

**Support to Quality Monitoring Systems and Methodologies**  
of Projects and Programmes of External Assistance  
Financed by the European Community  
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# **Analysis of Response Sheets Regarding Quality of ROM Reports and System**

13 May 2011

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2.    Excel document “RS database from September 2008 to July 2009”
3.    Excel document “RS database from July 2009 to November 2010”
4.    Excel document “Sample for RS analysis”

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BCS</b>	Background Conclusion Sheet
<b>CMTP</b>	Centrally Managed Thematic Programmes
<b>CRIS</b>	Common Relex Information System
<b>DAC-CRS</b>	Development Aid Committee – Creditor Reporting System
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ENPI</b>	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>MR</b>	Monitoring Report
<b>PCM</b>	Project Cycle Management
<b>PM</b>	Project Management
<b>PPP</b>	Private Public Partnership
<b>ROM</b>	Results Oriented Monitoring
<b>RS</b>	Response Sheet(s)
<b>TL</b>	Team Leader
<b>TM</b>	Task Manager(s)
<b>TORs</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>WBT</b>	Western Balkans & Turkey

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Response Sheet (RS) is one of the elements of quality assurance within the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) process. It has been part of ROM since mid 2009.

The ROM Handbook, in its latest version of August 2009, provides the following definition of the RS: “The RS [...] includes the Task Managers (TM) assessment of the quality of the Monitoring Report (MR), eventual plans to implement MR recommendations and feedback from other stakeholders”.

According to the ROM Handbook, the design RS is intended to:

- ensure the assessment by TM of the quality of the MR,
- guarantee that monitors receive feedback on the quality of their reports from TM and stakeholders,
- secure the dissemination of the MR results to stakeholders and Project implementers,
- facilitate improvement of the ROM system and Project Cycle Management (PCM) as a whole, based on the feedback from TM in the RS

In order to check the effectiveness of the RS, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the most relevant fields of the RS has been conducted in conformity with the Terms of Reference (TOR's) – (Ares(2010)759149). A sample of 239 RS across all regions was used. The analysis was conducted with the main aim to tackle the two following questions:

- Does the current design of the RS guarantee an overall assessment of the MR?
- Does the current RS working process guarantee the dissemination of ROM reports and feedback from the stakeholders?

The following general conclusions can be drawn from the study:

In 92% of RS (221 RS out of 239 of the sample), TM observed that MR are “comprehensive, easy to read and understand”. In those cases where MR require minor fine tuning, comments made in the RS are directed to the coherence of line of arguments, corrections of contradictions or further clarification of ideas/opinions.

- In general, TM underline that MR identify the weak points of projects and the corrective measures needed.
- 50% of the RS analysed do not contain any observations from stakeholders and MR may not be shared because of political or technical issues.
- Most of the comments provided by TM on ROM methodology are concerned with organisation, logistics and team performance.
- TM recommendations focus on adapting ROM (i.e. duration, number of visits, number and profile of the monitors) to the complexity of the project, to its budget and to its location.

In order to avoid introducing continuous changes to the RS template, it is recommended to focus on how to increase dissemination and in particular feedback from partners. Over the long term, a revision of the role of the RS and the improvement of the template is proposed. A new RS template should be more user friendly in order to remove the perception it is a bureaucratic/administrative obligation.

# 1 METHODOLOGY

The study has been carried out in two main phases.

- Phase 1 focused on the extraction of RS from CRIS in order to do a representative sample of 239 RS out of 1207 RS available.
- Phase 2 focused on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the main fields of the RS and the proposal of some recommendations

## 1.1 Sampling of Response Sheets

The analysis has been based on a sample of RS corresponding to the period July 2009-November 2010, when RS was not changed compared to other periods.

The sample was taken from 1207 RS, with a 95% confidence level and a  $\pm 5\%$  precision level, which results in a sample size of 239 RS. This is sufficient to satisfy a confident inference with minimum risk deviation. The sample also took into account the need to cover:

- *the 6 major “DAC-CRS code”*

Corresponding Sector
Public Services and Infrastructures
Major Services ( public, private or organized through PPP, as Transport, Communication, Energy or Finance)
Productive Sectors
Multisector crosscutting projects
Community Aid & Governmental Programme Assistance
Humanitarian Aid projects
Administrative cost of donors, refugees and unallocated projects

- *the main budget ranges*

Corresponding Budget range
Under 1 Mill €
From 1 to 4 Mill €
From 4 to 10 Mill €
Over 10 Mill €

As a result, the sample selected by sector and budget reflect the sub regions / country groups as follows:

Number of RS	Corresponding Sub-region/ Country Groups	%
4	"All countries"	2%
19	ENPI East partner countries	8%
25	ENPI South partner countries	10,5%
48	Countries of Sub Saharan Africa	20%
34	Countries of Asia	14%
15	Countries of Latin America	6%
13	CMTP UE partner countries	5,5%
21	Countries of the Caribbean region	9%
12	Countries of the Pacific region	5%
34	Food Facility projects (as one of the ROM contracts)	14%
14	Western Balkans and Turkey	6%

Two subcategories have been determined regarding the state of the project; ongoing and ex-post:

Number of RS	Type of MR	%
197	Ongoing MR	82%
42	Ex -post MR	18%

## 1.2 Analysed fields of the RS

The most relevant fields of the RS have been selected in accordance with the main objectives of the study:

- Overall Appreciation of the MR

The analysis determines to what extent the RS is a valuable tool to assess the quality of the MR. For this purpose, fields II.1, II.2 and IV.2 have been analysed respectively.

- Feedback by project's stakeholders

For this purpose, Field IV.1 has been analysed.

Purpose	Corresponding field of the RS	Corresponding question in the RS	Type of answer required	
			Comments	Grade
Overall appreciation of the MR	II.1.	Is the Monitoring Report easy to read and understand?	√	√
Quality of recommendations	II.2.	Are the recommendations useful and realistic?	√	√
Feedback by project's stakeholders	IV.1.	Please specify if you got any feedback / comments on the Monitoring Report from the partner government, implementing partner or project manager	√	
ROM working process appreciation	IV.2.	Please comment/suggest any other aspect you deem relevant, e.g. mission organisation, logistics, ROM methodology, team performance	√	



## 2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSE SHEETS: KEY FINDINGS

### 2.1. Easiness of the MR to be read and understood

Field of analysis in the RS:	II.1 Is the Monitoring Report easy to read and understand?
<b>FINDINGS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The general perception of TM is that MR are comprehensive</li> <li>2 In those cases where MR require fine tuning, comments are directed to the coherence of argumentations, corrections of contradictions or further clarification of ideas/arguments</li> </ol>

- In 92% of RS (221 RS out of 239 of the sample), TM observed that MR are “easy to read and understand”, grading question II.1 “a” in 107 cases or “b” in 114 cases. This demonstrates that MR are structured in a coherent way, and provide an overview of the most relevant projects developments:

- The MR is well structured and fulfils the standards of coherence and consistency,
- The monitor has a proven understanding of the context of the project,
- The monitor has recognized technical knowledge in the field of action of the project,
- The monitor has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the project,
- The monitor has carried out and in depth analysis of the main activities has been carried.

- In 12% of MR (30 MR over 239) which were rated “a” or “b”, TM considered necessary the correction of some aspects of the MR:

- Difficulties with language skills,
- Incorrect or contradictory observations that minimize the coherence of MR,
- Statements that need further clarification,
- Lack of global vision to make an accurate analysis of the situation.

- 7 MR over 239 have been assessed as confusing and/or redundant:

- Misunderstanding of the context and/or project situation leading to inconsistencies, confusions and errors.
- Contradictions across the sections of the MR,
- Important issues related to the project implementation have not been addressed.

## 2.2. Usefulness of Recommendations

Field of analysis in the RS:	II.2 Are the recommendations useful and realistic?
<b>FINDINGS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 In general terms, the perception of TM regarding the usefulness of recommendations is very positive</li> <li>2 In 15 RS section II.2 is scored “C” but TM consider those recommendations as useful and realistic.</li> <li>3 The size and the DAC sectors of the projects do not influence the usefulness and realistic nature of recommendations.</li> </ol>

In 86% of RS (206 RS out of 239 of the sample), TM observed that recommendations are “useful and realistic”, grading question II.2 “a” in 51 cases or “b” in 155 cases. Curiously, in 15 RS section II.2 scored “C” yet TM considered the recommendations useful and realistic.

Analysis of cross-cutting item II.2 with a DAC Code did not lead to any specific results.

Further cross-cutting analysis has been conducted regarding the appreciation of TM in relation to the usefulness of the recommendations and (i) the geographical zone of implementation of the project and (ii) the budget of the project. The following tables show how this comparison was done:

**Table 1. Cross cut overview between usefulness of recommendations and geography**

Geographical Zone	Overall quantity	2.2. Recommendations useful and realistic					
		Yes (all or some)		No		No comment	
		Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
0 = All countries	4	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
1 = ENPI East	19	18	95%	1	5%	0	0%
2 = Enpi South	25	23	92%	1	4%	1	4%
3 = Africa	48	40	83%	8	17%	0	0%
4= Asia	34	33	97%	0	0%	1	3%
5 = Latin America	15	13	87%	2	13%	0	0%
6 = CMTP	13	11	85%	0	0%	2	15%
7= Caribbean	21	19	90%	0	0%	2	10%
8 = Pacific	12	12	100%	0	0%	0	0%
9= Food Facility	34	29	85%	5	15%	0	0%
10 = WBT	14	12	86%	2	14%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3%</b>

The following observations can be highlighted:

- All regions show a high rate of positive responses regarding usefulness of recommendations, the Pacific region and Asia having the highest rates

**Table 2. Usefulness of recommendations and Budget**

Budget	Overall quantity	2.2. Recommendations useful and realistic					
		Yes (all or some)		No		No comment	
		Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
x < 1 Mio	65	59	91%	4	6%	2	3%
1 Mio < x < 4 Mio	64	57	89%	6	9%	1	2%
4 Mio < x < 10Mio	60	55	92%	4	7%	1	2%
10 Mio < x	50	43	86%	5	10%	2	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3%</b>

The following observation can be highlighted:

- The size of the projects does not influence the usefulness and realistic nature of the recommendations.

### 2.3. Provision of feedback from Project Stakeholders

<b>Field of analysis in the RS:</b>	IV.1 Please specify if you got any feedback / comments on the Monitoring Report from the partner government, implementing partner or project manager
<b>FINDINGS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 In 45% of RS (108 RS over 239), no feedback has been provided to TM</li> <li>2 In some cases, it appears that stakeholders have not been able to provide feedback as MR have not been shared with them</li> <li>3 When feedback is provided, the design of the RS makes it difficult to identify in a straight forward manner the origin of the feedback. When the origin of the feedback is mentioned, the main stakeholders (Government partner, implementing partners) do not appear as the main providers of feedback</li> <li>4 More feedback is provided to MR from Asia and for Food Facility projects, whereas in ENPI South and WBT feedback is not provided in most of the cases.</li> </ol>

- TM do not always receive feedback from the stakeholders on the MR
  - In 52% of RS analysed (125 RS out of 239) TM received some feedback from at least one institution involved in the project
  - In 45% of RS (108 RS out of 239) TM have received no feedback
  - In 3% of RS (6 RS out of 239), the answer of TM was not clear

- When feedback is provided, in most of the cases TM did not specify its source. They only indicate that the feedback received has been taken into account in the RS
- Stakeholders that sent feedback to TM can be identified as follows:
  - Partner Government: 3% (7 RS out of 239)
  - Implementing Partner: 7% (17 RS out of 239)
  - Project Manager: 2% (5 RS out of 239)
  - Others: 33% (79 RS out of 239). The terms “others” is used to cover the following cases:
    - (i) When the provider of feedback is not properly identified by the TM, the term “others” is used to cover the following entities:
      - Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
      - “the partners”
      - “the Technical Assistance team”
      - “the Project Monitoring committee”
      - other funding entities as the World Bank or the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
    - (ii) When the provider of feedback is not clearly identified:
      - a person named, with no indication about his/her position or role
      - the acronyms of an institution with no indication of its role in the project
  - Unknown: 8% (19 RS out of 239). The term “unknown” is used to cover the cases where some feedback has been provided but the source is unknown:
    - The comments received have been incorporated in the RS, without any indication regarding the source of feedback
    - TM refer to some documents containing the feedback as attached to the RS (however these documents were not found in CRIS)
- Feedback provided refer to the correction of factual errors appearing in MR
- When TM indicates that no feedback has been received (in 45% of the RS, 108 RS out of 239 RS), the analysis shows that no justification is added in most cases. The answers analysed follow 2 trends:
  - 76 RS do not justify the absence of feedback.
  - 32 RS give some insights regarding the dissemination of MR to the main Stakeholders:
    - TM indicate that MR have been shared but that no feedback has been received at the time the RS is fulfilled.

- TM indicate that MR has not been shared with the Stakeholders at all. The following reasons have been mentioned:
  - “Diplomatic reasons”
  - “MR are not available in CRIS, with no access for external parties”
- TM indicate that no written feedback has been received but they refer to the debriefing mission or to the meeting organised with Stakeholders about the Monitoring results.

The existence of feedback on the MR from stakeholders has been analysed by geographical zone .

**Table 3. Feedback and geographical zone**

Geographical Zone	Overall quantity	4.1. Provision of feedback					
		Yes (Y and YC)		No		Unclear Statement	
		Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
0 = All countries	4	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%
1 = ENPI East	19	8	42%	11	58%	0	0%
2 = Enpi South	25	6	24%	18	72%	1	4%
3 = Africa	48	26	54%	22	46%	0	0%
4= Asia	34	24	71%	10	29%	0	0%
5 = Latin America	15	9	60%	5	33%	1	7%
6 = CMTP	13	4	31%	6	46%	3	23%
7= Caribbean	21	13	62%	8	38%	0	0%
8 = Pacific	12	7	58%	5	42%	0	0%
9= Food Facility	34	24	71%	10	29%	0	0%
10 = WBT	14	3	21%	10	71%	1	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3%</b>

The following observations can be highlighted:

- The geographical zones more active in providing feedback are Asia and those where Food Facility projects are being implemented
- In ENPI South and WBT feedback is not provided in most of the cases.

## 2.4. Proposals from TM to address the ROM process

<b>Field of analysis in the RS:</b>	IV.2 Please comment/suggest any other aspect you deem relevant, e.g. mission organisation, logistics, ROM methodology, team performance
<b>FINDINGS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 In general good grades (A, B) for section “Assessment of general quality of Monitoring Report” are not accompanied by comments</li> <li>2 When there are comments (in half of the RS), remarks refer to the 3 areas suggested in the RS template (ROM methodology, Organisation and logistics, and Team performance).</li> <li>3 In 16 RS, it is underlined that the organisation of the mission (i.e. duration, number of visits, profile of the monitors) should be adapted to the complexity of the project, to its budget and location.</li> </ol>

In 116 over 239 RS analysed, TM do not make any additional comment or suggestion in field IV.2.

In order to obtain further information, the consistency between the grades allocated to I “Assessment of general quality of Monitoring Report” and the absence of comments in field IV.2. has been analysed.

**Table 4. Overview between grades in I and comments in IV.2**

Grade allocated to the “Assessment of general quality of Monitoring Report”	Number of RS without comments	% of RS without comments
A	30	26%
B	81	70%
C	5	4%
D	0	0%

In 96% of the RS that do not contain further comments in the field IV.2., TM have allocated “A” or “B” as overall grade to the MR.

The standard pattern when a MR is satisfactory is not to make any further comments or suggestions in the section IV.2 of the RS.

118 out of 239 of the RS contain further comments focusing on monitoring improvement:

○ **ROM Methodology**

In 44 RS, TM provide suggestions regarding ROM Methodology, mainly to improve its effectiveness:

- Most recurrent comments:
  - The monitoring mission (i.e. duration, number of visits, number and profile of the monitors) should be adapted to the complexity of the project, to its budget and to its location (16 RS)
  - For multicountry projects, only 1 horizontal report should be drafted (5 RS)

○ **Organisation/logistics**

In 21 RS, TM provide observations only on the organisation of the monitoring mission and its logistical aspects:

- Weak logistic support and the few number of visits organised
- Late approval of the experts
- Short time to prepare the mission
- Time elapsed between the Monitoring mission and the previous ROM
- Short duration of the monitoring mission.

○ **Monitor Performance**

In 20 RS, TM provide observations only on the performance of the Monitor:

- On the one hand, the quality of his/her work and his/her good preparation
- On the other hand, his/her lack of experience and/or of technical specialisation.

○ **Overall aspects of the monitoring mission**

In 19 RS, TM make positive remarks on three dimensions of a monitoring mission (not only on one as previously underlined): its organisation, the team performance and the ROM methodology.

### **3 DESIGN OF THE RESPONSE SHEET: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

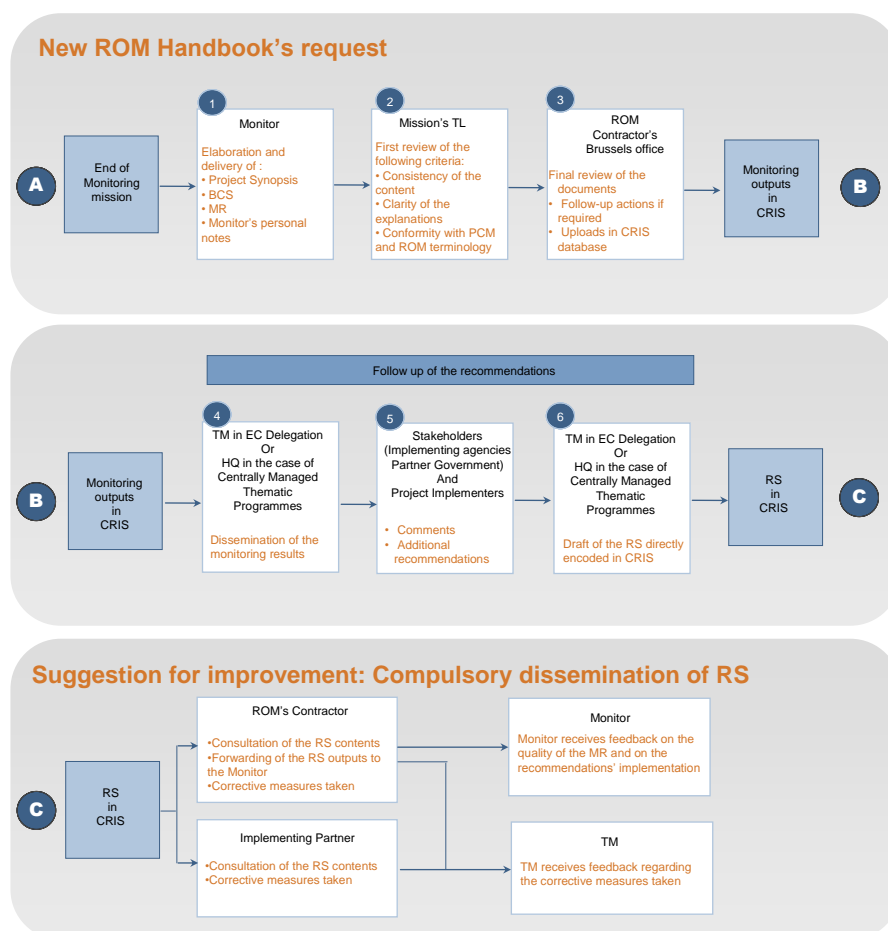
#### **3.2 Short term recommendations**

Taking into consideration IT constraints but as well as the need to avoid continuous changes to the RS template, it is recommended that in the short term, efforts and fine tuning are applied on: (i) increasing the usefulness of recommendations, (ii) increasing dissemination and in particular feedback from partners.

- Regarding the usefulness of recommendations, Monitors should be requested to substantiate their recommendations when projects monitored have sizeable budgets over 5-6 million Euros.
- Regarding feedback from partners, the goal should be to increase the level of participation of partners in providing feedback and increase the involvement of all direct partners (Partner government and Implementing partners) in the provision of feedback to TM. To this end, it is recommended that:
  - TM share on a systematic and compulsory basis the MR with the Government partners and implementing partners. In exceptional cases, they should be duly justified.
  - Partners are requested to provide feedback to TM on a compulsory basis within a reasonable time frame. To this purpose a RS for partners could be created, which would be attached to the RS of TM and uploaded in CRIS



The following workflow presents these ideas:



### 3.3 Long term recommendations

Based on the present analysis, and also taking into account key findings identified in the document “Study on the role and function of the Response Sheet in ROM”, a revision of the role of the RS and the improvement of its template is justified.

The RS has become a multipurpose tool to fulfil several diverse objectives; hence it has lost some of its effectiveness. A further prioritising of its role would be advisable before entering in redesigning the template itself. In this regard, it is suggested that a series of workshops are conducted within the frame of SQ2M project, involving ROM TM, key Delegation TM (managing complex projects/programmes), Team leaders as well as experienced monitors, in order to discuss these aspects and obtain a consensus on the main role assigned to the RS and thus the best way to design a new RS template.

A new RS template should be a user friendly tool. This would increase its use and its contribution to improve the quality of MR. Based on this analysis, a new user friendly design of the RS template should formulate questions with a view to obtain concise, self explanatory, precise answers. The proposal for a re-design of the RS template should take into account:

Recommendation 1: Regarding Part II Assessment of the general quality of the monitoring report

(i) To erase the following questions:

- *Is the Monitoring report easy to understand and read?*
- *Are the recommendations useful and realistic?*

And to replace them with questions to check on the soundness of the analysis, such as:

- *Are the main bottlenecks of the project identified and prioritised? Yes/ No. If No, provide your view*
- *Are the main conclusions affected by any bottlenecks? Yes/No. If No, provide your view*
- *Are the main recommendations in line with conclusions and meeting the objectives of the project? Yes/No. If No, provide your view*
- *Are recommendations operational? Yes/No. If No, provide your view.*

(ii) Maintain the fields Relevance/Quality of Design; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Impact and Potential Sustainability, but score each field from 1 to 3 instead of A,B,C,D, in order to avoid confusion with the grades of the MR.

1= I agree

2=I agree but I would like to complement

3=I do not agree

A space should be provided to allow justifications in case a key/significant divergence occurs.

Recommendation 2: Regarding Part IV Feedback from other project stakeholders and further comments and suggestions

(i) To restructure the field related to feedback from Stakeholders with more precise questions, such as:

- *Has the MR been shared with the main project partners? Yes / No. If yes, name the partner. If No, Justify*
- *Has the main project partner sent its feedback? Yes / No. If No, indicate action to take*
- *What is the most relevant feedback mentioned by the Partner? What action would you recommend to take? When? By whom?*

(ii) To create a RS template for main Partner to fill in and to be attached to the RS of TM

(iii) To erase the question related to comments on aspects of the mission (ROM methodology, Organisation and Logistics).