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**Joint Results Oriented Monitoring
(JROM)
Operational Guidance for European
Commission Delegations and Partners**

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Abbreviations

AMP	Annual Management Plan
BCS	Background Conclusion Sheet
CRIS	Common Relex Information System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EAMR	External Assistance Management Report
ECD	European Commission Delegation
EROM	External Results Oriented Monitoring
FA	Financing Agreement
F&C	Finance and Contracts
GBS	General Budget Support
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
IROME	Internal Results Oriented Monitoring Ethiopia
JROM	Joint Results Oriented Monitoring
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
M&EM	Monitoring and Evaluation Manger
PMO	Project Monitoring Officer
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PG	Partner Government
MP	Monitoring Plan
QA	Quality assurance
RMP	Return Monitoring Page
RS	Response Sheet
SOV	Source of Verification
SPSP	Sector Policy Support Programme
TAP	Technical and Administrative Provisions
TM	Rask Manager
TOR	Terms of Reference

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

To support implementation of the ‘Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness’ and the ‘Accra Agenda for Action’, EuropeAid remains committed to making ongoing improvements in the way that its development cooperation programme is managed and monitored. The overall objective is to improve aid effectiveness and transparency.

EuropeAid has already established a number of quality assessment and monitoring tools/mechanisms (e.g. the Quality Support Groups and the External Results Oriented Monitoring System). However, key staff and working groups within EuropeAid have observed the need to further strengthen the capacity of European Commission Delegations (ECDs) to monitor their own portfolio of projects and programmes. In addition, the Paris and Accra commitments require that EuropeAid promote ownership of development cooperation programmes by partner governments, greater alignment with partner government systems, harmonisation with other donors, and mutual responsibility for development results. Improved ‘joint’ monitoring of development results (e.g. ECD with partner governments) is one key way in which these commitments can be met.

This Operational Guidance has been prepared following an extensive review of current ECD monitoring systems and tools. The Guidance builds on the findings of this research, and in particular draws on the Ethiopian Delegation’s experience in designing, documenting and implementing their own ‘Internal Results-Oriented Monitoring System’ for Ethiopia (I-ROME).¹

Other key source documents include EuropeAid’s ‘ROM Handbook’ and ‘Strengthening Project Internal Monitoring – How to enhance the role of EC task managers’.²

1.2 Purpose and scope of this Operational Guidance

This Operational Guidance has been prepared in order to promote more effective aid management and monitoring by both ECDs and Partner Governments.

It aims to achieve this through providing both ‘ideas’, as well as some specific processes and tools that Delegations can use to:

- Rationalise and better integrate ECD monitoring and reporting activities;
- Prepare project portfolio monitoring plans that help prioritise and specify monitoring activities;
- Establish and implement a joint Results Oriented Monitoring (JROM) approach with partner governments, and where appropriate also with other donors; and
- Effectively manage and use the information resulting from JROM to help improve resource management and allocation decisions and to effectively assess and report on the effectiveness of the aid programme.

In its current form, this Guidance only applies to the monitoring of ‘projects’, and not to Sector Policy Support Programmes (SPSPs) or to General Budget Support (GBS) operations.

¹ This Operational Guidance has been drafted by consultants Jonathan Hampshire, Jordi del Bas and Rafael Eguiguren, under the coordination of Fernando Cerutti Gil (Aidco Unit E5) and Mary Hall (ROM Support Office - Particp).

² Tools and Methods Series, Reference Document No. 3, June 2007.

Nevertheless, it is anticipated that a similar approach, at least for SPSPs, will be documented and promoted in the near future.

The Guidance is provided as a resource for interested EC Delegations and Partner Governments. It is not a set of new EC ‘requirements’. The Guidance is just that – it should help guide the development and implementation of improved joint monitoring approaches and not be used as a quick-fix blueprint. Each Delegation will have somewhat different priorities and needs, as will their partner governments. The Guidance should therefore be applied (and adapted) as needed.

1.3 Discussion and definition of key terms

This section provides a brief discussion and definition of key terms. This aims to clarify what it is we mean by ‘Joint Results Oriented Monitoring’.

Term	Discussion and definition
<i>Monitoring</i>	<p>Monitoring refers generally to the ongoing collection, analysis and use of information about project/programme progress and the results being achieved. It supports effective and timely management decision making, learning by stakeholders and accountability.</p> <p>Monitoring is often distinguished from evaluation, in terms of its purpose, who is involved and its timing/frequency. Evaluation is seen as feeding more into policy making and strategic planning (rather than operational management decision making processes), is led by independent ‘experts’ (rather than being undertaken by implementing stakeholders themselves), and is undertaken only periodically (such as at, or some time after, the completion of a project or programme investment) rather than on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>While this is often a useful distinction to make, in practice there are often grey areas between what is considered to be monitoring and what is evaluation. In the context of developing ‘joint monitoring’ approaches, it is suggested that this distinction be kept in mind, but that some elements of ‘evaluation’ could also be captured within whatever joint approaches are developed.</p> <p>The most important point to emphasise about monitoring is that it is a basic management tool and a core management responsibility which needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis.</p>
<i>‘Results’ oriented</i>	<p>When we are talking about joint monitoring approaches, we are primarily focused on <u>results-oriented</u> monitoring. It is important that this focus is clearly maintained given that there is still a long way to go in moving from a focus on input/activity based monitoring to effective results-based systems.</p> <p>OECD-DAC refers to results as being ‘the output, outcome or impact...of a development intervention’.</p> <p>These different levels of results can be ‘linked’ to the OECD evaluation criteria as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs (plus activities and use of inputs) are assessed under the criterion of ‘efficiency’; • Outcomes are assessed under the criterion of ‘effectiveness’; and • Impact is assessed under the criterion of ‘impact’. <p>One point of potential confusion is that EuropeAid’s current ‘Project Cycle Management Guidelines’ uses the word ‘results’ to refer only to ‘outputs’ in the hierarchy of Logframe objectives. This Operational Guidance uses the OECD-DAC definition, and ‘results’ therefore apply to outputs, outcomes and impact.</p>

Term	Discussion and definition
<i>Joint monitoring</i>	<p>Joint can refer to either joint monitoring by: (i) donors and partner governments (promoting alignment and mutual accountability); and/or (ii) joint monitoring by donors (harmonised approaches).³ If multiple donors are working jointly with partner governments, this would promote both alignment and harmonization.</p> <p>These options are not mutually exclusive, but may not automatically support each other. There are legitimate concerns that more harmonized/joint approaches among donors may impede efforts to align more closely with partner government systems.</p> <p>On balance therefore, harmonized monitoring approaches (between donors) should only be pursued when it is clear that they will not impact negatively on efforts to align with partner government monitoring systems. Alignment (and promoting partner government ownership) should be seen as the ‘greater good’.</p> <p>With respect to joint monitoring (both between donors and with partner governments), there are various types of joint activity that could be undertaken, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint planning and management of monitoring visits (e.g. coordinated missions with mixed teams, jointly prepared TOR, etc); • Use of jointly agreed methods / tools (e.g. indicators, assessment criteria, rating systems); • Joint analysis and dialogue on the results of monitoring (e.g. joint reviews); • Joint reporting (e.g. using one agreed format and jointly agreeing on, and sharing, content); and/or • Joint decision making on follow-up actions based on the results of monitoring (e.g. through a joint management board / team) <p>With respect to donors working more collaboratively together, there is also the option of appointing/nominating one lead donor (e.g. for a jointly funded project, sector programme, or to work in a geographic area), and relying on their monitoring and reporting systems (e.g. division of labour and mutual recognition of each other’s monitoring systems). Similarly, donors may jointly monitor with a partner government by agreeing to use partner government monitoring systems, while establishing mechanisms for joint review, dialogue, and decision making on follow-up actions regarding use of donor funds.</p>
<i>Monitoring ‘projects’ vs other forms of aid</i>	<p>The EC distinguishes between 3 main types of aid delivery method, namely ‘projects’; ‘sector policy support programmes’, and ‘general budget support’. Sector policy support programmes can use different financing mechanisms, namely project (using donor procedures/finance mechanisms), common pool funding or sector budget support.</p> <p>The need/demand for joint monitoring with both partner governments and other donors tends to increase as one moves from stand alone projects towards general budget support. This is due to the simple fact that a fundamental purpose of both sector policy support programmes and general budget support is to promote government ownership, alignment with government systems and more harmonized donor approaches. Joint monitoring (in all its possible forms) should therefore be an integral part of both the design and implementation of any sector support or general budget support programme.</p>

³ Joint monitoring could also refer to working collaboratively with other stakeholders/partners such as NGOs. However, the focus of this note will be only on the joint donor/donor and joint donor/partner government options.

Term	Discussion and definition
	<p>For donor funded <u>projects</u> (which have traditionally used the donor's own management, financing and accountability procedures) the demand for undertaking joint monitoring with partner governments has been less pronounced. Nevertheless, there are now recognized to be clear and significant benefits (ownership, alignment, harmonization, mutual accountability, etc) from promoting more joint monitoring of projects, both with partner governments and with any other co-financing donors.</p>
<i>Internal and external monitoring</i>	<p>The term 'internal monitoring' is used to refer to monitoring that is undertaken by those responsible for project implementation. This is used to distinguish it from 'external monitoring', which is undertaken by external agents (usually independent consultants), such as in the case of EuropeAid's current global ROM system. 'Internal' monitoring also gives emphasis to the fact that the information is needed and used for 'own' purposes, rather than just for use by/sharing with 'external' parties.</p> <p>A primary aim of this Operational Guidance is to support more effective 'internal' monitoring (namely by Delegations, Partner Governments and their implementing agencies), based on the proven method and tools developed through EuropeAid's 'external' ROM system.</p>

2 The institutional framework and stakeholder roles

2.1 EC institutional requirements

European Commission Delegations are part of an institutional framework that prescribes a number of monitoring and reporting requirements with different, sometimes overlapping, objectives.

Task managers are currently expected to provide input to reports such as:

- the External Assistance Management Report (EAMR) and the Annual Management Plan (AMP);
- the Common Relex Information System's (CRIS) implementation window;
- External ROM mission reports;
- Task Manager's mission/field visit reports; and
- Quarterly/six-monthly and annual reports associated with specific programmes / projects.

These obligations are concurrent with other requirements such as contributions to Country Strategy Paper reviews, Section overview reports and other ad-hoc requests for information from Headquarters.

In this context, the start up of a JROM system could well be perceived with concern as an additional task in an already 'crowded field' of monitoring and reporting responsibilities. However, the objective of JROM is to in fact help rationalize these current reporting tools, better integrate and streamline monitoring and reporting processes and improve the underlying quality of results-oriented information that is generated and used. It aims to achieve this through:

- Enhanced collaboration with government partners, with emphasis given to the Task Manager's role as a 'dialogue partner' on development results (rather than as just a contract manager and project 'controller');
- Shift the focus from input and activity-based monitoring to results-based monitoring;
- Improved prioritization and planning of monitoring activities;
- Use of clearly structured and consistent monitoring and reporting processes and tools which can produce aggregate and comparable information; and, over time
- Promoting rationalization and streamlining of other reporting tasks.

JROM thus aims to deliver better quality information from the field, and not more information.

Some examples of the type of rationalization of reporting tasks that could be implemented by ECD's once JROM is established could include:

- When a project is monitored under JROM, the need to complete a separate field mission report could be waived;
- JROM reports could be simply uploaded in CRIS, thus obviating the need to separately complete the CRIS implementation report window;
- Summary data from JROM could be used as a direct input to EAMRs, thus simplifying the task of preparing portfolio overviews; and, over time
- The need for External ROM missions could be reduced and its added value increased.

2.2 Partner government systems

The principles of the ‘Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness’ call for greater ‘harmonisation’ and ‘alignment’ of Aid.

‘Harmonization’⁴ concerns the practices of donor agencies and requires agreement among them regarding the use of common arrangements and approaches, rationalization of procedures and sharing of information. It is intended to lead to better donor coordination and a reduction in transaction costs for partner governments in managing aid. ‘Alignment’ refers to a similar, albeit more encompassing concept, as it concerns both donors and PGs working together to ‘align’ the planning, delivery and monitoring of donor assistance with country policies/strategies, institutional arrangements and resource management systems. Enhanced alignment aims to directly promote country ownership and thus the prospects for sustainability of benefits.

In this context, it is essential that the way donors plan, manage and monitor their aid take greater account of partner government systems, and wherever possible increasingly work with and through these systems.

Operational measures that can support greater involvement of PGs in JROM and pave the way to greater alignment include:

1. Understanding PG systems

Having some understanding of PG planning, resource allocation, monitoring, review and decision making systems (both their scope and limitations) is a prerequisite to implementing any kind of JROM approach. This requires that the ECD, and Task Mangers in particular, take the time and effort to learn about, and take into account, such things as the partner government’s:

- planning and budgeting processes and cycle;
- sector programme strategies and implementation plans;
- monitoring and review mechanisms, responsibilities and formats; and
- key performance indicators already being used (e.g. MDGs, line ministry indicators, data collected and used by national statistical offices, etc).

The best way to learn about these systems is to talk to counterparts and, where possible/appropriate, look at and review relevant PG documentation.

2. Aligning with PG systems at ECD level wherever possible

After gaining an understanding of PG planning, monitoring, reporting and review systems, the ECD needs to discuss with PG counterparts if they are interested in the JROM approach, and if so, how it might be best organized and implemented.

If PG monitoring and reporting systems are well established, adequately results-focused and already producing reliable and useful information, then the ECD should aim to use these established systems as much as possible. Options need to be considered and discussed, and practical approaches agreed that support alignment while also promoting refinements/improvements in the quality of information generated.

If PG systems are not sufficiently mature or do not cover results-oriented information, the ECD can offer the ‘package’ of JROM principles and tools as a basis for joint monitoring work. Different degrees of joint work are of course possible, depending on the capacity and willingness

⁴ Definitions and some selected concepts inspired by ‘Harmonization and Alignment of Results Measurement in Developing Countries: Moving to Country Ownership of Results Measurement’ by Robert Lahey, 2008.

of the PG to participate in the different phases of the monitoring exercise. Previous experience indicates that the following ‘joint’ options may be possible:

- Joint planning of monitoring activities (e.g. which projects should be monitored, when, what the focus should be and who will be involved); and/or
- Joint conduct of field visits (e.g. the Task Manager and the PG counterpart(s) visiting the project together at the same time); and/or
- Joint preparation of Background Conclusion Sheets during/soon after the field visit; and/or
- Joint preparation of the Monitoring Report; and/or
- Joint Project Review Meetings where among other issues, the findings of the Monitoring Report and the Response Sheets are discussed; and/or
- Joint follow-up of critical issues identified and recommendations made as a result of monitoring missions.

Alternatively, the Monitoring Report can be written by one of the parties and then commented on/validated by the other party(s) and, finally, all parties comment through the response sheets and meet to reflect on the way forward.

3. Moving towards full alignment

Where PG results-based monitoring systems are weak, and PGs are interested in working collaboratively with the ECD and other donors to improve their systems, it is expected that the JROM process and tools can be used as a capacity building tool.

In this context, the common implementation of JROM can serve not only its immediate monitoring purpose, but also provide the necessary practical learning to become in the long term the seed for a sustainable PG-based system which satisfies both PG accountability and management needs as well as ECD and other donors’ information needs.

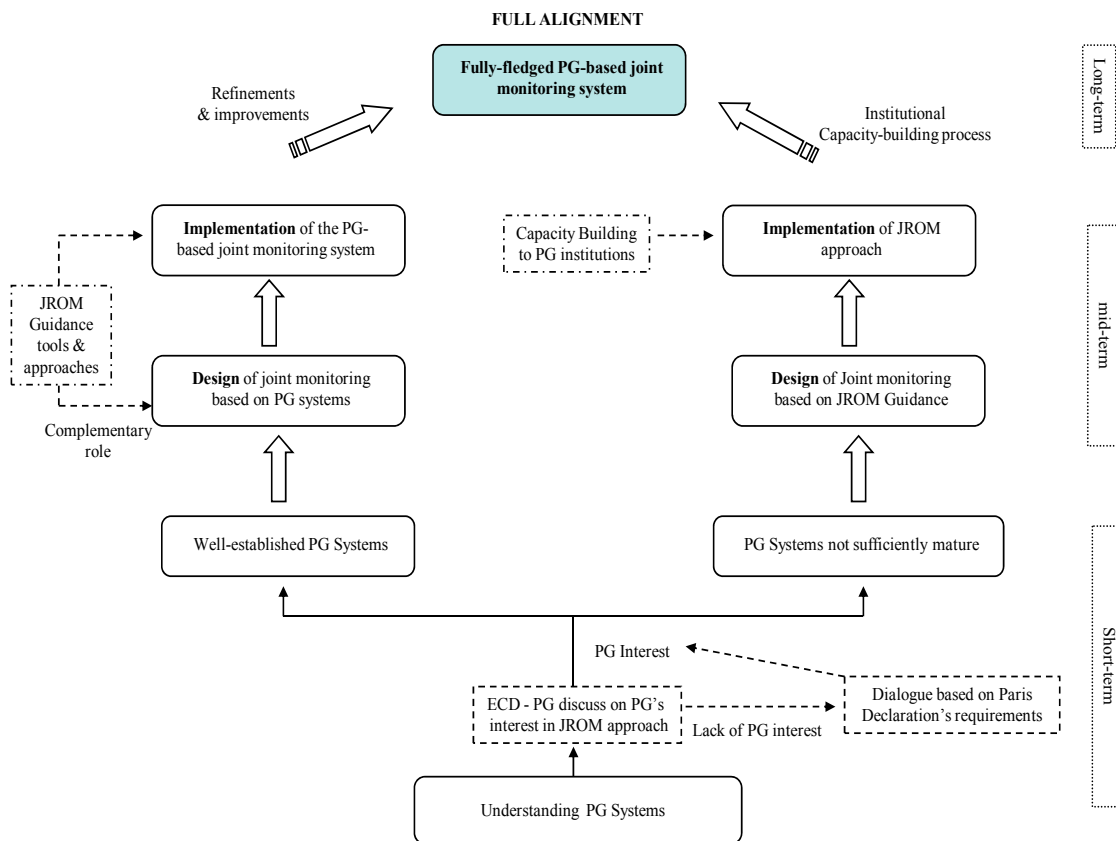
Moving towards full alignment will in many cases be a long-term process and will require significant institutional capacity building by the PG, such as with respect to its:

- Data and information gathering capability (both on a national and at sub-national levels);
- Capacity to analyse data and report on results;
- Capacity to use information effectively to support evidence-based decision making; and
- Overall capacity to establish and sustain ROM systems.

In addition to promoting and undertaking JROM on specific EC funded projects/programmes, the ECD should also therefore look at opportunities to provide other complementary capacity building support for the development of the PG’s own ROM systems.

Figure 1 (which should be read from the bottom up), provides an overview of the process, and main steps, that could be involved in moving towards alignment with PG monitoring systems. It shows two (simplified) scenarios, namely: (i) where PG monitoring systems are not well developed/mature; and (ii) where PG systems are already well developed/established.

Figure 1: Alignment process



2.3 Stakeholder roles and responsibilities for joint monitoring

This section provides a brief profile of the main stakeholders potentially involved in joint project monitoring as well as the roles they might play.⁵

The EC Delegation and Task Managers

The main roles of the ECD in supporting the establishment of JROM are likely to include:

- Informing PG counterparts (and other donors) of the ECD's interest in joint monitoring approaches and the objectives and scope of the JROM approach;
- Engaging in dialogue with PG counterparts (and other donors) to determine their interest in JROM and how this might be best organized and implemented in practice;

⁵ Direct Beneficiaries are often not key actors in the preparation and establishment of monitoring systems, and are therefore not specifically included in the list of stakeholders. Yet they will play a crucial role in JROM implementation as they constitute the primary source of information on project results/effects. Therefore effective monitoring must always involve/seek input from the project's beneficiaries.

- Developing an enhanced understanding of PG planning, monitoring, reporting and review systems, including their strengths, weaknesses and capacity building needs;
- Modifying/adapting, as appropriate/necessary, the JROM approach and tools to align with PG systems;
- Informing implementing partners/contractors about JROM and its requirements in terms of the need to use output and outcome indicators, baselines, mechanisms for field data collection, etc;
- Ensuring Task Manager's have the time, technical capacity and resources to engage in JROM development and implementation;
- Providing complementary resources to support PG and implementing partner capacity building so that they can effectively engage in JROM and develop their own results-oriented monitoring systems (e.g. supporting training and other capacity building activities); and
- Rationalising/streamlining other ECD monitoring/reporting activities so that duplication of effort is avoided and the information generated by JROM is effectively used to support other reporting requirements (such as completion of the EAMR) and as an input to EROM.

To effectively undertake these roles/tasks, each ECD will need to carefully consider the implications in terms of human resource management and resource allocation. For example, it is a broadly recognized concern that ECD Task Managers spend too much of their time dealing with EC procedural requirements, leaving little scope for playing the role of 'informed dialogue partner'. Implementation of JROM both requires, and supports the development of, this dialogue partner role. In this respect, EC Delegations might usefully conduct a brief internal review of Task Manager roles in order to identify how the dialogue partner role can be enhanced and time and resources made available to support and engage in JROM. Without wishing to pre-empt conclusions drawn by any such reviews undertaken by Delegations/Units, one thing seems clear. If the Task Manager is to play an enhanced role as dialogue partner, more time needs to be spent having direct contact with implementing partners, and more focus needs to be given to discussing substantive issues that impact on project effectiveness (rather than just on input delivery and expenditure).

This enhanced role of the Task Manager may also require having to allocate resources to reinforce and/or further develop their monitoring skills. Additionally, it is important to involve F&C Sections in JROM not only to ensure synergies between ECD Sections, but also as a means of motivating F&C officers through getting them more directly involved in assessing and understanding the results of the development cooperation programme. Task Managers similarly need to understand and appreciate finance and contracting issues and requirements in order to effectively support project implementation.

Further discussion of the management implications for ECD's with respect to effectively implementing JROM is provided in Section 5.

Partner Government agencies

The main roles of Partner Government agencies in supporting the establishment of JROM are likely to include:

- Engaging in dialogue with the ECD (and other donors) and make a decision on whether to take part in JROM and how this might be best organized and implemented in practice;
- Presenting their internal planning, monitoring, reporting and review systems to the ECD to enable Task Managers to have an enhanced understanding of such mechanisms;

- Working together with ECD staff in modifying or adapting, as appropriate, the JROM approach and tools to align them with their (PG) internal systems;
- Taking the lead in introducing/presenting previous joint monitoring experiences with other donors for their potential incorporation in JROM and explore possibilities of expanding JROM tools and approaches to other donors; and
- Making human resources with specific JROM roles and responsibilities available within their agencies and, together with the ECD, carry out a capacity needs assessment to identify JROM-related capacity building requirements.

Implementing partners/contractors

For JROM purposes, implementing partners/contractors can play a very important role in several areas, for example:

- By ensuring that results-oriented management tools are applied during implementation e.g. ensuring there is an appropriate baseline; ensuring the set up of a field data collection system; using quantitative and qualitative indicators of outputs and outcome, use of targets, etc.;
- By providing progress reports containing a clear comparative analysis of planned activities and intended results versus actual implementation and achievements; and
- By facilitating preliminary information collection, organization of meetings and logistical practicalities prior to JROM field visits.

Apart from this facilitating function, the active participation of implementing partners/contractors in JROM assessments needs to be encouraged as it helps enhance their focus on results and can help improve their self-monitoring and quality of reporting. It also promotes common understanding with the Task Managers and PG project Officers as to what the projects should be achieving and what actual progress is being made.

Other donors

The establishment of a JROM system serves a double purpose: aligning monitoring systems to those of the PG while at the same time contributing to harmonised donor approaches.⁶ It is thus important to promote the involvement of other donors other than the EC in the establishment of the JROM approach. Even if in a first phase the JROM is only implemented by the ECD and PG, it is important to consider how best to: (i) keep donors well informed on JROM achievements; (ii) ensure donors' inputs in improving the JROM; and (iii) increase the chances of other donors adopting JROM principles and approaches.

Although the ECD could play an instigating role in ensuring the involvement of other donors in the beginning, it would be preferable that the PG takes the lead.

Some of the main roles other donors can play in supporting the establishment of JROM include:

- Engaging in dialogue with the ECD and PG to get an understanding of JROM tools and principles so that they can assess their interest in JROM and provide input on how it might be best organized and implemented in practice;

⁶ Harmonised monitoring approaches should be pursued as long as they are conducive to alignment with PG monitoring systems. They should be dismissed when it is clear they may impact negatively on alignment efforts.

- Providing input on lessons learnt drawing from previous joint monitoring experiences they might have had either with PG or with other donors; and
- Participating in JROM monitoring field visits and in presentations of JROM practical experiences made by the PG and/or the ECD. This would not only ensure incorporating other donor's views in refining the JROM but would also keep them updated on progress and thus increase the chances of them buying into the approach.

3 Implementing Joint ROM

This section provides an overview of how the JROM approach might be put into practice. The implementation sequence, tools and approaches are provided as a guiding reference framework and not as a required protocol/procedure. They build upon lessons drawn from the piloting of the Internal Results-Oriented Monitoring System in Ethiopia (IROME), which has been implemented in collaboration with the Partner Government. This initiative offers a good reference point on what might be feasible and work in practice when implementing JROM.

It is nevertheless recommended that each ECD and PG adapt and adjust the roles and responsibilities, timelines and sequence of steps presented below to their particular realities and operational contexts.

The monitoring process and tools contained in this section focus on monitoring exercises carried out jointly by the ECD and PG (and other donors). Nevertheless, they can also be applied to project portfolios monitored unilaterally by the ECD, as might be the case for particular thematic budget lines or for regional programs.

3.1 Process overview

3.1.1 JROM preparatory phase

The aim of this preparatory stage is two-fold, namely:

- To ensure institutional commitment and a clear operational mandate on the ECD side; and,
- To confirm PG (and other donors) interest in embarking on a joint monitoring approach.

Some of the preliminary steps to be carried out could include:

1. Internal discussions at ECD level involving Task Managers from both the Operations and the F&C Sections, plus Heads of Section and the Head of Delegation. Some of the main aspects to be addressed in these discussions are:

- (i) Ensure the required degree of institutional support, namely that TMs are entrusted with the mandate from ECD high-level management to carry out the tasks and assume the responsibilities associated with the implementation of JROM;
- (ii) Reach a common understanding on the objectives and scope of the JROM approach so that an agreed approach can be presented to the PG and other donors; and
- (iii) Conduct a preliminary assessment of available human resources. At this preliminary stage this could concentrate on ensuring the minimum Human Resource requirements to enable the effective launching of JROM. Mid and long-term capacity building and human resource implications may be better addressed in a progressive fashion alongside the implementation of a full-fledged JROM. Annex 1 contains a brief overview of TMs's key roles and responsibilities, as well as a proposal to guide the process of reviewing these responsibilities in the context of promoting their role as an 'informed dialogue partner' and supporting implementation of the JROM approach.

2. Initial discussions with the PG and other donors. These preliminary discussions need to be promoted by the ECD and may cover the following aspects:

- (i) Inform PG counterparts and other donors of the ECD's interest in JROM and present the ECD's view in terms of objectives and scope of the JROM approach; and

- (ii) Foster a dialogue with PG counterparts and other donors to determine their interest in JROM and explore the institutional feasibility of implementing JROM in practice.

3. Outline of the operational framework. Once PG (and potentially other donor) interest is confirmed and the approach is perceived as feasible and beneficial, a first outline of the operational framework could be pursued. This would imply:

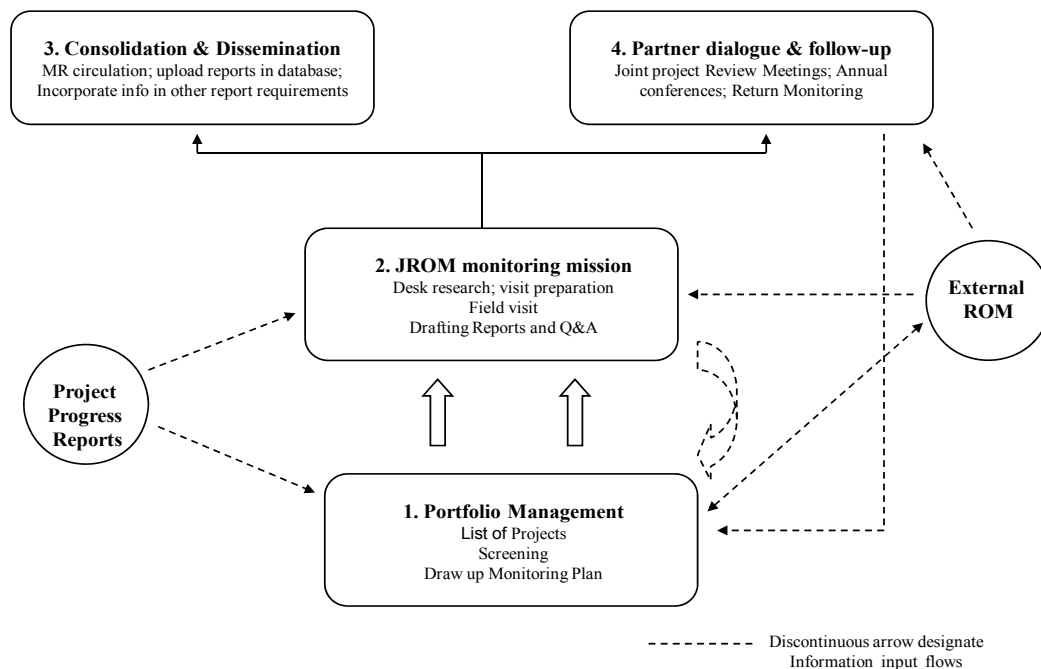
- (i) Developing an enhanced understanding of PG (and other donors) planning, monitoring, reporting and review systems;
- (ii) Modifying and/or adapting the JROM approach and tools presented in this Operational Guideline to align it with PG systems; and
- (iii) Incorporating other donors' interests and experiences.

3.1.2 JROM operational phase

This section offers ECDs a proposal on how make JROM operational regardless of whether PG systems are well-established or not. Again, it is at the full discretion of ECD and PG to adopt the full proposal, or modify or disregard any of the steps and tools presented.

The JROM operational process involves four main steps which are illustrated in Figure 2 below. It also illustrates the roles of External ROM and project progress reports in terms of how this information feeds into the JROM process.

Figure 2: Overview of the JROM process



In order to manage and implement JROM it is suggested that the following human resources first need to be in place:

- Tasks Managers with a clear mandate and time/resource allocations to undertake the tasks;
- The appointment of a full-time Monitoring & Evaluation Manager (M&EM) at the ECD; and
- The appointment of a full-time Monitoring Project Officer (MPO) on the PG side.

This set-up constitutes the optimal scenario to aim at and it does not mean the process can not start if the M&EM and MPO positions and TM time allocations are not in place. Actually, at first, the roles and functions of the M&EM could be allocated to a particular TM, or shared between different TMs. However, this is unlikely to be a viable option in the mid to long-term if the joint monitoring system is to be consolidated into a fully-fledged system.

Outline Terms of Reference for a M&E Manager are provided at Annex 2, adapted from the Ethiopian Delegation's IROME guidelines.

The MPO would ideally be a qualified professional assigned by the PG as counterpart and coordinator of all monitoring matters on the Government side. The appointment/recruitment of the MPO is of crucial importance to ensure the actual joint nature of the JROM. When there is a large portfolio of projects in a particular sector (e.g. Health), it may also make sense to have (additional) PMOs appointed from specific ministries.

The 4 main groups of activities shown in Figure 2 (above) are described further below.

1. Portfolio management

The management of the JROM project portfolio involves three main consecutive tasks, namely:

- (i) assembling an up-to-date project list;
- (ii) screening each project against a set of criteria to identify those which need to be prioritised for monitoring; and
- (iii) drawing up a JROM Monitoring Plan (MP).

It is recommended that the initial list of projects includes all EC-funded projects. Then a distinction can be made between those eligible for joint monitoring (e.g. those included in the National Indicative Programme), and those projects that might best be monitored unilaterally or at a later stage (e.g. some components of regional programs or some interventions funded through thematic budget lines). The first group will constitute the JROM project portfolio. Still, the monitoring process presented in this section could be applied all categories.

Some suggestions for criteria that might be used to 'screen' and select projects for monitoring might include:

- Projects that show signs of poor performance and have a high risk of not delivering the intended results;
- Projects with a low risk and that are performing very well, and which could therefore be a source for identifying good practices;
- Projects with a particular strategic relevance for the EC and/or the PG;
- Projects introducing pilot models the PG/ECD might be interested in replicating;

- Projects for which a second phase/ follow-through intervention is under consideration; and/or
- Projects with a wide coverage, either geographically or in terms of target groups; and/or which have large budgets.

A proposed format that could be used to ‘screen’ the project portfolio, and allocate a ‘risk rating’, is provided at Annex 3.⁷ Use of such a structured process for identifying ‘risk’ and then using this to help identify priority project’s for JROM is entirely optional.

Portfolio management is not just a one-off exercise to be conducted at certain points in time (e.g. at the beginning of each year). It should be a continuous process. The J-ROM MP needs regular updating and in this regard can be regarded as a *rolling plan*. An example of a Monitoring Plan format is provided at Annex 4. It covers a time span of 13 months and encompasses: (i) the last past month; (ii) the following six-month period which is binding in terms of planning where amendments should be clearly indicated and need approval, and (iii) another six-month period which reflects tentative planning and thus may still be adjusted. It includes information on:

- Project name and reference #;
- Start and finish date;
- Project budget;
- Responsible ECD Section, TM, PG Counterpart and Implementing Partner;
- Date of previous JROM visit (if applicable);
- Ratings from previous JROM visits (if applicable); and
- Timing of next planned JROM visit, including whether or not implemented as planned (for the first 7 months of the planning period).

Additional information could be included in a MP spreadsheet/database, including information on such things as previous EROM visits/ratings, timing of planned future EROM visits, timing of planned joint review meetings, etc.

The MP should be updated preferably on a monthly basis. That said, bi-monthly or quarterly updates may also be considered depending on the size of the portfolio and on the frequency of incoming projects. Rolling MP updates could be conducted by the M&EM with inputs from TMs and the MPO. A possible approach to updating the MP could be:

On the first working day of each month the M&EM would review the Rolling MP for the current month and upload it into the JROM database. This review could include the following steps:

- Specify the projects that were monitored the previous month;
- Identify projects for which monitoring visits were planned but which did not happen;
- Add a new month to the six-monthly plan;
- Revise planning for the following months as appropriate e.g. include first monitoring missions for previous pipeline projects that have just started during the past month, schedule ‘new’ monitoring missions for projects that were ‘missed’, or indicate requirements for the next planned JROM mission; and

⁷ This format is adapted from the ‘screening table’ provided in EuropeAid Reference Document #3 ‘Strengthening Project Internal Monitoring – How to enhance the role of EC Task Managers, June 2007.

- Select projects for review meetings and plan for the Tri-Partite Review Meeting (see section 3.4. for more details).

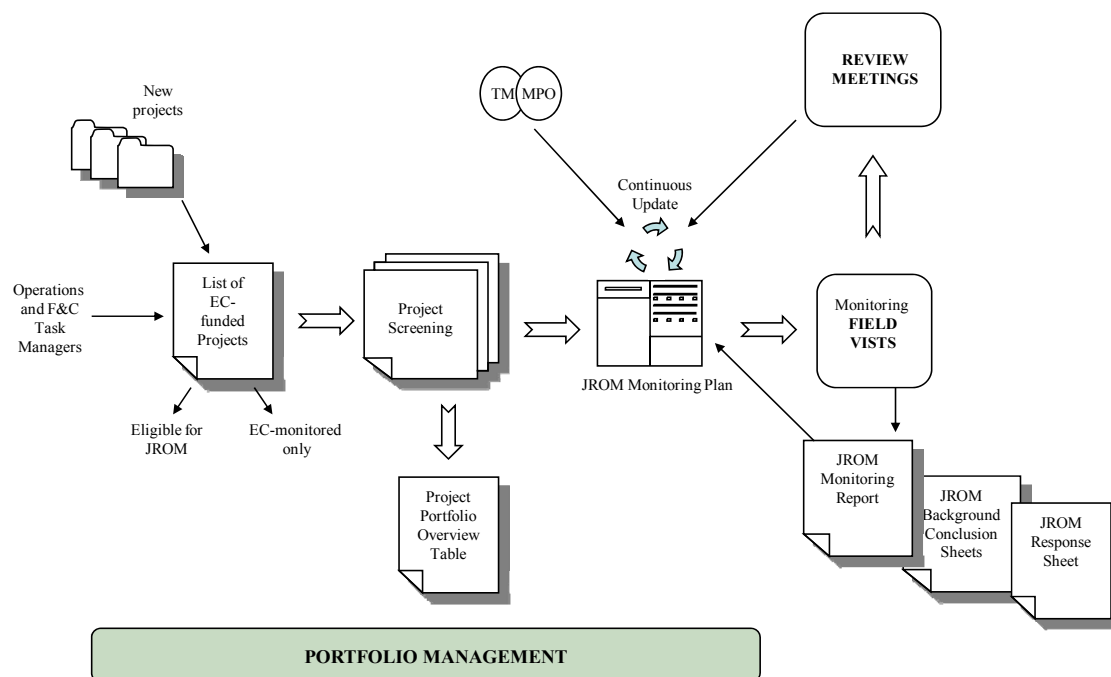
Some suggestions to be taken into account when producing and updating the MP are:

- When a project proves persistently problematic a more frequent monitoring scheme/sequence should be considered;
- Conversely, particular attention should be placed to avoid over-monitoring reasonably good projects. In scenarios where resources for JROM are limited, priority should be given to monitor particularly poor performing and strategic projects. The TMs/MPOs in consultation with the M&EM will have to strike an appropriate balance in this regard.
- The timing of the periodic monitoring field visits should take due account of the project's stage of implementation and key milestones, i.e. ensure that they coincide with planned milestones;
- The first JROM mission should be planned (and report produced) at the end of project's inception phase; and
- The final JROM report should be issued in the last month of the implementation phase.

These suggestions drawn upon lessons learnt during the implementation of the pilot JROM in Ethiopia.

Figure 3 below illustrates the main elements of JROM portfolio management and its immediate links with phases of the overall JROM process.

Figure 3: Main features of portfolio management



2. JROM Monitoring Missions

JROM missions imply joint field visits made by the TM and the MPO. They are a central element of the system for the two main reasons:

- Field visits constitute a unique opportunity for TM/MPO to gather primary source information on the project as especially on the project effects on the target groups (results); and
- They play a key role in boosting TMs/MPOs' understanding of the intervention, which supports the TM's role as an informed dialogue partner.

A JROM monitoring mission comprises a sequence of four main activities:

(i) Desk Research and field visit preparation

The planning process for a monitoring field visit starts with the inclusion of the project in the JROM Monitoring Plan. Including a project in the joint monitoring plan implies that TM and MPO (in consultation with the implementing partner) have already reflected on the most appropriate timing for the field visit. However, when the intended visit period approaches it is necessary for the TM and MPO to:

- Double check and verify with the Implementing Partner (IP) the suitability of the intended visit dates and confirm actual mission dates; and
- Start making logistic arrangements and, most importantly, design the agenda of meetings well in advance to ensure that is as comprehensive as possible given beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholder's availability.

The desk research involves ensuring that the TM and MPO have, and are familiar with, the most updated documentation related to the project. Essential project documents include the Financing Agreement (contractual framework), the Logical Framework Matrix, progress reports (both technical and financial parts) and annual work plans and budget/disbursement schedules. Other relevant documents are external ROM reports / previous evaluations and, whenever pertinent, reviews/evaluation conducted by other donors.⁸ A brief overview of key documents is provided at Annex 5.

(ii) Conducting the field visit

It is estimated that between 2 to 7 days is a suitable time allocation to conduct a field visit, including travelling time. This depends significantly on the geographic location of project sites. Some 'field visits' may only need to be undertaken to the offices of central government ministries/departments, if, for example, the project is focused on strengthening institutional capacity of central or line agencies located in the capital. Section 3.2 below contains a set of practical considerations and suggestions that can be used when planning and carrying out field visits.

In the event of particularly problematic or underperforming projects the possibility of a 'return monitoring' visit should always be considered. This visit could be shorter than a regular monitoring visit and should focus on the most problematic issues identified in the MR. In particular it should assess the extent to which corrective actions recommended in the MR have been or are being implemented. Such visits should be organised on an ad-hoc/as required basis and would not require completion of additional JROM report formats.

⁸ Even if the project is only funded by the EC/PG, other donors' reviews can be useful when they involved the same implementing partner, the same geographical area or the same target group.

(iii) Drafting of the JROM Monitoring Report (MR) and associated Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS)

The findings of a field visit are incorporated and summarized in the Monitoring Report (MR) and its associated Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS), which constitute the main outputs of the JROM monitoring mission. These two documents follow a structured and standardized format and contain an assessment framework that is broad enough to allow the TM and MPO addressing and including any specific concern they might deem relevant.

This assessment framework builds upon the analysis of the project against five criteria: relevance & quality of the design, efficiency of implementation to date, effectiveness to date, impact prospects and potential sustainability. A description of each criterion is included in section 3.3.1. The proposed formats for the BCS and MR are provided at Annexes 6 and 7 respectively.

Ideally, the MR and BCS should be written jointly by the TM and the MPO. This would not only be in line with the partnership nature of the JROM approach but would also contribute to ownership.

(iv) Quality Assurance (QA) of the MR and the BCS

This activity aims at ensuring the clarity, accuracy and internal coherence of the MR and BCS and may be one of the core responsibilities of the M&EM. Implementing Partners may also play an important role in double-checking the clarity and accuracy of the information contained in the MR. Section 3.5.2 contains a QA checklist for reference.

3. Dissemination and Consolidation

This may include three main steps:

(i) Circulating the report to relevant stakeholders

It is at the discretion of each ECD and PG to decide to which stakeholders the Monitoring Report and the BCS should be distributed to.

The minimum requirement proposed in this Operational Guidance is that the MR should be shared at least with the implementing partner for various reasons:

- The MR includes a section with key observations and recommendations on actions to be taken which, in most of the cases, will be directed to the IP. In this respect obtaining feedback from the IP on the feasibility and appropriateness of the recommendations is crucial to ensure that monitoring field visits is translated into action;
- Sharing the report with the IP is keeping with the dialogue and partnership approach embodied in the European Consensus on Development (2005) and with the principle of mutual accountability subscribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005); and
- As suggested above, sharing the report with the IP may play an important role in complementing Quality Assurance processes e.g. by making observations and recommendations on IP management systems/capacity, which need to then be acted on.

The process of obtaining feedback from the IP can be formalized through the use of Response Sheets (RS). Their proposed format and a description of their main features can be found in Annex 8 and in section 3.3.3 below.

Response Sheets to gather feedback from beneficiaries could also be considered. The feasibility of this option will depend (among many other factors) on whether beneficiaries are organized, on whether they have a representative body to channel the feedback, on their geographical dispersion

or on whether there is one single homogenous group or various target groups. Beneficiary Response Sheets may be feasible and manageable in projects where the target beneficiary is an institution.

(ii) Upload reports in JROM/CRIS/PG databases

Uploading the reports in the relevant databases will enable the dissemination of the MR within the ECD, the EC Headquarters and the PG. Aspects related to the need for databases are addressed in section 3.7.

It is recommended to upload the MR, BCS, RS and RMP to enable users to have a complete view of project status according to JROM.

(iii) Incorporate JROM information into the EAMR and PG reporting requirements

Aggregate and cumulative data generated by JROM could be a substantial input to regular reporting requirements of the ECD and the PG. In this regard the JROM database should be designed in a way that enables JROM information to be effectively used to support such requirements. In other words, the JROM database should allow for retrieving information on the portfolio in such a way that allows direct incorporation into EAMR and in PG reporting requirements.

Similarly, JROM information could be used to feed into communication plans and visibility actions as envisaged in the “Communications and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions (April 2008)”.

Apart from the MR and associated documents mentioned above, the implementation of the JROM process generates useful information on monitoring and management capacity-building needs of the PG, the ECD and the IP. This information could be systematically identified and collected and used as an input to the ECD’s Annual Management Plan, to the PG’s budget planning cycle and into the IP’s Human Resource Plans.

4. Follow up and partner dialogue

The JROM process does not end with the uploading of MR and its dissemination. To ensure that the information generated by JROM contributes to improving project performance and more effective aid: (i) MR recommendations and actions to be taken should be followed upon; and (ii) aggregate findings should feed into ECD dialogues with the PG and other donors.

Partner dialogue and follow-up mechanisms may include:

(i) Joint project review meetings

These meetings could become a regular structured mechanism for the ECD, the PG and the implementing partners to discuss progress towards the achievement of intended results, constraints/problems being faced, actions required and lessons being learned.

(ii) Joint annual “partners in implementation” meeting/conference

This activity would offer a joint platform to review the EC portfolio at an aggregate level, that is, by thematic sector or geographical areas. These meeting could also provide a good mechanism to identify new challenges or strategic interests that could feed into the MP.

(iii) Donor dialogue meetings

The aim of this activity would be three-fold: (i) to present JROM findings as an input to promote better sector or geographical coordination; (ii) to explore options for the adoption of JROM by other donors; and (iii) to gather other donors’ views in order to improve the JROM.

The meetings in points (i) to (iii) above could be articulated in several forms. Section 3.4 presents some of the possible options.

(iv) Return monitoring

A useful follow-up mechanism at individual project level could be conducting Return Monitoring. This could consist of a field visit shorter than a regular monitoring visit e.g. one to two days, which would focus on following up whether the corrective actions agreed in the MR are being applied. Return Monitoring visits would be planned jointly by the TM and MPO, although the actual field visit could be done by only one of the parties depending on resource and time availability. Return Monitoring could be earmarked for particularly underperforming projects, for projects with a considerable strategic interest and for interventions which could have negative impact(s). The output of a Return Monitoring would be the Return Monitoring Page (RMP), which could be directly linked to the JROM Report and thus add to the MR, the BCS and the RS. The RMP is a follow-up document and as such does not involve any scoring or associated BCS.

A template for the RMP is provided at Annex 9 and commented on in section 3.3.4.

Figure 4 below illustrates the sequence of steps presented in this section and provides a proposal on who could take responsibility for each step and the indicative timelines.

Figure 4: Main steps of the JROM process, responsible persons and reference timelines

	Step	Description	Responsible	Timeline
Portfolio Management	1	Structuring Project Portfolio: assembling list of projects eligible for JROM	M&EM with input from TM and in collaboration with MPO	At the start and update monthly
	2	Project screening: categorization of projects	M&EM with input from TM and in collaboration with MPO	On-going activity with monthly updates
	3	Draw up JROM Monitoring Plan (MP)	M&EM with input from TM and in collaboration with MPO	On-going activity with monthly updates
Monitoring mission	4	Desk research and field visit preparation	TM in coordination with MPO	T - 65
	5	Project field visit	TM and MPO in coordination with IP	T - 35
	6	Drafting of JROM report	TM and MPO	T - 25
	7	Quality Control of the JROM report	M&EM	T - 20
Dissemination / Consolidation	8	Circulation of the report to relevant stakeholders	TM and MPO	T - 15
	9	Upload reports in JROM/CRIS/PG databases ⁹	TM	T
	12	Incorporating JROM information into the EAMR and PG reporting requirements	M&EM; MPO	Annually
up and Partner dialogue and	10	Joint project review meetings	TM, MPO and M&EM in coordination with IP	T + 30
	11	Return Monitoring	TM and MPO under	6 to 8 weeks after the

⁹ JROM reports will most probably be entered in the PCM Platform which will be a common platform encompassing all documents related to the quality assurance cycle (QSG, ROM, JROM, evaluations, etc.). See section 3.7 below for more details.

	Step	Description	Responsible	Timeline
			coordination of M&EM	previous field visit
	12	Joint annual “partners in implementation” meeting/conference	TM, MPO and M&EM	Annually
	13	Donor dialogue meetings	TM and M&EM, Heads of Section	At least annually

Legend

M&EM: Monitoring & Evaluation Manager at the ECD
MPO: Monitoring Project Officer at the Partner Government
TM: Task Manager at the ECD
IP: Implementing Partner

In the Timeline column, “T” designates the date at which the MR is completed and uploaded into the JROM database. T-35 thus means 35 days before the day the MR is uploaded into the database.

3.1.3 The links between Joint ROM and External ROM

The JROM and the External ROM (EROM) should complement each other. Operating both systems in parallel can add significant value to the ECD/PG monitoring function. Some of the main links and complementarities between the two systems are:

- They supplement each other in terms of relevant information inputs. EROM reports are a useful input for JROM missions as much as JROM MRs for EROM missions:
 - JROM can guide and direct EROM missions to issues of concern for the ECD/PG thus increasing the usefulness of EROM findings and its role as a management tool for ECDs. At the same time, EROM may increase incentives for staff implementing JROM as EROM assessments will also (in future) comment/make observations on the effectiveness of the JROM system.
 - EROM reports are not only an input for JROM field missions but also to the MP and to partner dialogues.
 - EROM missions could play a role in terms of Return Monitoring Missions when properly synchronized with JROM field visits.
- When applied in a combined fashion they increase the coverage of the monitoring function for any given project both in geographical terms and in terms of target groups.
- Similarly, synchronizing both systems can immediately increase the intensity of monitoring (e.g. projects that were monitored yearly or every two years could now be visited on a six-month or annual basis). In addition it also enhances the chances of a more effective follow-up over time as one system can follow-up on the recommendations made by the other.
- Both systems are based on the same methodological framework and thus share similar formats, criteria and steps. The fact they are based on the same methodological principles and terminology presents immediate advantages in terms of comparability and is very conducive to facilitate communication between ROM monitors and ECD, PG and IP staff.
- When JROMs or ECD-based monitoring systems are not in place, TMs tend to have specific demands in terms of field-based information. These needs are then partly covered by EROM missions (EROM informative role). Implementing JROM will result

in more informed TMs and thus decrease these demands to some extent. An immediate consequence will be that EROM missions will be able to focus on a more in-depth project analysis, which will offer the possibility of EROM MR being more analytical and less descriptive.

- It is expected that as JROM consolidates it will create a culture of thinking in terms of results and it will promote the use of result-based reporting, indicators and ultimately the widespread use of internal project result-based monitoring frameworks. This will increase the value and objectivity of EROM assessments as they build upon the project's own monitoring framework (logframe, indicators, etc.).
- EROM has been operational worldwide for the last ten years. In the first stages of JROM implementation this offers the possibility of EROM monitors playing a supporting capacity-building role for ECD and PG.
- Implementing both systems implies immediate gains in terms of enhanced participation in, and accountability of, EC-funded interventions. Both systems together imply a formal system that articulates (through reports and response sheets) the assessments and views of ECDs, PGs, Implementing Partners and external monitors.

JROM and EROM have three distinctive features that make them highly complementary, as summarized in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Comparative analysis of JROM and EROM

JROM	External ROM	Complementarity
Is carried out by parties that have a stake in the project (ECD/PG). In this regard and putting the project at the centre, JROM is an ' <u>internal</u> ' or non-independent exercise.	Is carried out by experts who do not have a direct stake in the project. In this regard is an external / <u>independent exercise</u> .	Applying both systems enables the EC's overall monitoring function to incorporate elements such as accountability, transparency and stakeholder participation simultaneously (with no need for a trade-off).
It is a <u>joint exercise</u> that involves ECD and PG staff.	It is an <u>individual exercise</u> that involves a single monitor / external expert.	JROM calls for more consensus when planning and conducting field visits whereas EROM implies more flexibility in this regard. At the same time JROM provides the opportunity of getting acquainted with PG views and concerns which is an element that EROM cannot offer.
TM and MPO represent the ECD and the PG (at least to some extent). In this regard there is a higher chance JROM missions are perceived by IP, local authorities and beneficiaries as <u>official</u> visits.	Monitors do not have an institutional representativeness whatsoever ¹⁰ . The nature of their visits is essentially and exclusively <u>technical</u> .	EROM can focus on more technical issues as the need to follow protocols is lower. This gives EROM more flexibility in terms of meeting with different stakeholders separately e.g. meeting beneficiary groups without local authorities being present, meeting final beneficiaries and their representatives separately, etc. At the same time, the institutional representation aspect of JROM is very conducive to enhance the EC/PG's institutional visibility, an aspect that EROM can not provide.

¹⁰ They represent the interests of the tax payers but this does not grant them any a formal/institutional representation in this regard.

Although implementing both systems together has positive implications in most respects, there is a particular aspect that could have adverse effects and that requires special attention, namely overburdening projects with field visits. In this regard:

- TMs, the M&EM and the MPO should attempt to strike a balance not only between the frequency in which JROM and EROM missions take place but also in terms of how they synchronize with other assessments such as external/internal mid-term reviews, visits from the court of auditors, institutional visits not related to monitoring, etc.
- When planning for field visits special attention should be given to sequencing them in a way that minimizes costs for beneficiaries, implementing partners and for the project as a whole. Some aspects to be taken into account would be:
 - Assess what would be the implications of the field visit in terms of potential delays in implementing activities. A field visit requires the involvement of IP staff not only during the visit itself but during its planning phase and afterwards (follow-up).
 - Assess, in consultation with IP, the implications of the field visit in terms of costs to be born by beneficiaries and other stakeholders in order to meet the visiting staff.
 - In many developing countries a field visit from a donor/government official / (even from an external expert) has cost implications for beneficiaries and IP as such events often involve a high degree of hospitality (e.g. meals, welcome events, transport, etc.) the costs of which are born by beneficiaries and/or the IP.

3.2 JROM field visits

JROM monitoring missions constitute one of the central cornerstones of the JROM. They are the first-hand channel through which TMs/MPO learn about what the project is (or is not) doing and achieving. They also represent a direct contribution to the role of TMs as an informed dialogue partner.

Some general principles guiding JROM missions are:

- Given the limited time span of a field visit (usually expected to be between 2 to 7 days), special attention, time and efforts should be directed to the preparatory phase i.e. planning and design of the visit.
- Preparing and conducting the field visits should be a joint exercise between the ECD TM and the PG's MPO to the highest possible extent;
- Ensure that enough time is allocated to discuss and reach a consensus with the MPO on the main findings and recommendations of the mission. This, regardless of the specific arrangement chosen for report writing i.e. TM alone, MPO alone, both jointly.
- Preparation should involve close consultations with Implementing Partners both to ensure the quality of the collected information and to minimize direct and indirect costs¹¹; and
- Other donors working in the same geographical area/ thematic sector and/or with the same implementing partner should be consulted and, as appropriate, engaged in the process.

¹¹ Some examples of indirect costs would be the ones born by beneficiaries mentioned in the previous section. Direct costs refer to those related to travel and logistic arrangements.

3.2.1 Planning field visits

Figure 6 provides a check list for TM to assist them during the preparation of field visits. Although the table is intended as a guide for TM it could also be used by PG MPO. The end product of field visit planning should aim at producing a joint agenda that reflects both common and specific interests of the TM and the MPO.

Figure 6: Field visit planning – Check list for ECD TMs

Issue	Description of issues to take into account	Status
1	Collect essential project documents: (i) Financing Agreement; Logical Framework Matrix; (iii) latest progress report; (iv) Overall and Annual Work Plans; (v) budget and disbursements schedules; etc. Make sure the MPO has all documents as well.	Done/in progress
2	Familiarise yourself with the content of these documents, and discuss/clarify issues with the implementing partner and with other colleagues who may be working on the same or similar projects.	Done/in progress
3	Set your broad objectives for the visit. Clarify the purpose of the visit: what should the visit achieve? Is the purpose of the visit primarily to 'observe / check', or is there also a support/advisory/capacity building role to be played? What will the implementing agency/stakeholders get out of the visit? How can you add value?	Done/in progress
4	Set your specific objectives for the visit. Identify the key issues that need to be addressed during the visit i.e. what are the main aspects (problematic/strategic) the visit should focus on? Draw up a preliminary set of key questions to be asked. Pay special attention to recommendations from previous JROM, EROM or evaluation missions as well as to the latest progress reports.	Done/in progress
5	On the basis of the specific issues/questions you want to address, establish a list of the stakeholders that should be interviewed/met in order to get relevant information to answer the questions (table X below provides an example). The implementing partner and other donors working in the same area/with the same beneficiaries are the key of information in this regard.	Done/in progress
6	Clarify the composition of the ' field monitoring team '. Identify any other persons that should take parting the team besides the MPO e.g. other donors, ECD F&C officers, PG staff other than the MPO, etc.	Done/in progress
7	Identify and examine the approach/methods to be used when collecting, recording and analysing the information gathered through the field visit. Aspects to reflect upon could be: in which cases do you want to conduct group meetings or individual interviews? Do you want to meet with women separately from men? What do you want to see / physically inspect? What administrative records would you like to see? How will you avoid 'bias' in terms of who you meet and what you are shown by partners/stakeholders who may try to show you only 'success' stories?	Done/in progress
8	Further develop specific checklist(s) of key questions by type of stakeholder and taking account of the approach chosen to conduct the interviews / collect information.	Done/in progress
9	Develop an indicative/tentative itinerary for the visit and confirm with those who need to know. Consultation with the IP is crucial in order to come up with a feasible tentative itinerary. The itinerary should specify in a clear format who to meet, where as well as indications on the travelling time and time for conducting interviews.	Done/in progress
10	Identify the resources that will be required and who will provide them/who will cover the actual costs. Confirm that these resources can be readily available by the time of the visit (i.e. transport/fuel, accommodation, meeting rooms, etc)	Done/in progress
11	Clarify expected outputs of the visit in terms of reporting requirements i.e. what documents should be produced, by whom and timelines for completing reports (MR, BCS, RS, RMP). Ensure that mechanisms are in place to ensure that the information generated feeds back to those who require it.	Done/in progress
12	Draw up the final itinerary and circulate/share it. Once stakeholder availability and logistic arrangements are confirmed.	Done/in progress

The table above could be complemented with an additional column specifying actions to be taken in order to complete listed tasks e.g. information requirements from other stakeholders. Some examples could be:

Issue	Description of issues to take into account	Action required	Status
1	Collect essential project documents: (i) Financing Agreement; Logical Framework Matrix; (iii) latest progress report; (iv) Overall and Annual Work Plans; (v) budget and disbursements schedules. Make sure the MPO has all documents as well.	<i>e.g. ask Implementing Partner for the latest version of the logframe and revised Work Plan.</i>	Done/in progress
2	Familiarise yourself with the content of these documents, and discuss/clarify issues with the implementing partner and with other colleagues who may be working on the same or similar projects.	<i>e.g. ask F&C on the status of the last payment request.</i>	Done/in progress
5	Clarify the composition of the ‘field monitoring team ’. Identify any other persons that should be parting the team besides the MPO e.g. other donors, ECD F&C officers, PG staff other than the MPO, etc.	<i>e.g. contact GTZ M&E manager to confirm participation.</i>	Done/in progress

In thinking through some of the key issues that need to be investigated during the field monitoring mission (based on a review of key project documents as well as previous ‘knowledge’), it can be useful to plot the list of the stakeholders against the information you (TM) want to obtain. This can be done by relating issues/ questions to specific stakeholders or by relating issues/questions to the different levels of the intervention or to the JROM monitoring criteria. A simple (fictional) example of the latter in a rural development intervention could be as follows:

Group	Intervention logic level	MR criterion
Vegetable Farmers (target beneficiaries)	Project Purpose (PP: household income increased) and result 1 “productivity increased” and result 2 “marketing skills enhanced”.	Effectiveness
Farmers Association	Result 3 “Institutional strengthening” and related activities.	Effectiveness, efficiency
Women Groups village level	Overall objective (OO: improved living standards) and wider effects e.g. (child nutrition, household health expenditure, kids’ schooling). Gender aspects e.g in-household income distribution.	Impact prospects, effectiveness
Implementing Partner staff	Activity implementation: focus on delays in activity 2.2; financial management: focus on reported delays in transferring funds to Farmers’ association.	Efficiency
Agriculture Department	Potential unintended adverse effects of new varieties introduced (OO); sustainability / chances of extension services covering target groups in remote areas after intervention. Statistics (OO/PP)	Impact prospects and potential sustainability
Vegetable wholesalers	Assumptions X and Y: “vegetable market prices do not fluctuate downwards”; “wholesalers willing to buy new varieties produced by the project”	Effectiveness
GTZ’s program in the area.	Potential environmental consequences of pesticides used; assess chances of potential GTZ support for project component Y after EC funding; donor coordination.	Impact prospects and potential sust.

Other tips regarding the planning of field visits include:

- Although the IP plays a crucial part in preparing the itinerary, the TM/MPO should take the leading role. The IP has the information and the contacts with stakeholders but you should help guide the IP. Once you have a preliminary list of issues and the corresponding stakeholders that you should interview to get the relevant information, you should send it to the IP as a starting point. The alternative approach is to ask the IP for a tentative itinerary and double-check if it comprises all the stakeholders/areas you would like to meet. This second approach is less time-consuming but has higher chances of the IP biasing the itinerary towards groups/areas that may provide a positive impression.
- Allow the IP enough time to make contact with stakeholders so that meetings can be organised and confirmed in advance. Also keep in mind that the stakeholders you may wish to meet have their own lives and livelihoods to get on with, and will not just be waiting around for you to arrive!
- Pay special attention to balancing out travel time requirements when choosing the groups to meet. The IP should provide you with the travelling time estimates needed to go from one meeting to the next.

In addition to project-related issues requiring attention and the information you will require to assess the project against the five JROM criteria, field visits offer a unique opportunity to obtain information about/address other important issues. Some examples are: (i) making a quick assessment of the IP organizational capacity and monitoring and management skills; (ii) conducting informative/coaching sessions to IP staff if capacity-building needs have been previously identified; and (ii) conveying messages in terms of visibility of EC-funding, emphasis on EC prioritized cross-cutting issues and principles. All these elements take time, and time allocations should therefore be included in the final itinerary.

3.2.2 Conducting field visits

There are multiple factors influencing the quality of the information collected from a field visit. Although there is no magic formula to eliminate all the distorting elements, you may try to identify them, be aware of their effects in the quality of the information you are obtaining and try to minimize such effects as much as possible. In a results-oriented approach listening to and discussing with target beneficiaries takes particular pre-eminence. It is therefore important to ensure that they are able to express their views freely and that the information gathered reflects their first-hand opinions and views. Some elements to take into account in this regard are:

Interpreters / translation

Whenever interpretation may be required¹² there might be various options available e.g. (i) hiring an interpreter on site; (ii) using the IP's project staff; (iii) relying on the MPO; or (iv) bringing local staff from the ECD. The suitability of each option will, in turn, be situation-specific and may depend on factors such as the strategic importance or severity of the underperformance of the project, the availability of interpreters, their costs, etc.

In any case, an overarching aspect to take into account when an interpreter is required is trying to make sure she/he has a technical background on the project's subject. If this is not possible make sure that you/the MPO allocate enough time to brief her/him on the project, on the main issues to be addressed in the interviews and familiarize her/him with the most essential technical terms.

¹² Conducting interviews jointly with the MPO does not guarantee that interpretation will not be required. Target groups / stakeholders may speak dialects/ languages different from that of the MPO.

Who participates in the meetings / composition of the attendees

There are no one-size-fit-all recommendations as to what is the best composition or format for a meeting. Sometimes you may want to observe the dynamics of two particular groups interacting whereas on other occasions you may want to meet them separately to avoid the influence of one group over the other. In any case you should pay special attention to factors that might have an influence on the representativeness and frankness of the expressed opinions and views. Some examples of such factors are:

- Roles and power-balance relationships between attendees e.g. hierarchical relations, gender-based relationships;
- Socio-cultural aspects such as politeness or aversion to express conflicting views or discontent; and
- The physical environment in which the interview takes place which may inhibit stakeholders if they do not feel comfortable in that setting.

Socio-cultural aspects should also be paid special attention when deciding the most suitable formulation of the questions to be addressed to the interviewees.

Access to primary sources of information

During the mission and due to your/MPO institutional role it could happen that you do not have direct access to certain groups (e.g. final beneficiaries) but only indirectly through their representatives or third parties (government officials) who might not necessarily represent the views of the beneficiaries. It could be useful to take note of these incidences as well as of situations in which you identify some of the three biasing elements above. This information could then be used when drafting itineraries for External ROM missions as they may be in a better position (due to their external/independent nature) to have access to these groups.

Jointly (TM/MPO) or separately conducted interviews

It is advisable to take advantage of the fact you are a team (TM/MPO). It may be very useful at times to split in order to cover more beneficiary groups or locations, or simply to accommodate different ECD/PG interests. In any case it is very important to make sure you allow enough time during the mission for sharing and discussing preliminary impressions with the MPO. In practice this can be easily done when travelling or during joint dinners.

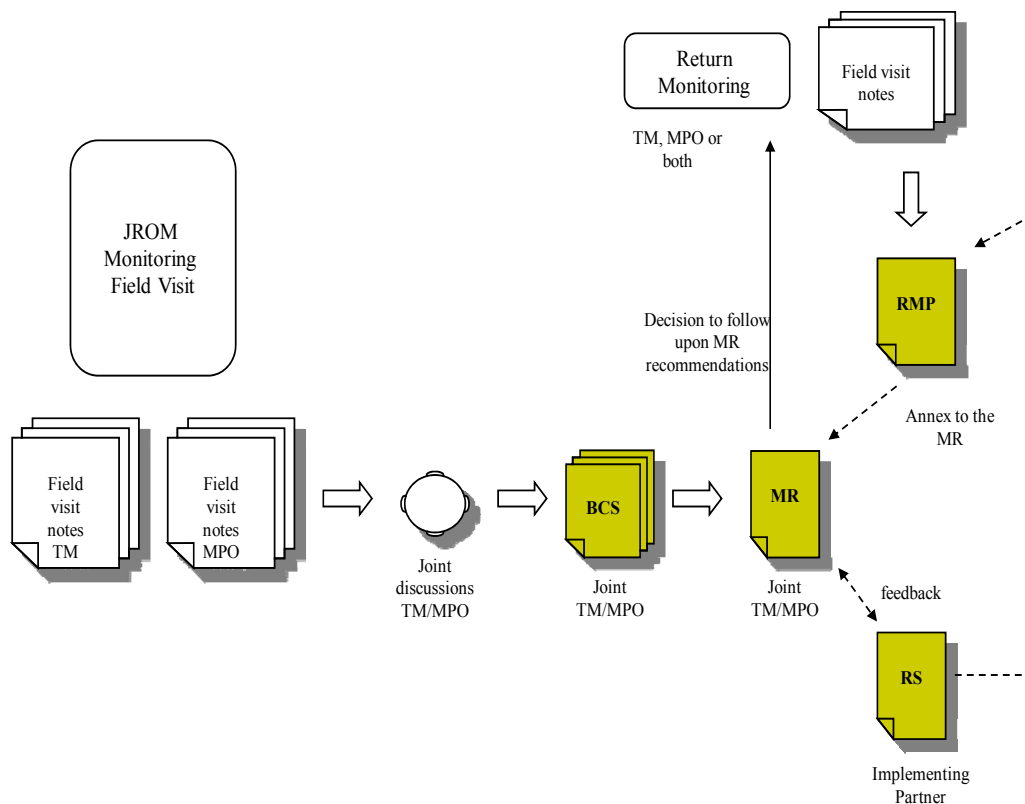
3.3 Monitoring and reporting formats

This section provides a description of the main features of the JROM reporting formats, namely the:

1. Background Conclusion Sheets;
2. Monitoring Report (MR),
3. Implementing Partner Response Sheets (RS); and
4. Return Monitoring Page (RMP).

These four documents are interrelated and are prepared in a sequence that is presented in Figure 7 below. The proposed formats for each of these documents are presented in Annexes 6 through to 9.

Figure 7: Links between JROM reporting formats



3.3.1 Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS)

Purpose:

The purpose of the BCS is to provide a structured and consistent format for documenting the findings of the monitoring mission, against a set of 5 main assessment criteria. In the event that the TM/MPO judgements are questioned, the BCS can support, justify and explain the conclusions reflected in the narrative text of the Monitoring Report.

Description of the main features of the BCS:

The BCS are an Excel spreadsheet which has a worksheet for each of the five assessment criteria used. The table below (Figure 8) presents a brief definition¹³ of each criterion:

Figure 8: JROM assessment criteria

Criteria	Definition
<i>Relevance and quality of project design</i>	The appropriateness of the project's objectives to the real problems, needs and priorities of its target groups/beneficiaries as well as to the partner Government policies and EC strategies; and the quality of the design through which these objectives are to be reached.
<i>Efficiency of implementation to date</i>	How well the project is being managed in terms of resource use, activity implementation, and delivery of outputs.
<i>Effectiveness to date</i>	The quality of outputs and the achievement of project outcomes (purpose).
<i>Impact prospects</i>	The likelihood of the project directly contributing to the desired project impact (Overall Objective).
<i>Potential sustainability</i>	The likelihood of a continuation in the stream of benefits produced by the project after the period of external support has ended.

The worksheet for each criterion contains three main text boxes:

- the answers to the guiding questions are inserted into the “detailed observations/findings” box;
- the “summary of key observations/findings” box provides a summary of the detailed observations/findings, which is then automatically inserted into the MR;
- the “recommended actions” box contains recommendations associated with the main weaknesses/needs for improvement pointed out in the summary of key findings. The content of this box is also automatically inserted into the MR.

The BCS has two additional worksheets (sixth and seventh) addressing horizontal and cross-cutting issues. Horizontal issues include the suitability of technical cooperation implementation arrangements (i.e. the TC/PIU backbone strategy), the link between QSG and monitoring and EC visibility. The worksheet for cross-cutting issues includes specific sections on gender, governance, human rights and environment.

Finally, the BCS include a worksheet with the list of persons/institutions interviewed and consulted during the JROM field visit. This information plays a triple role: (i) it provides a picture of the sample of stakeholders covered during the mission thus providing an indication on the representativeness of the findings; (ii) it constitutes a useful input when preparing subsequent JROM field visits, and (iii) it can be used as a reference also for EROM monitoring missions.

¹³ These five definitions coincide with those used in the External ROM (EROM) methodology to ensure comparability and consistency given the complementary roles between JROM and EROM.

Each criterion is attributed a specific rating. The overall rating for each criterion is then automatically transferred to the rating section (III) of the MR. The JROM rating system offers four options: a=very good, b=good; c=problems; and d=serious deficiencies. Figure 9 provides a graphic presentation of the definitions for each rating.

In order to allow quantitative assessments that could be included in the JROM Annual Report, each rating could be assigned a numerical value (score) according to the following arrangement¹⁴: a=4, b=3, c=2 and d=1.

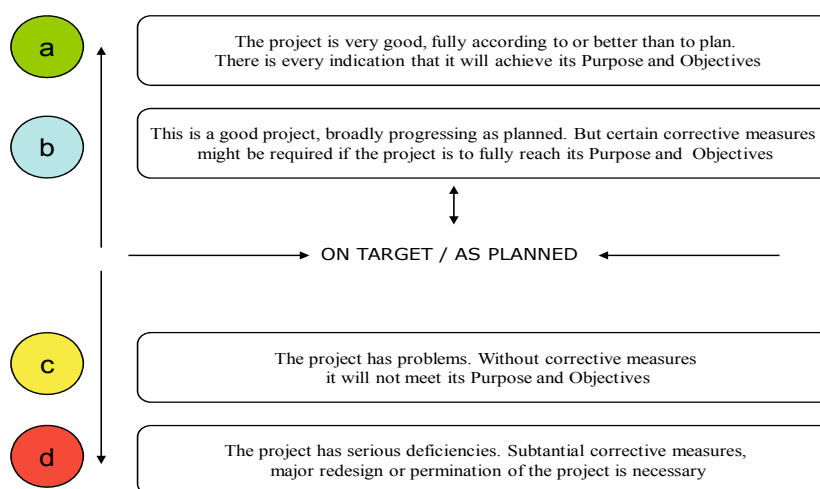
Sources of information to produce the BCS:

Ongoing notes taken by the ‘monitors’ i.e. the TM and the MPO, during the monitoring field visit.

Responsibility:

Completing the BCS is a joint responsibility of the TM and the PMO. The actual work of filling in the BCS may be approached in two ways: (i) joint drafting between TM/MPO which entails sitting together to perform the task; or (ii) either the TM or the MPO fills in the BCS and sends them to the other for comments, input and feedback. What is important is that the final version of the BCS is jointly agreed by the TM and the MPO.

Figure 9: JROM rating system



Some **considerations and suggestions** when filling in/completing the BCS are:

- Guiding questions provide a checklist of key issues/topics that the ‘monitors’ should consider/address during the monitoring mission. That said, answering each question is

¹⁴ This is the arrangement applied in EROM.

not compulsory. It is up to the ‘monitor’ to decide whether they are applicable or not to the situation being assessed. Monitors are also encouraged to include reflections on any other pertinent issues (as long as they are related to the criterion), even if they are not covered in the guiding questions.

- Following up on recommendations put forward in previous monitoring reports (especially JROM reports) is a particularly important function of the BCS as it allows an on-going/continuous approach to improving project performance. The BCS include a guiding question in this regard under each of the five criteria i.e. *‘Have relevant recommendations from any previous monitoring reports been followed-up on/actioned’?*
- “a” and “d” ratings should be particularly well-justified in the detailed observations/findings box. They should be backed up by evidence-based information, such as specific data on relevant indicators. Subjective assessments leading to “a” and “d” which are not backed by objective data on the value of indicators: (i) may act as a disincentive to improve the project’s internal result-based monitoring system; and (ii) may discredit the value of JROM assessments.

3.3.2 Monitoring Report (MR)

Objective/purpose:

The Monitoring Report is the key JROM document produced by the TM/MPO as a result of a monitoring field visit and has a three-fold purpose: (i) to provide a summary assessment of project performance on the basis of the five aforementioned criteria, (ii) to identify problematic issues which adversely affect project performance and which require special attention; and (iii) to put forward specific corrective actions aimed at addressing any identified problems and improving project performance. In the case of projects that perform particularly well the main goal of a MR could be that of identifying best practices in order to replicate them or incorporating them in the design of future interventions.

Description of the main features of the reporting format’s layout:

A MR is a document comprised of five main sections:

- I. intervention data;
- II. financial data;
- III. ratings for each of the five criteria;
- IV. summary of key observations/findings; and
- V. recommended actions indicating by whom, when and in order of priority.

The ‘intervention data’ of the MR format includes basic project data. It is at the discretion of ECD and PG to add new entries as they deem appropriate e.g. entries covering the project’s DAC sector, the type of implementing partner or the geographical region.

All information for sections III, IV and V are then automatically sourced from the BCS. The ratings for each criterion correspond exactly to the “overall rating” given to each criterion in the BCS. In other words, most of the MR is automatically generated once the BCS has been completed.

Sources of information to produce the MR:

The primary source is the BCS. Project and financial data could be sourced from the project's file and the JROM Monitoring Plan (MP).

Responsibility

As in the case for the BCS, producing the MR is a joint responsibility of the TM and the PMO. What is important is that the final version of the MR is jointly agreed by the TM and the MPO.

Some **considerations and suggestions** when filling in /completing the MR are:

- The contents and thus the quality of the MR and the BCS are linked, since the MR essentially contains a summary of the main findings in the BCS. Before submitting the MR TM/MPO should make sure that there have been no missions/oversights when transferring information from the BCS to the MR.
- The TM/PMO should ensure that the narrative text under each of the five criteria contain statements that justify the ratings given.
- Limiting the length of the text that goes from the BCS to the MR to 10 lines is a suggestion based on what has worked for the pilot JROM in Ethiopia. It is at the discretion of ECD/PG to make adjustments if considered necessary.

It is recommended that the total length of the narrative text contained in a JROM MR be no more than two pages, as the spirit of a MR is that of presenting the outcomes of a field visit in a concise manner.

3.3.3 Implementing Partner Response Sheet (RS)

Objective/purpose:

The aim of the RS is three-fold: (i) to obtain direct feedback from the Implementing Partner on the contents of the MR, and in particular the feasibility and appropriateness of the recommended actions; (ii) to serve as a quality assurance mechanism for the MR; and (iii) to ensure transparency and accountability of the JROM process.

Description of the main features of the reporting format's layout:

The RS has four sections:

- VI. project data;
- VII. overall assessment of the quality of the Monitoring Report;
- VIII. assessment of the recommended actions, and
- IX. further comments and suggestions.

The “overall assessment of the quality of the Monitoring Report” section fulfils the quality assurance function of the RS as it allows the IP to assess the clarity, accuracy and usefulness of the report.

The “assessment of the recommended actions” section is a core element of the RS as it addresses whether the recommendations will be adopted or not and why, who will take action and when.

The four sections of the RS follow-on from the numbering sequence used in the MR i.e. the MR ends with section V and the RS starts with section VI (project data). This reflects the fact that the RS is a document intrinsically linked to the MR. Actually, the MR, the BCS and the RS can be regarded as a package.

Sources of information to produce the RS:

The main source is the Monitoring Report and if necessary, the BCS.

Responsibility:

Filling in the RS is the sole responsibility of the Implementing Partner.

Some **considerations and suggestions** when filling in/completing the RS are:

- The TM/MPO should make sure that all the “recommended actions” in section V of the MR are inserted in the RS so that the implementing partner does not omit providing feedback on any of them.
- The ratings (a,b,c,d) in the “overall assessment of the quality of the Monitoring Report” section of the RS correspond to the same qualitative judgements made elsewhere, that is: a=very good, b=good, c=problems and d=serious deficiencies.

3.3.4 Return Monitoring Page (RMP)

Both conducting Return Monitoring missions (as described below) and producing the ensuing Return Monitoring Page are optional. It is up to the ECD/PG to decide if this is a desirable and practical approach to following-up quickly on high priority issues identified through the periodic scheduled joint monitoring visits.

Objective/purpose:

The RMP reflects the outcomes of Return Monitoring which is a field visit conducted to particularly problematic or underperforming projects a few weeks¹⁵ after the main JROM monitoring field visit has taken place. The main objective of Return Monitoring is to follow up on the most problematic issues identified in the MR and particularly, to assess the extent to which corrective actions recommended in the MR have been or are being implemented.

Description of the main features of the reporting format's layout:

The RMP has three sections:

1. project data,
2. key issues and recommendations identified during the JROM field visit, and
3. current status.

The latter constitutes the core section of the RMP as it includes the description of corrective actions taken to solve the most problematic issues and the effects of such corrective actions. It also specifies whether any other further actions are required.

The Return Monitoring Page is directly linked to the JROM report as an Annex and does not have any BCS associated with it, nor does it include any specific grading.

Sources of information to produce the RMP:

The main sources of information are the notes taken during the Return Monitoring visit and the Monitoring Report to which the Return Monitoring is associated/annexed to. The information to be included in the “key issues and recommended actions identified during the JROM field visit”

¹⁵ The JROM piloted in Ethiopia reveals that 6 to 8 weeks is a suitable timeframe. That said, it is entirely up to each ECD/PG to decide the length of such timeframe.

of the RMP mainly comes from the MR and the Implementing Partner Response Sheet, which provides information on which recommendations were ‘agreed’, who had to take action and when.

Responsibility

Return Monitoring could be conducted by the TM and/or MPO depending on resources and time availability as well as on the gravity and repercussions of the problematic issues identified.

Some **considerations and suggestions** when filling in /completing the RMP are:

- The RMP template has, by default, room to include five issues. This should be taken as a reference: if there is less than five relevant issues the remaining boxes should be left blank and, conversely, when there are more than five issues new rows could be added.
- It is recommended to include relevant issues in order of priority/importance.

3.4 Joint review mechanisms and follow-up

The value of the JROM system would be rather limited if it only delivered reports. For JROM findings and recommendations to translate into improved project performance there needs to be common mechanisms ensuring follow-up and feedback¹⁶ on the outcomes of the monitoring process. Moreover, joint review mechanisms which bring together the ECD, the PG and other donors are an important interface for JROM to result in institutional learning and ultimately, in more effective aid delivery instruments and approaches.

The objectives of establishing on-going consultation and feedback mechanisms such as review meetings and partner dialogue platforms are to:

- Follow up on JROM findings and recommendations and help ensure they improve project performance; and
- Ensure that the information and knowledge base generated by the JROM system feed back into partner dialogues, and particularly to those aimed at improving overall aid effectiveness in terms of promoting socio-economic development and reducing poverty.

Regular review meetings may take place at various levels and take various forms. We suggest the following options be considered:

Joint review¹⁷ meetings at project level

Regular Project Review Meetings constitute a suitable forum/mechanism to support reflection on project progress, exchange of information and ideas, team building, problem solving and forward joint planning. These meetings offer a channel for structured discussions on project progress and are the most immediate channel for JROM findings to be commonly discussed by the ECD, the PG and the implementing partners.

In the pilot in Ethiopia, joint review meetings at project level were structured by means of the so-called Tripartite Monthly Review Meetings which proved to be an appropriate mechanism to discuss project implementation and achievements. Its main elements are:

¹⁶ The JROM Response Sheets are a feedback mechanism in themselves as they include IP’s comments on the MR. The feedback mechanisms addressed in this section are those beyond the production of the MR.

¹⁷ The term review here refers to regular internal reviews which are not different from project reviews such as mid-term reviews. The latter are donor-led and external.

Purpose:

- Regular/periodic follow-up on the implementation status and effects of recommendations and corrective actions put forward in MR and RMP;
- Gather lessons learnt on the actual feasibility and effectiveness of the actions recommended;
- Identify issues to be addressed in forthcoming JROM field visits; and
- Identify JROM capacity-building needs.

Implementation arrangements and operation:

- It is a meeting between implementing partners, the PG and the ECD, and takes place on a regular monthly basis;
- Every month three to four projects are discussed in the meeting. The number of projects per meeting was established in a way that enabled the review of the entire EC portfolio in the country (eligible for JROM) at least once a year. Whenever possible, it is recommended to carry out a review every six-month reviews for each project;
- The M&EM pre-selects the projects to be reviewed in consultation with the TM, the F&C officers, and head of Section/head of Cooperation. Priority is given to projects that require particular attention due to their strategic importance or to the severity of their performance problems. Final selection of projects to be reviewed is done in consultation /consensus with PMO/PG;
- In order to ensure a well-structured discussion a meeting Agenda is prepared beforehand;
- The main output of the meeting is the action-oriented Minutes that reflect collective decisions taken and specify responsibility for the execution of the actions agreed.

Another option for regular review meetings at project level is using already existing project mechanisms/implementation management arrangements such as the Project Steering Committees or the Management Committees.

It is recommended that, regardless of the meeting modality chosen, review meetings have the following features:

- Be regular/periodic and thus planned in advance. Ad hoc- meetings could be considered but preferably only in emergency cases or in exceptional circumstances;
- Have a clear formal agenda circulated to all participants before the meeting;
- The decisions agreed during the meeting should be documented e.g. by means of minutes, and specify responsibility allocations and timeliness for implementation of the actions;
- The meetings should be adequately resourced and budgeted for; and
- The preparation of the meeting should also involve collecting the relevant documentation that will be discussed and circulating it to the participants e.g. JROM MR, EROM MR, evaluations, progress reports, etc.

Joint review meetings at portfolio level

Review mechanisms at levels higher than project-level could encompass discussions on cross-cutting issues and general/horizontal problems that affect implementation of part of the portfolio or the country project portfolio as a whole. They could also be a mechanism to review general aid management issues and aspects related to the monitoring function. In this regard, they would

become an on-going consultation and regular feedback channel on further exploring, developing and expanding the JROM.

The implementation of the IROME in Ethiopia revealed a clear need for a forum beyond project reviews. It did so in a context where the importance of building a well-functioning partnership with Implementing Partners and Line Ministries is growing alongside the introduction of new development aid modalities (SPSP, GBS) and the progressive transfer of project implementation executive authority to partner country institutions. In such scenarios, the establishment of a Joint Annual “Partners in Implementation” Conference would be appropriate. This type of event could include sessions in which good practices applied by the best-performing implementing partners/agencies could be presented and shared alongside discussions on the factors hindering performance. This sort of event would help ensure that broad ranging partner dialogue takes place on regular basis.

There are multiple formats and possible arrangements for this kind of meetings and each ECD should decide on the most suitable ones given the specific country context. What is most important is to ensure that such regular partner dialogue mechanisms do exist, regardless of the chosen formula. The conference’s frequency is also at the discretion of each ECD. That said, opting for an annual event is recommended.

Some of the options could be:

- ***A Joint Conference including the ECD and the PG.*** This could cover:
 - Discussions on portfolio performance by thematic sectors or geographical zone. Aggregate /cumulative JROM data could be presented and discussed; and
 - Identification of new challenges, strategic interests and priorities which could be fed back into the JROM’s MP.
- ***A Joint Conference also including Implementing Partners***

This is the arrangement that corresponds to the conference format described above and which was the one recommended in Ethiopia after the piloting of the IROME.
- ***A Joint Conference also including other donors***

This could take the form of a one to two-day event promoted by the ECD and the PG with a program encompassing all the relevant combinations of actors e.g. a half-day session with discussions between the ECD and the PG; a half-day session with discussions between the ECD, the PG and IP; another half-day session in which donors operating in specific sectors are also invited to discuss, for example recurrent problems in impact and effectiveness in the health portfolio.

It would be very opportune, in order to promote harmonisation in the area of result-oriented monitoring, that the ECD promotes a JROM-centered dialogue with other donors. In most countries there are already-existing donor dialogue platforms which could be used in this regard, for example, inserting JROM-specific discussions in donor annual meetings. If that option is chosen it would be important to ensure the continuity of the dialogue on JROM as opposed to one-off discussions being inserted in on-going donor coordination structures. In the event that the possibility of incorporating a JROM-based dialogue in existing mechanism was not feasible, it would be advisable to create a specific ad-hoc regular mechanism. The partner dialogue on JROM between the EC and other donors could cover topics areas such as:

- Need for better coordination in specific geographical areas or thematic sectors in which JROM has identified flaws/opportunities;

- Comparing JROM and joint monitoring experiences implemented by other donors in order to discuss practical implementation aspects and improve the system;
- Exploring ways to expand joint monitoring approaches – be they JROM or practices applied by other donors. In this regard it would be pertinent to discuss the possibility of piloting harmonized joint approaches. Moreover, if JROM proves successful at project level, its principles and methodology could be tested for monitoring Sector Policy Support Programs (SPSP) and General Budget Support (GBS) initiatives.

3.5 Quality assurance

JROM quality assurance comprises three dimensions: (i) ensuring the quality of the sequence of steps within the JROM process; (ii) ensuring the quality of the main JROM outputs i.e. the MR, the BCS, the RS, the RMP; and (iii) ensuring the quality of the internal monitoring systems of individual projects.

3.5.1 Quality assurance of the JROM process

This is one of the core responsibilities of the M&EM and consists of a series of controls and checks to make sure that the system is administered and operates efficiently and effectively. The focus of the M&EM in this regard will be to ensure the quality of the 13-step sequence described in Figure 8. The ECD and the PG's senior management (the JROM's mandate stems from them) will also play a role in ensuring that the JROM process fulfils its central purpose and it is implemented in a joint fashion.

Some of the **general aspects** to take into account are:

- Focus on timelines. Information generated by JROM feeds decision-making process at various levels.¹⁸ The degree of effectiveness of the entire systems hinges to a great extent on the timely provision of informational outputs. This in turn will depend on the timely provision of inputs to the system e.g. from IP or TM/MPO;
- Ensuring the joint nature of the approach. This implies making sure that the MPO/PG are informed and consulted when required throughout the sequence of JROM steps e.g. in the selection of projects to be monitored or when drafting the agenda for review meetings. A particularly important aspect would be ensuring joint field missions and joint report writing;
- Similarly, it would be pertinent to ensure that F&C Section staff are involved in the process since contractual, financial and procedural aspects can have a significant influence on project performance;
- Ensuring that resources are available in a timely manner so that there are no bottlenecks e.g. budget allocations and timely disbursements for field visit expenses, adequate staff e.g. IT support staff to ensure the correct functioning of the database, etc.;
- Ensuring that JROM capacity building requirements are identified and addressed. Both the quality of the JROM process and outputs hinges on technical competency and expertise of the actors involved. Introducing JROM implies a greater/new focus on monitoring & evaluation techniques and approaches. The M&EM could play a key role in identifying capacity building requirements that could then translate into training programs, coaching activities or technical assistance. Ensuring adequate capacity is crucial to guarantee the quality of the JROM process and its sustainability.

Some **specific Q&A issues** the M&EM could give special attention to are:

- The list of EC-funded projects is updated;

¹⁸ Project level (implementing partner); at ECD Task Manager level or F&C officer level; at ECD Head of Section level or Head of Cooperation or even Head of Delegation; at EC Headquarters level; at several levels within the Partner Government.

- The MP is updated periodically (monthly if possible) and inputs from the TM and MPO are provided in a timely manner. In particular, inputs stemming from review meetings and partner dialogues need to be incorporated;
- In review meetings, make sure that the agenda incorporates the inputs of the participants and that it is circulated beforehand; check that relevant documents to be discussed in the meeting are provided to everyone in time;
- Check that JROM reports are made available in a timely manner to the users i.e. uploaded in the JROM databases and circulated/disseminated to other stakeholders when necessary e.g. before a partner dialogue meeting with other donors;
- Keep track of and record deviations to the timelines;
- Ensure that JROM information is readily available to fulfill ECD's reporting requirements such as for the AMP and the EAMR;
- Collect and assemble feedback on the extent to which the JROM fulfills its core objectives (improve project performance; contribute to partner dialogue, etc.). Such feedback could be gathered through project review meetings, the annual joint conferences or through aggregate data analysis.

In this regard, it could be appropriate to require the M&EM to produce a **JROM Annual Report** to be submitted to Heads of Section, the Heads of Cooperation and F&C and Head of Delegation. The report could include, at least, specific sections on: (i) JROM coverage; number of missions, number and type of review meetings, etc.; (ii) main achievements i.e. how JROM has contributed to improved portfolio management or to enhance the TM's role as an informed dialogue partner; (iii) main issues and bottlenecks; and (iv) JROM capacity needs assessment and proposed training/coaching actions for next period.

This report could be produced jointly between the M&EM and the MPO, in which case it would also be submitted to the PG's relevant higher management levels. It is at the full discretion of each ECD whether to opt for a joint approach or not when producing the JROM Annual Report.

3.5.2 Quality assurance of JROM outputs

MRs and associated documents represent a cornerstone of the JROM. They do not only contain the assessment of project performance and the required corrective actions but also are a central communication tool within the JROM process. Therefore, the quality of a MR is associated with aspects such as clarity, internal coherence and accuracy.

The main responsibility for conducting Q&A of JROM outputs falls under the M&EM's responsibilities. Complying with the timelines for report drafting, submission and upload in the database are also part of Q&A. They are aspects that have been covered in the previous section as they are related to the JROM process. This section focuses on intrinsic quality of the outputs.

The Implementing Partner also plays a role in the Q&A of the MR. It does so by filling the Implementing Partner Response Sheet which addresses aspects such as the clarity of the report, the relevance and accuracy of the findings and comments on the actions recommended in the MR.

The Q&A made by the M&EM should encompass the supervision of the MR, BCS, RS and RMP. Figure 10 provides a checklist with the main aspects the M&EM could take into account when carrying out the Q&A of these documents.

Figure 10: JROM outputs QA Checklist

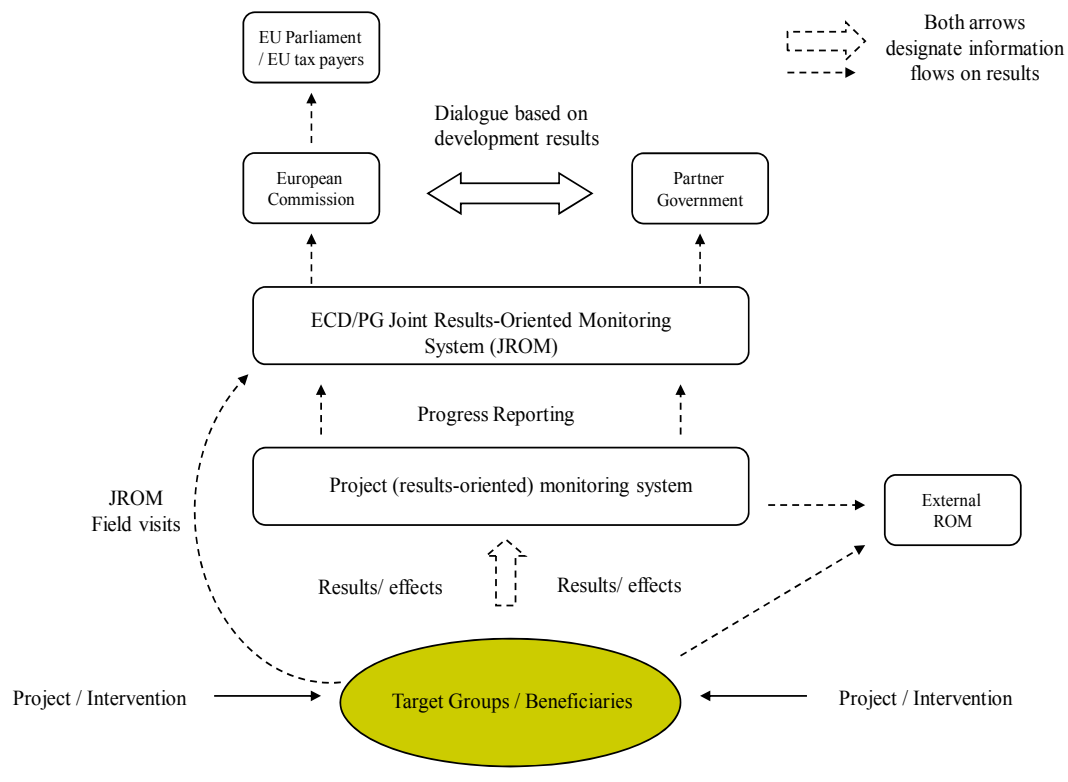
	Description of issues to take into account
Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS)	Formal compliance: (i) Check that data entries e.g. project number, name, monitoring date, etc. are duly filled in; (ii) check that all criterion have been assigned a rating (no omissions)
	Check that the narrative comments under each criterion support/are coherent with the rating attributed to that particular criterion.
	Make sure that (i) the “Summary of key observations/findings” box does not omit any of the core issues addressed in the “Detailed observations/findings” box; and (ii) that the monitors (TM/MPO) comment on whether recommendations from previous monitoring reports have been followed-up on.
Monitoring Report (MR)	Formal compliance: (i) check that project data and financial data entry tables are duly filled in with the right data; (ii) check inconsistencies in the financial data table e.g. funds disbursed higher than secondary commitment or expenditure higher than disbursement; (iii) ensure that ratings in the MR coincide with those in the BCS.
	Check the clarity of the report: easily readable, understandable, language is appropriate and accessible to the average reader i.e. the reader of a MR might encompass a broad range of stakeholders with different command of the language; above all you should make sure that the recipients of the recommendations (action) will understand the terms/expressions used.
	Accuracy and relevance of the information: avoid vague statements and ensure they are accurate (backed up by a source). The IP’s Response Sheet plays a key role in this regard.
	Coherence: (i) ensure there is no ambiguity in the statements and no contradictions throughout the text; (ii) main findings should be justified through clear argumentations / reasoning (given the conciseness of MRs, some argumentations may be found in the BCS).
	The value of ratings should be consistent / in keeping with the analysis made in the narrative part of the report.
	Ensure that the recommendations/actions to be taken: (i) are all directly related to weaknesses/criticism/problematic issues pointed out in the text. No recommendation should be made in a vacuum; (ii) include who they are addressed to and the order of priority. In this regard check that there is coherence between the recipient of the recommendation and the nature of the action to be taken; (iii) check whether the recommendations are feasible and realistic. The RS provided by the IP is instrumental to support/corroborate this assessment.
	Ensure the added value of the report: avoid reports that tend to describe what progress reports already say. A MR should be more analytical than descriptive.
Implementing Partner Response Sheet (RS)	Formal compliance: check that project data is correct and that there are no omissions in the ratings.
	Ensure that the TM has duly copied all actions recommended in section V of the MR (no omissions) so that the Implementing Partner provides responses to all recommended actions.
	Check IP responses to the recommended actions are clear, understandable and well-reasoned i.e. when explaining why the recommendation will/will not be adopted. Ensure that timelines and responsibilities are specified i.e. who will take responsibility to implement the action and by when.
Return Monitoring Page (RMP)	Formal compliance: check that project data is correct and that all key issues and recommendations identified during the main monitoring mission – and contained in the MR- are included / copied in section II of the RMP.
	Ensure that all issues in section II are commented upon in section III “current status” even if it is to specify that no remedial action has been taken. Check that “further actions” include timelines and clear responsibility allocations.

3.5.3 Quality assurance of the project's internal monitoring system

The section addresses Q&A of one of the main source of relevant inputs to the JROM process: the project's internal monitoring system. The quality of the assessments made by JROM or any other monitoring or evaluation exercise conducted by actors other than the IP, build upon the quality of the information provided by the project itself.

Most importantly, a results-oriented monitoring system depends to a great extent on available information/data on the effects of the project on target groups. The collection of this information should be one of the central elements of the project's internal monitoring system. Figure 11 illustrates the interdependencies between project level and JROM systems.

Figure 11: Information flows on results/effects



The minimal elements of a project's (results-oriented) monitoring system (PMS) are:

1. A hierarchy of objectives framing the intended achievements and reflecting the logic of the intervention (intervention strategy);
2. Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) at all levels of the intervention describing the project's objectives in operationally measurable terms; and the estimated/intended value of these indicators at the end of the project (targets);
3. A baseline enabling a comparison between the original and the final situation; and

4. A (feedback) data collection and management system to retrieve information on the values of the indicators at all levels

The TM and the M&EM can play a role in ensuring that these four elements are in place and that their quality is up to standard by, for example, enforcing (explicitly asking for) the use of OVIs when reporting on progress, requiring revisions in unclear intervention logic or ensuring that baseline surveys are budgeted for in Work Plans. Moreover, the TM and M&EM can provide technical support, advice and guidance to the IP on how to improve the quality of these elements and thus the quality of the project's M&E framework.

The Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) contains an outline of three of the four elements above i.e. the intervention logic, the OVIs and the Sources of Verification (one of the components of the data collection system¹⁹). It should be noted that a good quality LFM on paper does not necessarily mean that the project has a P-ROMS in place. Conversely, a project/implementing partner may have a sound P-ROMS (or some of its elements) that it is not well-reflected in the LFM simply because the implementing partner is not familiar with the methodological aspects underlying a LFM.

As shown in Figure 11 above, **progress reports** are a main communication tool to communicate the status of the achievement of results and the information they content depends on the data produced by the project's internal monitoring system. Therefore the quality of progress reports is another key element to ensure the quality of the JROM information inputs.

The main quality feature for a progress report to be useful for a TM is that it includes a comparative assessment between what was planned against the actual/current situation. In practical terms this implies comparing planned activities with the activities actually carried out and comparing planned results with those actually achieved. This comparative analysis should be presented in a clear and straightforward format to free the TM from the time consuming task of having to compare different documents (work plans with progress reports).

Figure 12 provides a checklist of issues/questions the TM and M&EM could address when assessing the quality of a project's (internal) monitoring system.

¹⁹ Other elements of a data collection system besides the sources of verification/information would be, for example, the frequency with which data is collected or the responsibility allocations for data collection.

Figure 12: Checklist – Assessing the quality of project ‘internal’ monitoring systems

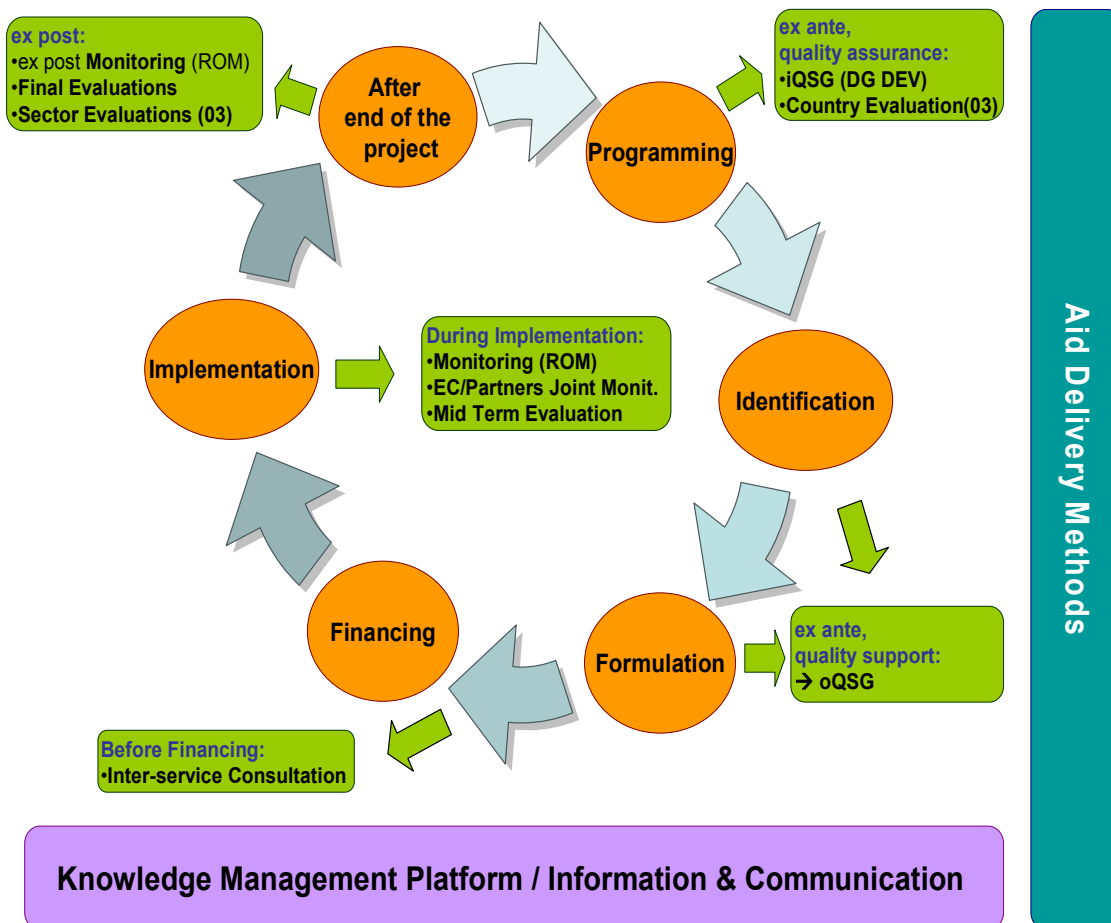
Issue / question	Action required	Timeline
Intervention logic		
Are objectives (Overall objective(s), project purpose and results/outputs) and the intended actions (activities) clear and logical? E.g. are planned activities appropriate to produce outputs?, are outputs appropriate to generate intended outcomes and achieve the project purpose?, etc.	<i>e.g. project purpose not realistic given current timeframe: IP should submit proposal for scaling it down</i>	<i>e.g. proposal to be submitted by end of April</i>
Do objectives and activities address clearly identified needs?		
Are objectives and activities realistic (as opposed to overambitious) given the project time frame and the assigned budget?		
Objectively Verifiable Indicators/Targets		
Do indicators chosen at all levels of the intervention describe the project's objectives in operationally measurable terms?	<i>e.g. OV11 for result 2 is not specific and should be changed</i> <i>e.g. OVIs 2 and 3 for the project purpose should be revised as they are not measurable.</i>	<i>e.g. IP should send proposal by email by end of month</i>
Are OVIs SMART i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound?		
Are there OVIs at output, outcome and impact level? Is there a good combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators?		
Have targets been established (in quantitative, qualitative terms or both)? Are they realistic given the project's timeframe, resources and the nature and scope of activities?		
Baseline		
Is there available baseline data? Was a baseline survey budgeted and planned for in the original design? If not, does the IP have any alternative –even if incomplete- in place to measure change?	<i>e.g. No baseline survey was planned; IP to suggest a budget reallocation to enable a baseline survey during the inception phase.</i>	<i>e.g. Budget reallocation to be submitted by second week of April.</i>
If there is a baseline: (i) do the variables for which data was collected coincide with the chosen indicators?; (ii) does the baseline provide quantitative/qualitative data on the initial values of the indicators in a straightforward manner or are further calculations are required?		
Data collection and management system		
Does the IP collect data? Were the costs associated with data collection included in the budget? If not, who covers the cost for data collection? Is data collection formalized in a system/structured mechanism or is it an ad-hoc exercise?	<i>e.g. the IP has a data collection mechanism in place but information is not aggregated/used to retrieve the values of indicators in the logframe. IP should redress the problem</i>	<i>e.g. Annual Progress Report should include values for all indicators in the logframe</i>
Does the project data collection mechanism retrieve data on the chosen indicators (on all of them, on some of them, none of them)? Does data collection encompass data on inputs, on activities, on outputs, on outcomes, on impacts? Are data source primary or secondary data sources? To what extent are the data sources reliable/provide accurate data?		
What is the frequency of data collection (how often)? Are there responsibility allocations for data collection (who collects it)? Is there an information management system enabling data aggregation and analysis? Or is data collected but not aggregated?		

3.6 JROM database

The JROM constitutes a comprehensive information system and as such generates a considerable amount and range of data. This calls for the setting up of a database to store and analyze data and to support the quality assurance process. While the need to have a mechanism to store and analyse JROM data is fairly self-evident, the core of the matter is where the database will be hosted and how it will be managed. As a general principle an indiscriminate proliferation of independent databases within the EC external aid portfolio should be avoided as they increase the complexity of the system and tend to generate isolated and unrelated processes and increase transaction costs.

Some of the immediate options to host the database of MRs generated by JROM could be: (i) to host them in the ROM database section in CRIS; or (ii) to include them as a module in the CRIS report window. That said, there is another option that looks feasible in the medium term. At the time of writing this Operational Guidance, Units E5 and G5 of DG AIDCO have launched an initiative aimed at developing an IT platform to support and integrate the Quality Cycle tools for EC-funded projects and programs. The JROM system is one of these tools.

Figure 13: Quality support, monitoring and evaluation tools throughout the project cycle



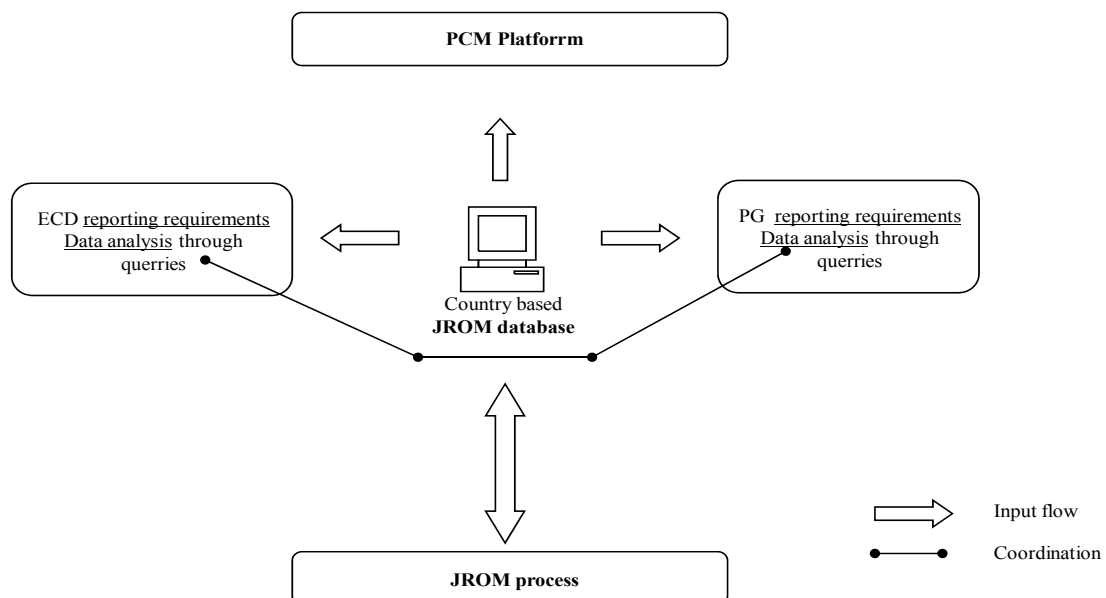
In short, this future platform, which is nowadays referred to as the PCM Platform, will bring together the quality tools into an integrated quality system. If the initiative succeeds JROM data will be entered into this IT platform.

Even if that is the case there may be a need to set up a JROM database at ECD level for three reasons:

- The ECD will have specific JROM-related data management needs e.g. those related with portfolio management such as project screening, generating the rolling Work Plans, etc;
- The ECD (and the PG) will most probably need to analyze JROM country-specific data in order, for example, to assess project performance trends over time or to measure portfolio performance by thematic sector or by type of implementing partner; and
- Both the ECD and the PG will need JROM information to be organized in a way that fits into their reporting requirements.

In short, the ECD and the PG will need to organize and retrieve data in a way that is useful to them. Actually the JROM database will have to serve two purposes: it will have to be designed in a way that enables feeding relevant information into the PCM platform and, at the same time, fulfils ECD and PG data requirements. Most probably the PCM platform will require only part of the information generated by a particular ECD-JROM, for example JROM main outputs -MR, BCS, RS and RMP- and aggregated data on the country portfolio monitored by thematic sector or by type of implementing partner or by budget size.

Figure 13: Outline of a potential scenario for the JROM database



The responsibility for the JROM database could be allocated to the M&EM, who could be assisted by IT support staff. There are three reasons that explain the appropriateness of the M&EM having overall responsibility on the database:

- She/he has the most complete and comprehensive overview on the JROM system;
- She/he plays a key leading role in overseeing portfolio management, which implies a set of tasks (updating list of projects, screening, regular MP updating) that require the support of a database; and
- She/he is in charge of the QA of the entire JROM process, a task that requires to have updated information on the whole process e.g. so that timelines can be tracked, etc.

Some **general considerations** to take into account when designing the JROM database may be:

- Ensure that it is compatible with the PCM platform (or equivalent broader management information system at EC level e.g. CRIS);
- Ensure that it allows for retrieving information in a format that complies with and fits in the reporting requirements of the ECD (AMP, EAMR) and the PG;
- Ensure that it fulfils the immediate information needs of the JROM process: it supports monitoring planning, resource allocation, quality assurance and enables storing all monitoring reports and related JROM outputs. The database would host, for example, the PMPP so that it may be updated at the beginning of each month;
- Ensure that it includes an updated inventory of all EC-funded projects broken down between those subject to joint monitoring and unilateral ECD monitoring. The database would store all the monitoring information related to EC-funded projects;
- Ensure that it can also provide information at an aggregate level for the senior management by allowing cumulative analysis of monitoring ratings, key observations and recommendations against a wide range of variables e.g. DAC codes, regions within the country, strategic areas, type of implementing partner, etc;
- In line with the previous bullet point, the database should be able to be used by TMs and the MPO as a statistical tool also at project level: enabling the analysis of ratings, key observations and recommendations, lessons learned and recurring problems – information that can help project managers and implementing partners improve the overall quality, efficiency and effectiveness of ongoing and upcoming projects; and
- Ensure that it is designed in a user-friendly way so that ECD and PG staff may perform queries easily just ‘by pressing a key’.

Some of the specific **operational features** that the database could include are:

- A function enabling it to retrieve data by relevant project features e.g. thematic sector, budget size, geographical area, type of implementing partner, financial instrument, by coverage (regional/national interventions), by project start date, etc;
- A search engine and associated analytical and data presentation features enabling the generation of fact sheets, interactive bulletins and, for example, a monitoring/management solutions help desk;
- A statistical reporting tool enabling the generation of analytical management reports. These reports could include, among many others, analysis of scoring/observations/recommendations in relation to financing instruments, analysis of

- tendencies in scoring over the project time span, analysis of the link between the quality of the design and the quality of the results, etc;
- The possibility of full search and access to the comments in the Background Conclusion Sheets. This will be highly valuable for ECD and PG staff when analysing particular aspects of project performance as it would enable them to identify deficient solutions and best practices applied in the past to similar projects; and
 - A mechanism enabling different levels of access to the information by means of using individual passwords.

Development and ongoing maintenance of a JROM database must therefore be adequately resourced and supported by IT professionals.

4 Management implications

This section provides a brief concluding summary of the main management implications (particularly for the ECD) with respect to setting up, implementing and sustaining an effective JROM system/approach.

4.1 Human resource management

JROM will likely require a review, and re-orientation, of some of the tasks and responsibilities of Task Managers, and other ECD staff, in order to:

- Give greater emphasis to the TM's role as an 'informed dialogue partner';
- 'Free-up' the time required to plan for, conduct and manage JROM activities. More time needs to be made available to allow Task Managers (in particular) to get out of the office, work with partner government officials and other stakeholders, and visit project activities 'in the field';
- Promote 'smarter', not harder, work practices within the Delegation, including trying to minimise bureaucratic 'red-tape'; and
- Promote more effective team work/collaboration between Finance and Operations Sections with respect to portfolio management and monitoring.

As already noted in the main body of the Guidance, the appointment of a full-time M&E Manager within the ECD (specifically for JROM) is also likely to be necessary. In addition, if TMs devote more of their time to JROM activities, this may result in the need to recruit additional administrative support staff to take on part of the administrative and contractual related workload presently done by TMs. Furthermore, the ECD IT specialist could take on, as part of their regular roles and functions, support for the management of the JROM database.

Of particular importance is also the commitment of the Head of Delegation, and other senior managers, to the objectives of JROM. One key implication is that the overall management of the project/programme portfolio, and strategic decision making on resource allocation, needs to be increasingly based on evidence concerning the achievement of 'results', and not so much on budget and expenditure information, and meeting expenditure targets.

More effective monitoring (joint or otherwise) also requires that Task Managers have clear incentives to appropriately prioritise their monitoring responsibilities. Senior Managers therefore need to both informally (e.g. through ongoing positive direction and feedback to staff) and formally (e.g. through staff performance appraisal processes), put effective monitoring and reporting at the top of their list of things they expect their staff to effectively undertake.

4.2 Skills development/training

The development and implementation of JROM approaches requires that ECD staff, as well as PG counterparts and Implementing Partners have the requisite knowledge and skills.

There are four main ways in which such knowledge and skills might be developed, namely:

- Mentoring and on the job-support, provided by those within the Delegation who already have appropriate skills and experience which they can share with colleagues;
- Participation of Delegation (and PG staff) in External ROM missions, with coaching/support provided by EROM monitors;
- Developing/organizing coaching activities with support from EROM monitors; and

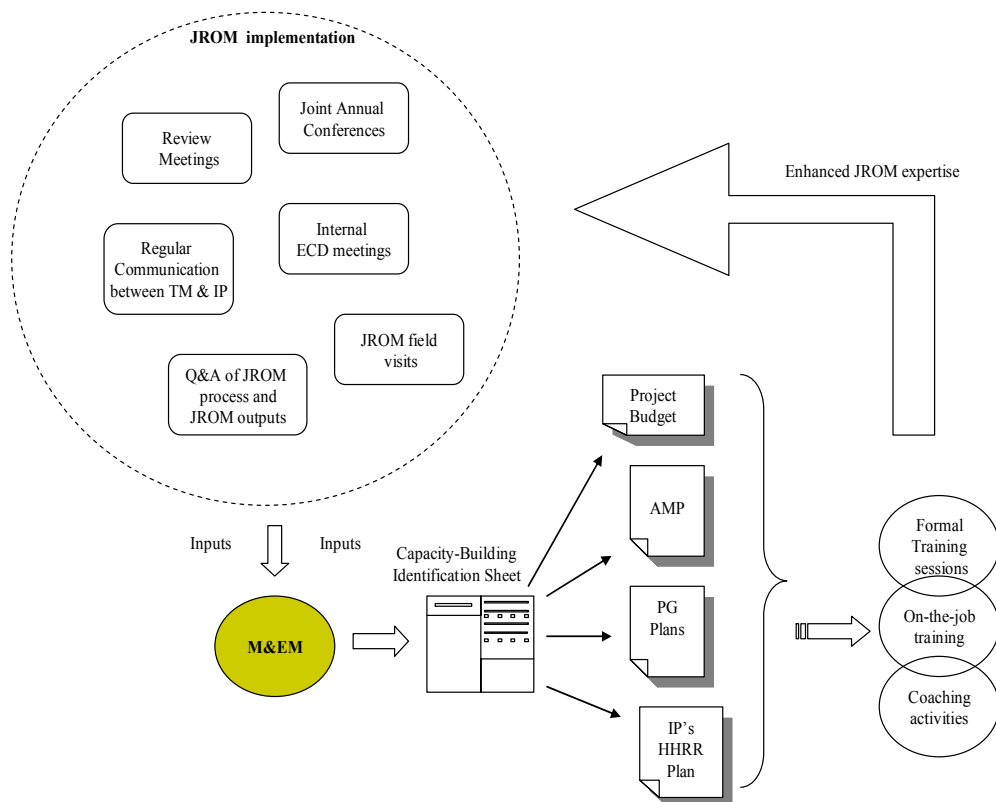
- Organising and delivering training events/workshops, either directly by the Delegation or through Unit E5 in Brussels (using the services of the Aid Delivery Methods Support Team).

Learning by doing is certainly a key way in which both Delegation and PG staff can improve their knowledge and skills.

It is anticipated that the appointed M&E Manager(s) within the Delegation would take the lead role in developing and then organising the implementation of a skills development programme for both Delegation and PG staff.

The M&E Manager(s) could also play a leading role in identifying needs for capacity building within the JROM system. Figure 14 below provides an illustrative example of how the M&E Manager(s) could identify such requirements and facilitate their incorporation in the ECD Annual Management Plans, project budget, PG plans and/or IP's Human Resources Plans. The Figure also presents some of the various sources of information M&E Manager(s) can call upon to retrieve information on capacity-building needs. At times M&E Manager(s) will have direct access to such information e.g. by attending review meetings or by conducting Q&A, whereas in other cases they will have to liaise closely with TMs and the MPO(s) to identify specific capacity building requirements.

Figure 14: Opportunities for identifying and addressing skills development/capacity building requirements



To help ensure that identified needs for capacity-building are captured in a systematic fashion, M&EM(s) could use specific documents designed for the purpose. One of the many examples/options available could be drawing up a Capacity-Building Identification Sheet on a periodic basis e.g. quarterly, half-yearly or yearly as appropriate. Figure 15 below provides an illustrative example:

Figure 15: JROM Capacity-Building Identification Sheet

JROM capacity-building identification sheet				
Period: January -July 2010				
Source / request	Identified shortcoming	Suggested action	Source of funding	Suggested timeline
M&EM	Poor quality and depth of BCS/MR	Training session on field monitoring techniques (focus groups, semi-structured interviews, etc)	AMP & PG budget	First quarter 2011
TM and MPO	Inadequate project M&E frameworks	Training session on development of result-based monitoring systems	AMP / project budget	First quarter 2011
...				

4.3 Budget

The implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation activities requires resources, both staff time and financial resources for such things as travel, meetings, contracting additional expertise, establishing and maintaining databases, producing and disseminating information, etc.

As a rough rule-of-thumb, somewhere between 5 and 10% of the overall value of the project/programme portfolio should be allocated specifically to monitoring and evaluation.

The operational budget for M&E can come from a variety of sources, including:

- Project budgets;
- ECD operational budgets (e.g. included in the AMP);
- Partner Government budgets; and/or
- Implementing Partner budgets.

The ECD therefore needs to take an active role in helping ensure that both JROM, and other complementary monitoring and evaluation processes, are adequately budgeted for and resourced.

Annexes

A1 – Terms of Reference for M&E Manager

The responsibilities of the M&EM will include overseeing all phases of the monitoring process from preparation of work plans, through execution of monitoring, quality assurance, and preparation of aggregate management reports for PG and EC Delegation leadership. In particular the general management and coordination functions executed by the M&EM(s) will include, but will not be limited to:

- a) Assembly of accurate and complete inventory of all EC funded projects implemented in the country
- b) Oversight of inputs from TM/PO resulting in preparation and regular monthly update of JROM monitoring work plans with particular attention attached to promotion of joint monitoring by ECD and PG, whenever feasible
- c) Oversight of on-time implementation of the monitoring work plan and on-time preparation/uploading of JROM reports.
- d) Review and quality assurance of JROM reports
- e) De-briefing by TM/PO before JROM upload and responsibility for oversight of upload into IROME database
- f) Oversight of the monthly schedule of Tri-Partite Review Meetings – substituting for Head of Cooperation in cases of their unavailability
- g) Joint preparation of regular aggregate management reports (quarterly, annually) for PG Representative and Head of Cooperation/Head of Delegation on portfolio performance and on ad-hoc basis, as required
- h) Coordination of training and mentoring activities to ensure good understanding and harmonization of monitoring approaches by the ECD, PG and Implementing Partners
- i) Oversight and coordination of External ROM missions starting from selection of project sample (with aim at either complementing and/or reconfirming JROM findings) to consolidation of ROM findings with the regular JROM results.

A2 - Project screening table format example

This format, if used, should ideally be completed jointly by the ECD (Task Managers) in consultation with relevant partner government counterparts.

The issues/criteria listed are provided as examples only, and could be modified to suit the priorities of each respective Delegation/Partner Government.

Project Name:		
Start & Finish:	Value:	IP:
Date of assessment:	Task Manager:	
General Issues	Risk rating (1, 2, 3, 4)	Issues for follow-up/tracking
1. Complexity and/or political sensitivity of the project (e.g. anti-corruption, human rights, nuclear power)		
2. Level of identified environmental or social risks (e.g. re-settlement, dam/irrigation, ethnic minorities)		
3. Relative financial value of the project (e.g. to the overall ECD portfolio)		
4. Other / 'X' factors (e.g. significant changes in project context and relevant sector policy, conflict zone, etc)		
Project performance related issues	Risk rating (1, 2, 3, 4)	Issues for follow-up/tracking
1. Quality of project design and/or annual work plans (e.g. Logframe, indicators and workplan schedules)		
2. Activities carried out to date		
3. Evidence of results achieved to date		
4. Evidence of any negative unintended effects/impact		
5. Quality of project 'internal' monitoring system		
6. Institutional capacity of project implementing partner (management systems)		
7. Level of ownership/commitment of beneficiaries and relevant institutions		
8. Financial execution (against budget and time)		
9. Implication of the contracting deadline (d+3)		
10. Others		
Overall risk rating for project		

Four categories of “risk” could be used (similar to the JROM rating system), to assist in prioritising which projects need particular monitoring attention and support.

- **No risk (1):** there is no apparent risk of the project not delivering planned results.
- **Low risk (2):** the risk of the project not delivering results is low, but some issues have been identified which may require follow-up.
- **Medium risk (3):** difficulties have been identified that will impact negatively on the project’s ability to deliver its expected results, and specific follow-up is required.
- **High risk (4):** serious shortcomings have been identified and the risk is high that the project will not produce its results. Significant support/follow-up is required.

Figure 3 presents a proposed project Screening Table which could be used to help determine a project’s relative risk rating. The ‘issues’ included are provided as examples only, and each Delegation should feel free to adapt/change these to suit their specific context and needs.

In the process of completing the table, some issues may not be relevant if a project has not yet commenced implementation, or is in the very early stages of implementation and there is therefore no ‘performance’ data. The rating for such criteria could then just be left blank.

The overall risk rating given to each project should be based on a broad qualitative judgement of the ‘risk’ issues considered, and their relative importance. While it is possible to add all ratings, divide by the number of issues considered and determine an average score, this may imply a misleading level of quantified/statistical precision.

One alternative would be to establish an overall risk indicator on the basis of the number of times a particular individual risk rating appears. For example, a project with a “4” overall risk indicator could be defined as an intervention having more than seven 4-risk ratings. To emphasise focus on results, a project with a 4-risk rating in “results achieved to date” could automatically be selected for a monitoring visit. A project with a “1” overall risk indicator could be defined as an intervention having no single 4-risk ratings and 3-risk ratings; etc.

The screening table should be completed in consultation with the partner government and using information from all relevant sources (including partner government records), IP progress reports, CRIS implementation reports, EROM and/or JROM reports, etc.

Tracking key issues

The last column in the screening table lists " Issues for follow-up/tracking " that require special attention and possibly specific monitoring activities. All the information provided by the screening table, its overall rating on risks and the issues that need special follow-up, should then be used to establish priorities to be fed into the Project Portfolio Monitoring Plan.

A3 – JROM Monitoring Plan format

											2009		2010																	
											Dec		Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		J	A	S	O	N	D
Ref #	Project Name	Start date	Finish date	Total budget	ECD section	TM	PG Counter-part	IP	Date of previous JROM	Previous JROM rating	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A						

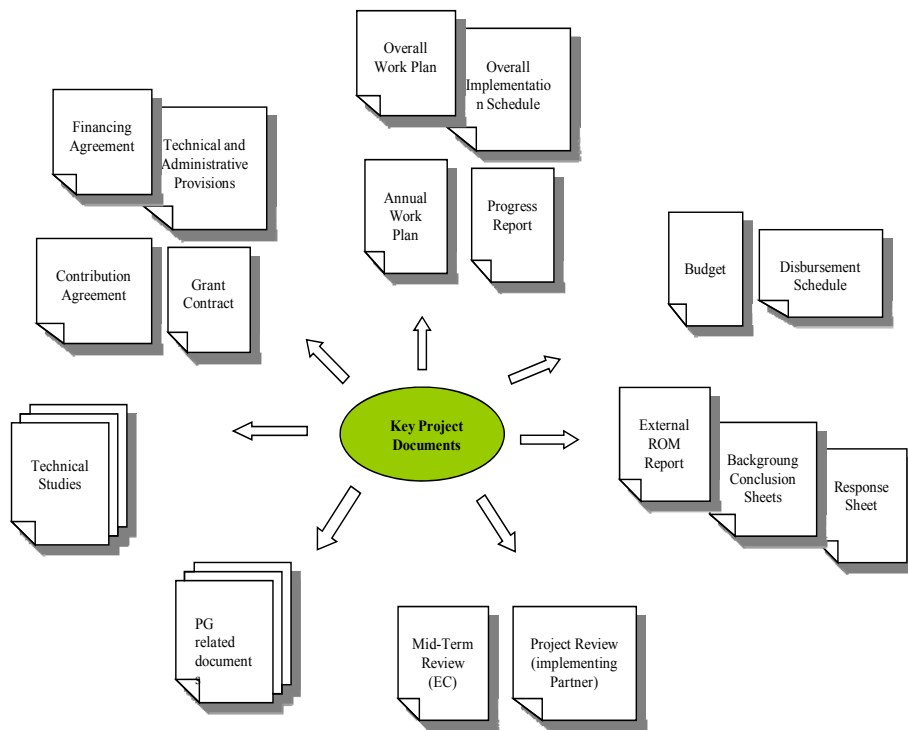
Notes:

- The scheduling columns cover a 13 month period – allowing for a monthly update ‘rolling’ update
- P & A in the scheduling columns (first 7 months only) refer to ‘planned’ and ‘actual’ (e.g. when the JROM mission was planned, and when it actually happened.
- Other columns could be added to a spreadsheet/database, including information on EROM visits, timing of joint review meetings, actual expenditure, etc.

A4 – Key project documents

Efficient and effective monitoring requires that the ‘monitors’ have a good understanding of the content of key project documents.

The following documents are considered the most important: (i) Financing Agreement and Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs); (ii) Logical Framework Matrix; (iii) overall work plan and implementation schedule; (iv) last progress reports and work plan; (v) budget, (vi) any external ROM reports or other independent review/evaluation documents; (vii) any relevant technical reports or studies; and (viii) any other documents considered important by the PG.



A brief summary of the role of these documents in the monitoring exercise is provided below.

Financing agreement (FA)

The Financing agreement contains and defines the specific content and scope of a project or programme. It reflects the explicit commitment of the different parties to a concrete intervention and as such, the FA constitutes a core reference document for monitoring.

It is worth noting that a FA may formally be presented with different forms and names in different projects i.e. “Contribution Agreement” with other donors, “Grant Contract” in thematic budget lines, etc. All these forms are just different types of FA.

The annexes to a FA and all its amendments are considered an integral part of the FA and should therefore be referenced and used.

Logical Framework Matrix (LFM)

In the context of monitoring, the LFM is useful for two main purposes.

- Firstly, it provides a simple overview of the intervention logic, facilitating a quick understanding of the hierarchy of objectives.

- Secondly, the LFM contains the main reference element to implement results-oriented monitoring, that is, the Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) with their corresponding Sources/Mean of Verification (SOVs). The OVIs should describe project objectives in operationally measurable terms and provide the basis for measuring the project's success in delivering results (i.e. at the level of the 'Overall Objective/Impact', 'Project Purpose/Outcomes' and 'Results/Outputs').

It must nevertheless be recognised that some LFM's are not particularly logical, do not contain appropriately clear and measurable indicators and have sources of verification which are inadequately specific. In such cases, a key role that JROM can play is to support the review and improvement of a project's LFM so that all key stakeholders can use it as an effective management tool.

Last progress report and work plan

The last progress report available should provide the Task Manager with an understanding of what has happened during the most recent implementation period, thereby providing a good introduction to the monitoring task. It is important to review both the operations/technical section and the financial section of progress reports.

The most up to date work plan also provides an important point of reference in terms of planned activities and expenditure. It allows comparison to be made between planned and actual implementation so as to help make an assessment of performance at the time of the monitoring field visit.

Overall work plan with overall implementation schedule

Monitoring exclusively against annual progress reports or annual work plans poses the risk of losing track of the overall situation. For example, implementation assessed as "according to plan" taking as a reference an annual work plan would not account for the overall scope of activities carried out (or not) over a longer implementation period. Overall work plans should therefore be used as a general reference point to help assess the performance of a project against the original plan.

It is nevertheless important to recognise that a project's performance cannot be judged solely against plan (whether overall or annual), given that the plan itself may have been unrealistic or poorly conceived in the first place. Indeed, this can be an important 'finding' of monitoring missions, namely that plans need to be revised/improved.

Budget

The budget and its disbursement schedule are the main reference point for expenditure monitoring. They allow a comparison to be made between planned and actual expenditure incurred to date which is an indicator of efficiency. The budget can also provide a better understanding of the 'weight' and significance of different project components and activities.

External ROM reports

ROM reports provide a structured summary assessment (including rating) of project performance against the criteria of relevance and quality of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and prospects for sustainability of benefits. Where available, they are an important source of additional information and should be referred to, including the recommendations made for follow-up.

Over time, JROM and external ROM should become fully complementary tools with external ROM gradually increasing its role as a validation tool for the JROM system, as well as a coaching instrument.

Other external reviews and ongoing evaluations

Project reviews and evaluations may include both mid-term reviews/evaluations commissioned by the EC and conducted by external experts and internal and/or external evaluations commissioned by the implementing partners.

The reports from such reviews/evaluations are an important point of reference as they can provide in-depth analyses on a projects' overall performance as well as recommendations that need follow-up during implementation.

Technical reports and studies produced by the project

During implementation projects will often produce technical documents/reports that can provide valuable insight into what the project is doing and achieving. Examples of such reports/studies could include wealth-ranking survey reports (for poverty reduction projects), training needs assessment reports (for capacity building projects), studies on loss of natural habitat (for biodiversity projects) and reports on access to HIV/AIDS treatment in prisons (for HIV/AIDS projects). Reviewing such documents if only briefly can give JROM 'monitors' additional insights into the quality of work being carried out, as well as specific information about whether or not results are being achieved.

Any document considered key in the PG requirements

Before undertaking a monitoring mission, it is also important to check with the PG if there are any other key documents that should also be used as a reference, apart from those listed above

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

2. Efficiency of Implementation to Date

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

Guiding questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Have relevant recommendations from any previous monitoring reports been followed-up on/actioned?</i> <i>Are planned financial resources and required inputs being provided/delivered in a timely manner, from both EC, PG and other sources?</i> <i>Are sound financial management systems in place, which provide timely, accurate and transparent information on expenditures and procurement?</i> <i>Are activities being effectively planned, managed and monitored, for example through using an activity scheduling/work planning tool?</i> <i>Is the pace of activity implementation satisfactory (or are there any significant delays)?</i> <i>Are project outputs being delivered as planned?</i> <i>Are stakeholders generally happy with the quality of project management, including responsiveness to their concerns/needs?</i> <i>Is the project adequately documenting, reporting and disseminating information?</i> <i>Has the project followed up on recommendations from previous monitoring missions/reviews?</i>
Detailed observations/findings:
Overall Rating: <i>a = very good; b = satisfactory; c = problems; d = serious deficiencies.</i>

Summary of key observations/findings
[Max 10 lines]

Recommended actions (what, when, who)
[Max 10 lines]

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

3. Effectiveness to Date

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

Guiding questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Have relevant recommendations from any previous monitoring reports been followed-up on/actioned?</i> <i>Is the quality of project outputs satisfactory, and is this being appropriately monitored by the project?</i> <i>Are target groups/beneficiaries satisfied with project outputs (including different groups, such as men and women)?</i> <i>Are project outputs directly contributing to the achievement of desired/planned outcomes (the project purpose)?</i> <i>What evidence is there that outcomes are being achieved?</i> <i>Is there any evidence of unplanned outcomes, either positive or negative?</i> <i>Is the project using appropriate indicators and information sources/collection methods to measure whether or not outcomes are being achieved, and is this information being appropriately used and shared?</i>
Detailed observations/findings:
Overall Rating: <i>a = very good; b = satisfactory; c = problems; d = serious deficiencies.</i>

Summary of key observations/findings
[Max 10 lines]

Recommended actions (what, when, who)
[Max 10 lines]

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

4. Impact Prospects

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

Guiding questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Have relevant recommendations from any previous monitoring reports been followed-up on/actioned?</i> <i>Is there any evidence yet that the project is contributing to the desired impact (Overall Objective)?</i> <i>Is it likely that the project will make a contribution to the desired impact in the future?</i> <i>Is there any evidence that there may be unplanned, but positive, impacts of the project?</i> <i>Are the current indicators and targets realistic at the impact level?</i> <i>Are there any concerns about possible negative impacts of the project (e.g. environmental, social, economic)?</i> <i>Are cross cutting issues being appropriately addressed, such as with respect to gender, environment and governance/corruption?</i>
Detailed observations/findings:
Overall Rating: <i>a = very good; b = satisfactory; c = problems; d = serious deficiencies.</i>

Summary of key observations/findings
[Max 10 lines]

Recommended actions (what, when, who)
[Max 10 lines]

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

5. Potential Sustainability of Benefits

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

Guiding questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Have relevant recommendations from any previous monitoring reports been followed-up on/actioned?</i> <i>Are project management and financing arrangements supporting the aid effectiveness principles of partner ownership, alignment with local systems and mutual accountability for development results?</i> <i>Is the project clearly contributing to institutional capacity development that will support the sustainability of benefits?</i> <i>Have the recurrent cost implications of sustaining project benefits been assessed and are plans in place to cover these costs in the future if required (e.g. sustainable financing mechanisms)?</i> <i>Are target institutions/groups and/or beneficiaries likely to be able to afford any additional costs associated with sustaining benefits?</i> <i>Is there evidence of local commitment to continue project initiated activities, such as increased budget appropriations, commitment to maintaining improved work processes or institutional structures by senior staff/officials, etc</i> <i>What, if any, are the identified threats to sustainability of benefits, and are these being appropriately addressed/managed by the project?</i>
Detailed observations/findings:
Overall Rating: <i>a = very good; b = satisfactory; c = problems; d = serious deficiencies.</i>

Summary of key observations/findings
[Max 10 lines]

Recommended actions (what, when, who)
[Max 10 lines]

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

6. Horizontal Issues

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

6.1 Role of Quality Support Group (QSG) and ROM in project quality

Guiding questions:

- *Whether the comments, particularly regarding stakeholders and needs analysis, institutional capacity assessment of the implementing partner and risks and assumptions made in the checklist and minutes against the quality and content of the Action Fiche were appropriate / relevant?*
- *Whether the comments were taken into consideration and included in the Project documents, e.g. TAPs, financing agreements, LFM, Inception reports, etc. and if so, did they improve project implementation?*
- *If the comments were not taken into consideration, was there any consequence during the implementation of the project? If so, please describe in the free text box.*
- *Has any monitoring (including internal monitoring systems or ROM) or evaluation resulted in improvement in the project?*

Please comment on any of the questions/aspects above, qualitative data is very valuable:

6.2 Review of TC Quality Criteria

Guiding questions:

Demand Driven TC?TA and ownership

- *Do local partners effectively lead in the planning and management of TC support (i.e. beyond formal endorsement)?*
- *Do local partners provide the required inputs enabling TC to perform (e.g. human and/or physical inputs)?*

Adaptation to the context and existing capacity

- *Is the TC support likely to achieve its objectives without critical constraints?*
- *Is the TC support adequate vis-à-vis the capacity of the local partner?*

Harmonisation of TC

- *Is the TC support taking into account TC from other donors in the same sector? (Ask the EC Delegation to acquire this data)*
- *Is the present TC support from the EC delivered jointly with other donors? (If no other donors are active in the sector then mark N/A)*
- *If the TC support from the EC is not harmonised with other donors, are relevant steps being taken for a more harmonized TC in the future?*

Results oriented TC/TA

- *Are the TC deliverables (outputs and outcomes) clearly specified (e.g. in the TA ToR) and regularly assessed (e.g. through a joint performance dialogue/assessment)?*
- *Are there innovative forms of TC support being used (e.g. peer review, South/South and/or Public/Public cooperation, twinning, networking, etc.)?*

PIA

- *Are partner country staff effectively managing the programme (and not TA)?*
- *Do the experts take instructions from and report to the partner (and not the EC)?*

Please comment on any of the questions/aspects above, qualitative data is very valuable:

6.3 EC Visibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the project contribute to promoting EC visibility (e.g.does it comply with the EC Guidelines?)</i>
Please comment on any of the questions/aspects above, qualitative data is very valuable:

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

7. Cross-Cutting Issues

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

7.1 Gender issues: Have practical and strategic gender interests been adequately considered in the project strategy?

If so, how and to what effect? If not, why not? If n/a, explain.
Please consider the following aspects of gender mainstreaming:

- *Has the project been planned on the basis of a gender-differentiated beneficiaries' analysis?*
- *To what extent will / could the gender sensitive approach lead to an improved impact of the project?*
- *What is the likeliness of increased gender equality beyond project end?*
- *According to the OECD Gender Policy Marker how would you classify this project?*

Please comment:

7.2 Is the project respecting environmental needs?

If so, how and to what effect? If not, why not? If n/a, explain.
Please consider the following aspects of mainstreaming environmental aspects:

- *Have environmental constraints and opportunities been considered adequately in the project design?*
- *Are good environmental practices followed in project implementation (in relation to use of water and energy and materials, production of wastes, etc)? Does the project respect traditional, successful environmental practices?*
- *What capacities exist (within project, project partners and project context) to deal with critical risks that could affect project effectiveness such as climate risks or risks of natural disasters (in the case of projects in sensitive geographical areas / natural disasters hotspots)?*
- *Has environmental damage been caused or likely to be caused by the project? What kind of environmental impact mitigation measures has been taken?*
- *Is the achievement of project results and objectives likely to generate increased pressure on fragile ecosystems (natural forests, wetlands, coral reefs, mangroves) and scarce natural resources e.g. surface and groundwater, timber, soil)?*

Please comment:

7.3 Has (good) governance been mainstreamed in the project/programme?

If so, how and to what effect? If not, why not? If n/a, explain.
Please consider the following aspects of mainstreaming governance:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does it take into consideration the differential impact of poverty by disadvantaged groups?</i> • <i>Is the P/P designed in such a way that it takes into account potential conflict ?</i> • <i>Is regular, transparent, financial reporting built into the P/P? Are its results widely circulated and understandable?</i> • <i>Are there effective anti-corruption monitoring tools in place?</i>
Please comment:

7.4 Does the project actively contribute to the promotion of Human Rights?
<p>If so, how and to what effect? If not, why not? If n/a, explain. Please consider the following aspects of mainstreaming Human Rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Has there been an analysis of “winners and losers” regarding possible “discrimination” of target groups by the P/P?</i> • <i>Will the P/P help to ensure respect for any relevant human rights and not cause them to be reduced in any way?</i> • <i>Do any interested parties and observers raise HR concerns?</i>
Please comment:

BACKGROUND CONCLUSION SHEET

8. List individuals consulted

Project Title		Project Ref #	
Monitoring Report Ref #		Date of Report	
Monitored by:			

Name	Position/Designation	Institution

A6 - Monitoring Report

JOINT RESULT ORIENTED MONITORING SYSTEM (JROM) <i>COUNTRY NAME</i>	
MONITORING REPORT	
Project Title:	MR reference number:
Reference (Project Number):	Report date:

I. Intervention data

Project Authority	
Delegation Responsible (TM)	
PG responsible (MPO)	
Author of the Report	
Monitoring dates (from – to)	
Project start date	
Project end date	

II. Financial data

Primary commitment (project budget):	
Secondary Commitment (funds contracted):	
Funds Disbursed by the Commission:	
Other funding (government and/or other donors):	
Total budget of operation:	
Expenditure Incurred by Project:	

As at: dd/mm/yy

III. Ratings

1. Relevance and quality of design	
2. Efficiency of implementation to date	
3. Effectiveness to date	
4. Impact prospects	
5. Potential sustainability	

Note: a = very good (4); b = good (3); c = problems (2); d = serious deficiencies (1)

IV. Summary of key observations/findings

1. Relevance and quality of design
2. Efficiency of implementation to date
3. Effectiveness to date
4. Impact prospects
5. Potential sustainability

V. Recommended actions (indicating by whom, when and in order of priority)

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A7 - Implementing Partner Response Sheet

JROM IMPLEMENTING PARTNER RESPONSE SHEET

VI. Project Data

Project Reference		Date of JROM Report	
Project Name		PG Project Officer (MPO)	
Date JROM Report received		Task Manager	
Date of Response submission		Author of Response	

VII. Overall assessment of the quality of the Monitoring Report

Issue	Explanatory comments	Rating *
Is the MR easy to read and understand?		
How relevant and accurate are the findings/observations?		
In general, are the recommended actions useful and realistic?		

* a=very good; b=good; c=problems; d=deficiencies

VIII. Assessment of the recommended actions

Recommended Actions (TM to copy all recommended actions from the MR in the boxes below)	Implementing Partner Response		
	Will the recommended action be adopted? Yes/No, explain why	If yes, by whom?	If yes, by when?

IX. Further comments and suggestions

Next JROM visit suggested: (mark one of the three options)	3 months	6 months	Shorter/longer?
(Insert any comments if necessary)			
Special attention to be paid in the next visit to the following aspects/problem areas:			
(Insert brief description of such aspects/ problem areas)			
Please specify if you got any feed back/comments on the MR from other stakeholders e.g. beneficiary institutions/groups, project partners, etc.			
(Insert name of stakeholder and brief description of their comments)			
Please comment / give suggestions on any other aspect you deem relevant, e.g. mission organisation, logistics, JROM methodology, monitoring team performance/approach, etc.			
(Insert comments/ suggestions)			

Name: on behalf of Implementing Partner

Date:

A8 - Return Monitoring Page

JROM RETURN MONITORING PAGE

Annex to the JROM Monitoring Report No. _____

I. Project Data

RMP ref.		RMP Date	
Project Reference		Implementing Partner	
Project Name		TM and MPO	
Dates of JROM monitoring field visit		Dates of the Return Monitoring visit	

II. Key issues and recommended actions identified during the JROM field visit

Num.	Issue	Recommended action put forward in MR
1	(brief description of issue 1)	
2		
3		
4		
5		

III. Current Status

Issue	Remedial action applied	Effects of the remedial action	Further actions required		
			Description	By whom	When
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Author's Name and Organisation: