



# LAWYERS ALERT PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION POLICY

## 1.0 Introduction

Lawyers Alert is a Civil Society Organization made up principally of Lawyers and other Professionals committed to the cause of human rights, democracy, inclusive governance and rule of law. It was formed in 2000 but became operational in 2002. Lawyers Alert is registered according to the laws of Nigeria. It is headquartered in Makurdi, Benue State with a regional office in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital city. Its vision is the entrenchment of a virile democracy in Nigeria alongside its attendant gains while its mission is the empowerment of the citizenry through the knowledge of their rights and the accessible means of enforcing same in a secured environment.

We have over the years carried out over 100 projects both as an independent entity and in collaboration with partners and allies. Lawyers Alert places premium importance on service delivery using Project Monitoring and Evaluation as a means of achieving same and experience building.

Prior to the development of this Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices were focused, for the most part, on the activity level of programming and have tended to reflect process- (as opposed to outcome-) based approaches. This has been largely due to the lack of an overarching result-based M&E policy framework as well as limited institutional capacities, resources, guidance and tools on which to draw.

As part of experience and learning, we have now designed an integrated RBM framework, linking strategic planning, results-based budgeting, and annual and individual work planning to monitoring and evaluation, and programme and staff performance reporting. Lawyers Alert has established a Monitoring and Evaluation Section to take the lead in the development and implementation of a new monitoring and evaluation framework. We have also identified strengthening accountabilities, effectiveness and efficiencies in delivering results as one of the key priority areas.

## 2.0 Goal of the Policy

The goal of this policy is to provide a roadmap towards an effective and efficient Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation systems for optimal service delivery and value for money in all projects and activities.

### 2.1 Objectives of the Policy

- a. To enhance the design of toolkits and indicators for proper Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation for Projects and Activities
- b. To ensure the proper use of the designed toolkit and indicators in the monitoring and evaluation processes for all projects and Activities.

In line with the concepts of this policy framework, Lawyers Alert defines **monitoring** as a routine process of collecting and recording information in order to track progress toward expected results. While **Evaluation** is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation and/or results of a programme, project, activity, policy, strategy or other undertaking. The intention of evaluation is to provide credible and useful information with a view to determine the worth or significance of the undertaking, incorporate lessons learned into decision-making and enhance the overall quality of the organization's programming and operations

### **3.0 Complementary and Interdependent Roles**

While monitoring and evaluation are distinct functions, Lawyers Alert recognizes their complementary and interdependent roles. Findings from prospective evaluation (or similar processes such as appraisal or baseline studies), for example, are useful in defining indicators for monitoring purposes. Moreover, results from monitoring progress towards results can help identify important evaluation questions. It is primarily for these reasons that the two functions are integrated into the present policy framework.

### **4.0 Monitoring**

Pursuant to our monitoring functions, we have designed tools to monitor progress towards the achievement of Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation. These tools include medium-term strategic planning, Results-based budgeting and work planning for projects and logical framework.

- a. **Medium-term strategic planning:** At the corporate level, medium-term plans shall be prepared every two to four years providing direction on a number of strategic priority areas with pre-defined indicators of achievement.
- b. **Results-based budgeting:** Results-based programme budgets are prepared on an annual basis outlining objectives and expected results. Organizational Thematic areas are required to monitor and report progress on achieving pre-defined performance indicators.
- c. **Annual work planning:** Lawyers Alert Thematic areas are required to prepare and monitor annual work plans on the basis of the approved budget.

### **5.0 Logical framework requirements for donor-funded projects and other undertakings**

Lawyers Alert recognizes the usefulness of logical frameworks as a tool to manage for results. Project proposals should include logical frameworks or other appropriate results formulations and specify major activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Performance indicators, means of verification and risks and assumptions should be specified for output and outcome level results; for projects or other undertakings in which an impact evaluation is to be performed, indicators of achievement and means of verification should also be specified for intended impacts.

Performance indicators should include baseline and target measures for expected results. In the event baseline information may not be available in the design phase or at the submission time of a proposal, managers should plan to obtain baseline or other relevant information within a reasonable period from project start-up (e.g. inception workshop) to ensure evaluability of results. When projects or undertakings are to be implemented jointly, logical frameworks should be discussed and agreed with respective partners.

## 6.0 Monitoring criteria

For effective results-based monitoring and in order to ensure evaluability (the extent to which projects or undertakings can be evaluated both reliably and credibly), indicators should be formulated using SMART criteria (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound):

- a. **Specific:** The indicator is sufficiently clear as to what is being measured and specific enough to measure progress towards a result.
- b. **Measurable:** The indicator is a reliable measure and is objectively verifiable. Qualitative measures should ideally be translated into some numeric form.
- c. **Attainable:** The indicator can be realistically met.
- d. **Relevant:** The indicator captures what is being measured (i.e. it is relevant to the activity/result).
- e. **Time-bound:** The indicator is expected to be achieved within a defined period of time.

## 7.0 Evaluation

### 7.1 Purposes

Evaluation serves the following purposes:

- a. **Promoting organizational learning and quality improvement:** Perhaps more than other purposes, Lawyers Alert views evaluation as an opportunity to learn how to do things better, more effectively, with greater relevance, with more efficient utilization of resources and with greater and more sustaining impact. The results of evaluations need to contribute to knowledge management and serve as the basis for enhancing the quality of its products and services.
- b. **Ensuring accountability:** As an organization receiving funds in the form of voluntary contributions from public and private donors, in addition to a growing proportion of funds in the form of self-generated income from individual beneficiaries we are answerable to our sources of funding and funders for delivering results.
- c. **Improving informed decision-making:** Results from evaluations provide the basis for informed, responsible decisions. Such decisions may include, for example, scaling up, replicating or phasing out a programme, project or undertaking;

adjusting learning objectives; redesigning content, changing methodologies, assessment activities or modes of delivery; etc.

- d. ***Providing leverage to mobilize resources for outcome-based programming:*** One of the constraints facing the Organization is the tendency of donors to provide activity-based funding as opposed to results-based funding. This severely constrains our capacity to follow-up with beneficiaries as is often required in the field of training or capacity building of beneficiaries in order to determine whether changes in behaviour have taken hold. Lawyers Alert thus views evaluation as an opportunity to provide leverage to mobilize sufficient resources for outcome-based programming.

## **8.0 Guiding Principles, Norms and Standards in Evaluation**

The international capacity development and evaluation communities have developed a number of guiding principles and good-practice norms and standards to ensure that evaluations meet quality requirements. The following five principles/norms/standards form part of our evaluation policy framework:

- a. ***Utility:*** Evaluation should be planned and conducted with a view to serve the information needs of its intended users. Evaluation recommendations should flow logically from findings, be actionable and be presented in a clear and timely manner with the intention of incorporating results into learning and decision-making processes.
- b. ***Accuracy and credibility:*** Evaluation should be conducted with the necessary professional expertise and be based on the principle of impartiality. Evaluation should use appropriate data collection and analysis which produce accurate, valid and reliable information. Findings should be open to reporting strengths and weaknesses as well as successes and failures.
- c. ***Feasibility:*** Evaluation should be as practical, politically viable and cost effective as possible, and should take into consideration time and financial and human resource requirements.
- d. ***Consultation, access to information and transparency:*** Evaluation should be conducted in a transparent manner with stakeholder consultation and access to relevant information. To the extent feasible, stakeholders should be engaged and contribute to the evaluation process by providing views, and such views should be reflected in evaluation findings in an impartial and balanced way. Consultants and others undertaking independent evaluation should have unrestricted access to information of the concerned programme, project or undertaking subject to evaluation, including project documents; terms of reference; training material; beneficiary views; results of decentralized evaluations, if relevant; and financial statements and reports, unless such information is considered by the Organization to be sensitive or confidential.

- e. **Propriety:** Evaluation should be undertaken in a legal and ethical manner with regard to the rights and welfare of those involved in and affected by assessments. Stakeholders invited to contribute to evaluation processes should be made aware of the purposes for and potential consequences of evaluation, and the Organization should seek their consent prior to them taking part in any evaluation exercise.

## 9.0 Criteria

Lawyers Alert adopts the five widely-recognized criteria for evaluation that have been recommended by the OECD Development Assistance Committee:

- a. **Relevance:** The degree to which an undertaking responds to the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries, a contextual situation to be addressed and donor priorities.
- b. **Effectiveness:** The extent to which an undertaking has achieved its objectives.
- c. **Efficiency:** The cost effectiveness of transferring inputs into outputs taking into consideration alternative approaches.
- d. **Impact:** The cumulative and/or long-term effects of an undertaking or series of undertakings which may produce positive or negative, intended or unintended changes.
- e. **Sustainability:** The likelihood of benefits derived from an undertaking will continue over time after its completion.

## 10.0 Evaluation Planning and Management

### 10.1 Evaluation Planning

- a. All projects, activities and other undertakings should be conceived in a results-based manner in order to ensure evaluability.
- b. All donor-funded projects or other undertakings should include a clause in the project document specifying evaluation requirements and relevant modalities (e.g. joint evaluation, participatory evaluation; self-evaluation, independent evaluation; and type(s) of evaluations in relation to process and/or level(s) of results). In the event a project document is not required, the relevant letter or memorandum of agreement should specify monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- c. Evaluation of projects or other undertakings should be included in the work planning of the Organization' divisional entities from which the Monitoring and Evaluation Section will prepare and maintain on a rolling basis a corporate evaluation plan. Evaluation plans should include information related to the category of evaluation (e.g. corporate, decentralized), type, methods, budget, scheduling and reporting.
- d. For independent, external evaluations, relevant terms of reference will be prepared using international standards and good practice, and include the following elements: the context and purpose of the evaluation, scope, main evaluation questions,

methodology (data collection tools and analysis), work plan, learning products of the evaluation, intended use of results and qualifications.

- e. Costs to carry out evaluation vary and depend on the purpose/type/scope of the evaluation, main evaluation questions and data collection methods. Sufficient resources should be identified and made available for both decentralized and corporate evaluations (including internal and/or external independent evaluations).
- f. Evaluation costs should be adequately budgeted in project/activity proposals by the relevant Thematic Areas. Evaluation costs should also be taken into consideration in determining the price structure of fee-paying training and training-related services (e.g. fee-based e-courses).

## **11.0 Evaluation Management**

In conducting evaluations, the Organization' acknowledges that different evaluation designs as well as quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods for data collection and analysis exist. The most appropriate design(s), method(s), approach(es) and/or technique(s) should be selected, taking into consideration the evaluation question(s), scope, criteria, human and financial resource requirements and availability, as well as guiding principles and good practice standards. All independent evaluations should include a response from management in relation to the evaluation's findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons-learned.

## **12.0 M&E Reporting**

Results from the Institute's monitoring and evaluation exercises are to be recorded in the following formats: Programme Performance Reports, Results Summaries, Completion Reports, Corporate Evaluation Reports and Self Evaluation Reviews. Other types of reporting formats such as inception reports, mid-term reports, annual reports, impact evaluation reports, etc. may be used in addition to (or, where relevant, in lieu of) these formats if required by donor or partner.

- a. ***Programme Performance Reports*** record programme performance based on expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures, as recorded in results-based budgets. PPRs should be prepared by all Institute entities, including both operational and programming divisions and submitted to the Monitoring and Evaluation Section by the end of the first quarter of the subsequent biennium using a standard reporting template. To monitor progress, an interim report will be prepared and submitted at the mid-point of the biennium.
- b. ***Results Summaries***: summarize results at the output and outcome level in relation to performance targets. Results summaries are used for small scale stand-alone e-courses and activity-events and projects budgeted at 10,000,000NGN (\$50,000) or less.
- c. ***Completion Reports*** record findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned (if relevant) from evaluations and focus on the output and/outcome levels of

results. Completion Reports should be prepared by all programmes and other entities if an evaluation of results is required.

- d. **Corporate Evaluation Report (CER)** should be prepared by the Monitoring and Evaluation Section at the end of each biennium based on a review of completed decentralized and corporate evaluations. The CER will highlight outcome-level results and summarize recommendations and lessons-learned, as well as provide an Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework assessment of how evaluation processes have generated learning, quality improvement and enhanced decision-making. The CER should be presented to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.
- e. **Self Evaluation Reviews** are independent reviews conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Section of decentralized self evaluations and primarily for quality assurance purposes.

### **13.0 Dissemination and Disclosure**

Reports will be accessible in a public depository with a view to ensure transparency and facilitate knowledge management and application of lessons learned.

### **14.0 Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning**

As one of the main purposes of evaluation, the creation, storage, management and dissemination of knowledge is essential. In view of promoting organizational learning and contributing to quality improvement of the Organisation services, an annual learning forum will be organized to share lessons learned on evaluation processes and outcomes.

### **15.0 Role and Responsibilities**

The Organization has a shared system of role and responsibilities in performing monitoring and evaluation functions.

#### **15.1 Office of the President**

The Office of the President provides overall direction, leadership and management of the Organization. The Office's roles and responsibilities are the following:

- a. Submits the Organization's results-based programme budget to the Governing Board for approval;
- b. Submits other relevant documents to the Governing Board and/or Board of Trustees for review, including the Strategic Plans, Programme Performance Reports and Corporate Evaluation Reports; and
- c. Identifies projects and undertaking for, and requests the Monitoring and Evaluation Section to perform corporate evaluations.

#### **15.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Section**

The Monitoring and Evaluation Section acts as the custodian of the monitoring and evaluation functions. The section's roles and responsibilities are the following:

- a. Oversees the application of the policy framework, identifies bottlenecks and constraints and makes recommendations for updating the requirements or other

elements of the framework, in line with international good practice, lessons learned as well as the evolving programming and operational needs and characteristics of the Organization.

- b. Facilitates regular interaction in-house with managers and other staff, collects feedback and facilitates learning on the framework;
- c. Conducts research and engages in critical and analytical reflection as well as issues recommendations to management for compliance with the framework;
- d. Prepares and circulates guidelines, checklists, templates and other tools to facilitate the application of the framework;
- e. Develops and promotes standards for evaluation and quality assurance;
- f. Conducts and/or manages corporate evaluations at the request of the President and/or Program Managers and other Organizational entities;
- g. Undertakes reviews of decentralized evaluations on periodic and selective basis for quality assurance purposes;
- h. Prepares and maintains a depository of annual work plans;
- i. Prepares, maintains and monitors the implementation of an annual evaluation plan based on scheduled corporate and decentralized evaluations;
- j. Prepares a synthesis and maintains a compilation of Programme Performance Reports based on submissions from programme management;
- k. Prepares an annual Corporate Evaluation Report based on a review of completed corporate and decentralized evaluations;
- l. Maintains a public depository of evaluation reports with a view to ensure transparency and facilitate the integration of lessons learned and best practices into the broader concept of knowledge management;
- m. Oversees the development and maintenance of an intranet-based knowledge navigator tool to stock, manage and disseminate lessons-learned from evaluations;
- n. Promotes knowledge management, organizational learning and lessons learned by keeping abreast of innovative practices in the field of evaluation and monitoring, identifying relevant state-of-the art techniques, tools and methods, and providing thematic areas with guidance on the use of respective tools and methods;
- o. Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the Organisation's services; and
- p. Collaborates and coordinates with Lawyers Alert' Thematic Areas and other organizations on issues related to monitoring and evaluation.

### **15.3 Programmes Administration/Management**

Programme management is a generic term comprising the manager-level posts of all entities, including programmes, sections, offices and units. Programme management's roles and responsibilities are the following:

- a. Undertakes monitoring and evaluation functions in accordance with the present policy framework, including monitoring progress towards results, as well as planning and conducting decentralized, self-evaluations;
- b. Informs donors and implementing partners of the Organization's evaluation requirements when preparing and negotiating project agreements and modalities for cooperation, and ensures that monitoring and evaluation modalities are specified in project documents or related agreements;



- c. Budgets resources for the planning and undertaking of self- and/or independent evaluations in line with applicable evaluation requirements;
- d. Incorporates evaluation into annual work planning and informs the Monitoring and Evaluation Section of the scheduling of evaluations on a rolling basis;
- e. Submits copies of results and/or reports of decentralized, self-evaluations undertaken to the Monitoring and Evaluation Section upon completion;
- f. Follow-up on findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons-learned of independent evaluations in the form of a management response;
- g. Implements recommendations of evaluations provided that they are relevant and actionable, and indicates expected dates for completing implementation; and,
- h. Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the Institute's products and services.

#### **16.0 Coverage and Scope**

- a. The framework applies to the entirety of Lawyers Alert's operations and programming at headquarters and out-posted offices. The policy is limited in scope, however, as concerns projects, activities or other undertakings which are implemented in collaboration with partners or executed entirely by partners on behalf of the organisation.
- b. In cases where projects or other undertakings are implemented jointly, including country projects in which Lawyers Alert is accountable to donors for funds disbursed to national partners, Lawyers Alert' thematic area should inform implementing partner(s) and donors of the present framework and carry out consultations with a view to determine appropriate indicators for measuring results and modalities for evaluation. Should monitoring and/or evaluation modalities deviate from the present policy framework as a result of such consultations, programme management should inform the Monitoring and Evaluation Section.

#### **17.0 Implementation, Amendment and Review**

- a. The framework is ambitious and will be implemented beginning in April 2016, will include systematic evaluation of outputs and outcomes, in line with requirements, for programmes and thematic areas of the Organization's headquarters and out posted offices.
- b. The implementation of the framework may include the issuance of amendments to account for adjustments in requirements or other elements based on the evolving nature of monitoring and evaluation functions and taking into consideration international good practices.
- c. Lawyers Alert will request a peer review of its monitoring and evaluation functions at the end of every two years.