?

- As a critical component of RBM – **monitoring** is a routine, systematic way to track and gather information (data) to check for progress made.

  - Monitoring is **recurrent** – happens over the life of a project/program tracking change over time

  - Monitoring **tracks & captures both qualitative and quantitative** information (data) – through primary and secondary sources

  - Monitoring **reports are shared periodically** – as determined by the project (**internal**) or by the donor (**external)**

  - Monitoring **must be fully integrated into all program areas** – this activity should involve all program staff and not be regarded as a separate activity conducted by a single unit

  - Monitoring **checks compliance** on how a project/ program is running against set standards

What is Evaluation?

○ An evaluation is an activity that makes use of monitoring results – takes into consideration processes, achievable milestones and experiences routinely collected under monitoring
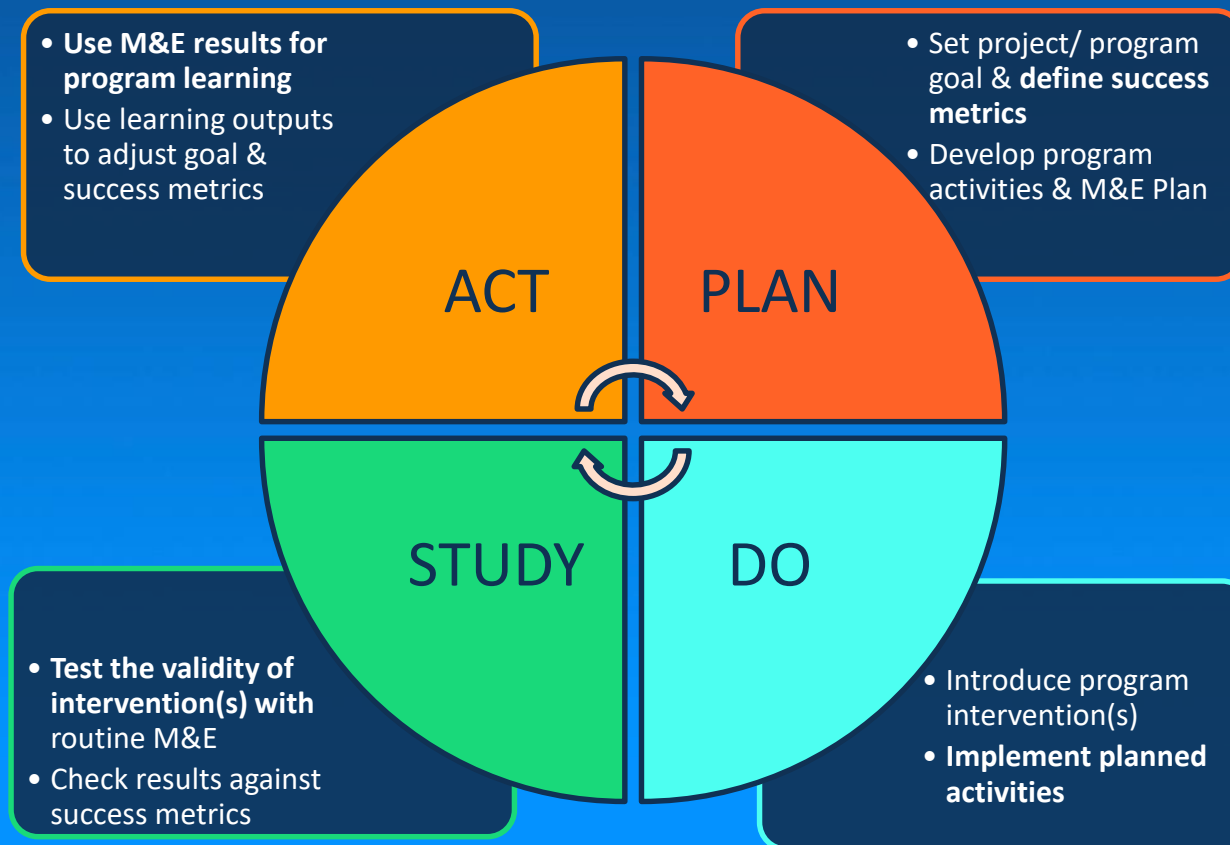
- Evaluations **appraise the quality of the data**
- Evaluations are typically **used to inform strategic planning and decision-making**
- Evaluations **check program performance** based on 5 aspects of the intervention(s) implemented:

relevance → **effectiveness** → **efficiency** → **impact** → **sustainability**
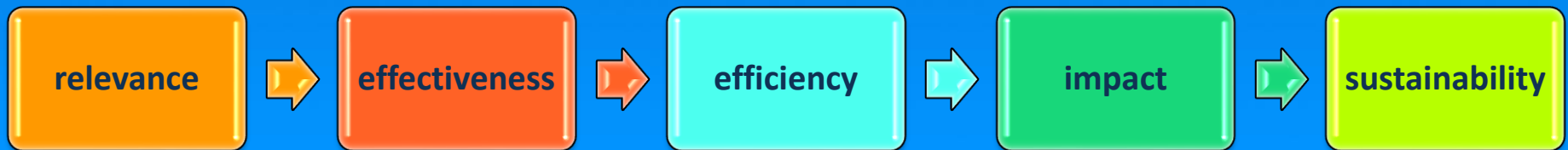
What is Learning?

○ Learning is directly informed by M&E results which are analyzed periodically or *ad hoc (*as needed).

  - Learning is **continuous** – over the life of the project/ program making use of different information sharing platforms (internal/ external)

  - Project/ Program staff use tacit & explicit information towards:

    ➤ Problem solving (course-correction)

    ➤ Planning

    ➤ Evidence building and knowledge management (conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge)

Program Cycle Management & MEL

- **Use M&E results for program learning**
- Use learning outputs to adjust goal & success metrics

ACT

- Set project/ program goal & **define success metrics**
- Develop program activities & M&E Plan

PLAN

- **Test the validity of intervention(s) with** routine M&E
- Check results against success metrics

STUDY

- Introduce program intervention(s)
- **Implement planned activities**

DO

Advantages of embedding MEL in Program Management

- Scheduled checks allows for **catching mistakes** early for course-correction

- Routine data collection creates a **pool of ready-to-use information** for strategic planning

- Good data management **boosts institutional memory** instills knowledge management

- Information collected, once analyzed, provides **evidence-base for increased funding** support

- Routine sharing through learning platforms allows for **increased transparency, accountability and improvements** through lessons learned

Best Practices in Monitoring

○ Regular checks – ensure that information sought is absolutely necessary to informing project progress (focused)

○ Unchanging – ensure that a systematic approach is used in data capture

○ Timely – data capture needs to happen within a predetermined set window period for comparability over time

○ Participatory – involve and engage all relevant stakeholders of the information ; sources and users for transparency and increased ownership

"As human beings it is our endeavor to achieve our goals...

Goals are part of every aspect of life: how you conduct your relationships, what you want to achieve at work, the way you use your spare time...

Everything comes **_down to priorities, and what you would like to accomplish_** in every aspect.

Without setting goals or objectives, life becomes a series of chaotic happenings you don't control."

- Anonymous.

Recap of key definitions

○ **Goal:** a statement which is defined by the program from inception, which articulates **the desired, long-term outcome** of the program

○ **Objectives:** a series of statements which **aim to fulfill the program goal**

○ **Indicator:** this is used to guide **monitoring attainment of program objectives** and goal
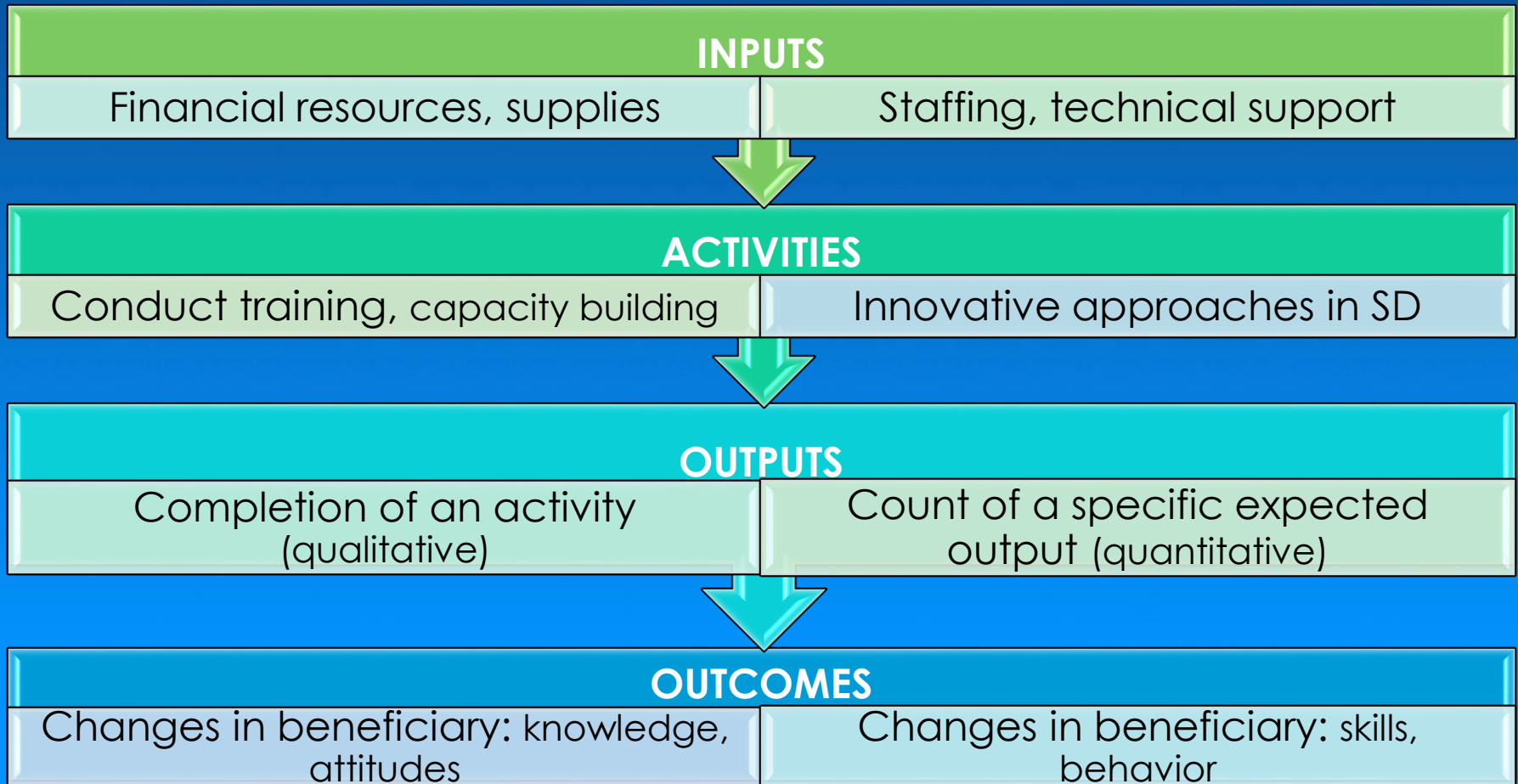
S.M.A.R.T Principles

S.M.A.R.T. Principles

S.M.A.R.T. principles can be used in M&E and Programming to:

○ SET **GOAL**

○ SET **OBJECTIVES**

○ DEVELOP **INDICATORS – direct/ indirect**

| Input | Activity | Output | Outcome |

LOGIC MODEL ELEMENTS

Logic Model

INPUTS

Financial resources, supplies	Staffing, technical support

ACTIVITIES

Conduct training, capacity building	Innovative approaches in SD

OUTPUTS

Completion of an activity (qualitative)	Count of a specific expected output (quantitative)

OUTCOMES

Changes in beneficiary: knowledge, attitudes	Changes in beneficiary: skills, behavior

# Developing a Results Framework

- RFs (log frames) give explicit guidance on results expected at different stages of implementation

- The matrix presents:

    - A **mix of anticipated results** → for input, activity, output and outcome stages

    - T**ime limits** for specific activity, output or intermediate outcome →to achieve the project/program objectives

    - **Risks or obstacles** → readiness for program re-design

    - **Key milestones** → worth noting through routine progress monitoring

    - **Direct/ in-direct indicators** → linked to a specific intermediate outcome

    - **Clear data sources** → a mix of primary or secondary sources

EVALUATION BASICS

Evaluations & The Program Cycle

Evaluations are primarily used to inform program staff about:

o **Performance:** How well program activities have been able to meet strategic objectives?

o **Attribution:** To what extent to which any changes seen are directly linked to the program?
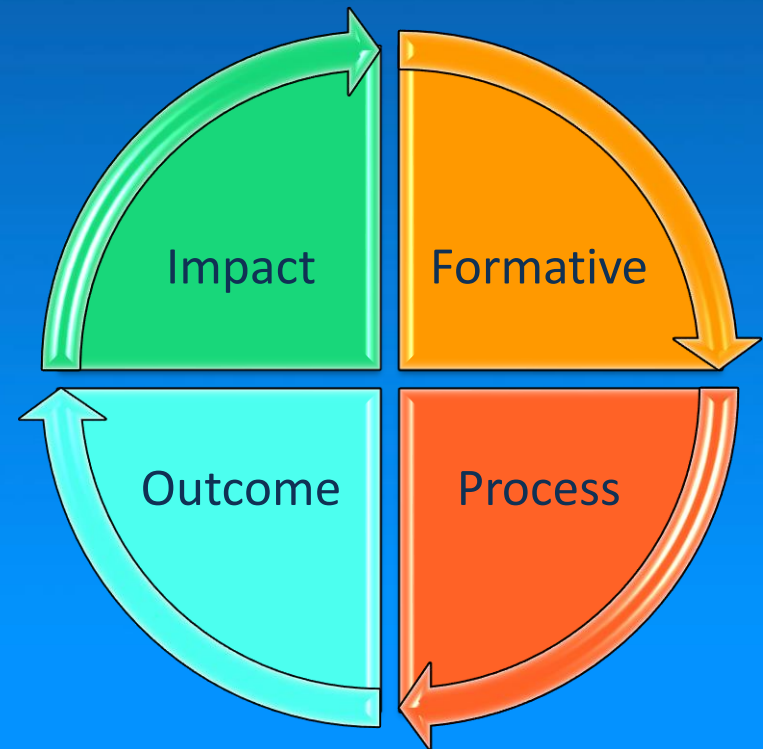
4 Main Types of Evaluations

Formative
- Checks program **feasibility**
- Done **before** implementation

Process
- Checks **implementation progress**
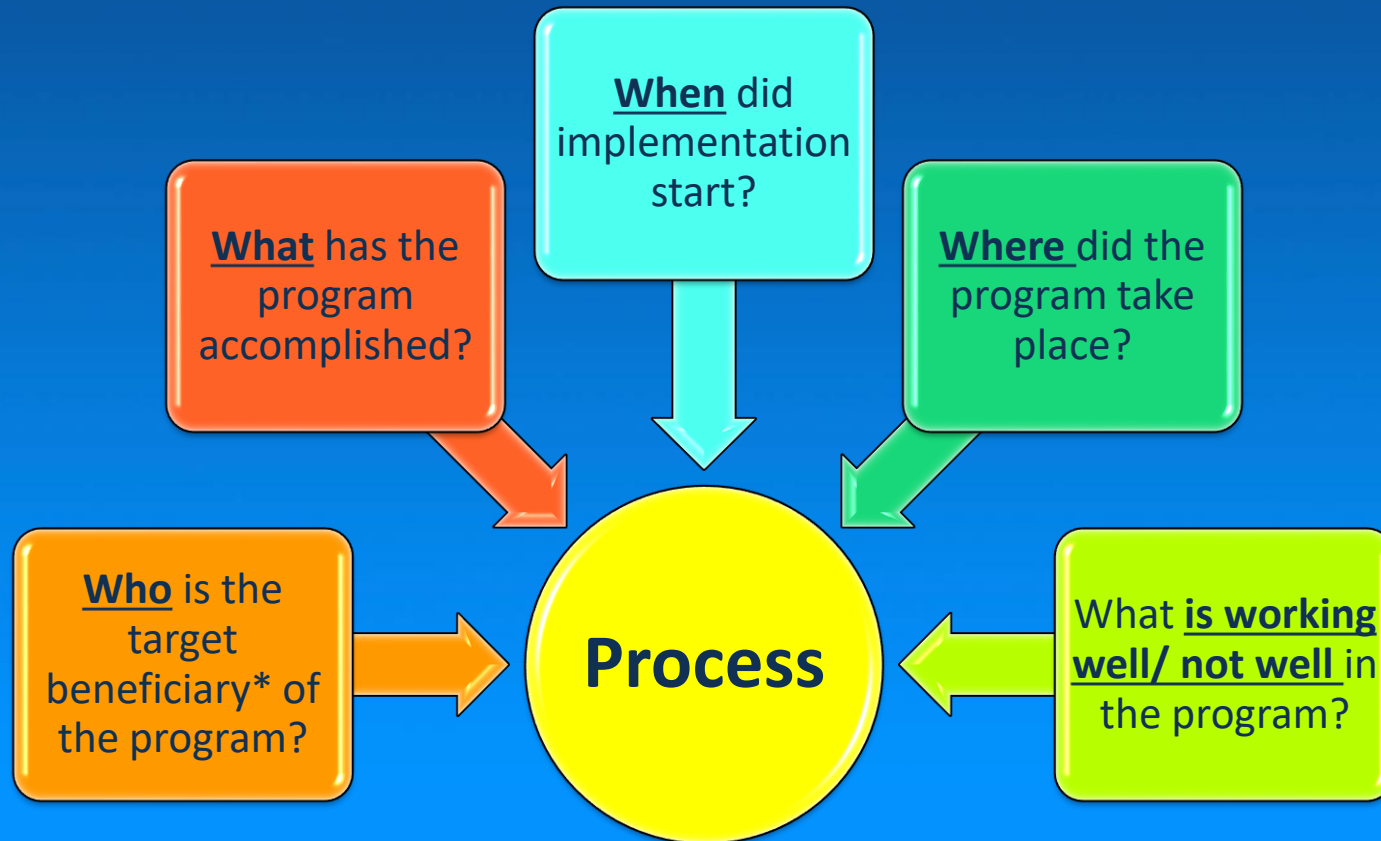- Done when program **implementation begins**

Outcome
- Checks **program effects**
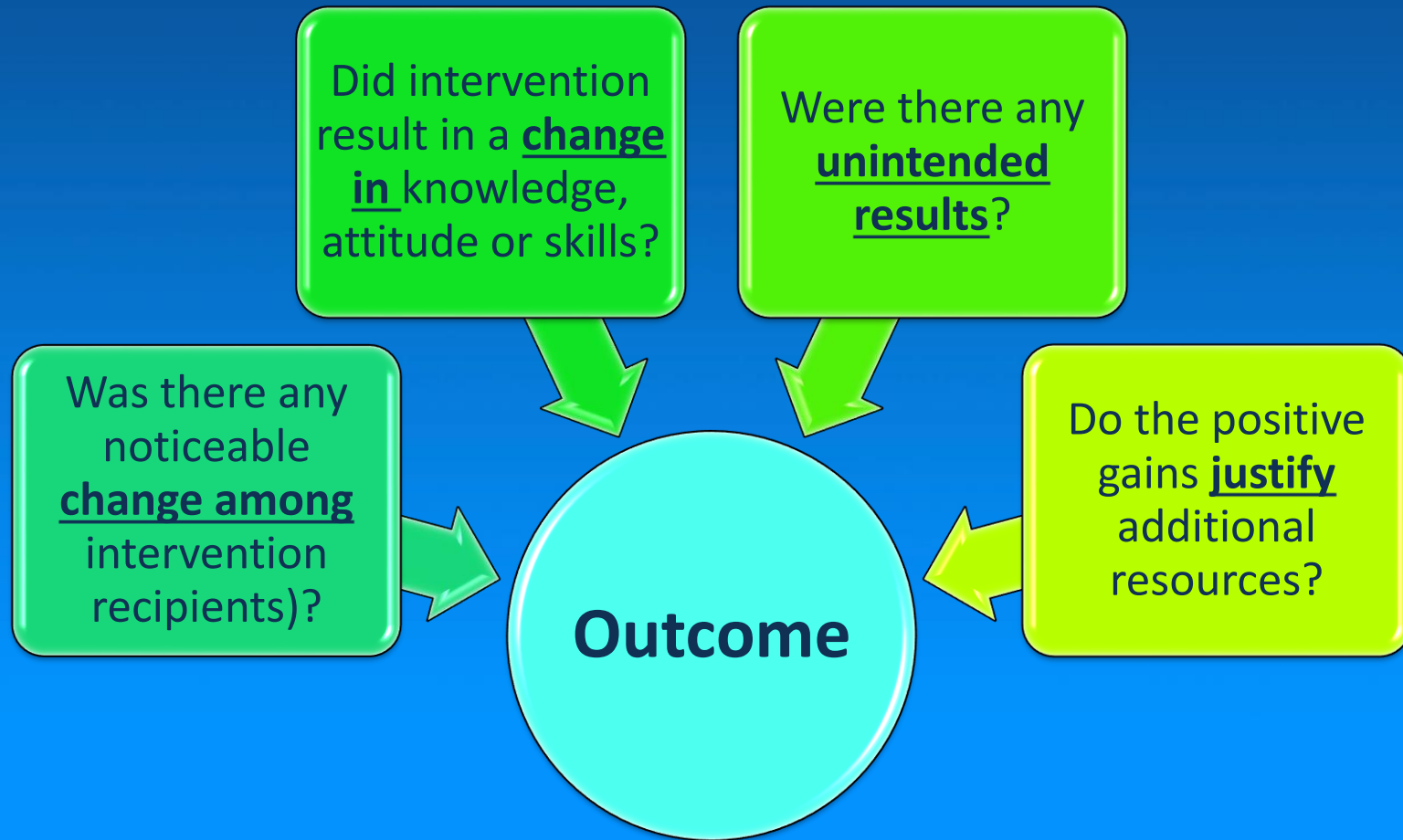- Done when program **has reached at least 1 person**

Impact
- Assess **program effectiveness**
- Done at the **end** of a program

Process Evaluation

Outcome Evaluation

Did intervention result in a **change in** knowledge, attitude or skills?

Were there any **unintended results**?

Was there any noticeable **change among** intervention recipients)?

Outcome

Do the positive gains **justify** additional resources?

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF AN M&E PLAN & WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

PLANNING FOR M&E

What is an M&E Plan?

○ This is a guiding document which is developed as soon as program is operational

○ M&E Unit leads development of the M&E plan – in consultation with program teams

○ Serves as a basis for how the program as a whole meets its objectives to achieve its goal

Why is an M&E Plan important?

Consensus

Coordination

Accountability

Standardization

Institutional Memory

What is in an M&E Plan?

○ **Program description**

○ **Results framework** which clearly states program goal and S.M.A.R.T. objectives and clear outcome areas

○ **Indicators** (and definitions) for planned activities by result area

○ **Data sources** aligned to list of indicators

What is in an M&E Plan? (cont'd)

○ **Risks** associated with data capture (data collection) & proposed QA measures

○ **Time period** for routine monitoring
  ○ Time period for evaluations, assessments

○ **Data Analysis plan** for each methodology

○ **Dissemination plan**

e.g. RF for HIV service delivery

Goal	Achieve 50% HTC coverage among Zambian females and makes aged 15 – 49 who receive an HIV test in the last 12 months and know results by 2015
Strategic Objective	Strengthen facility & community-level HTC referral and linkage systems
Result Areas	Increase number of health facilities providing ART services / Improve health provider capacity to provide referral HTC services for HEIs / Strengthen follow up to provide referral HTC services at community-level

THE END

- Online Resources:

- www.cdc.gov

- www.pepfar.gov

- www.measureevaluation.org

- www.globalhealthlearning.org