

# Monitoring of FSTP grant contracts

## Online training, 12 – 13 October 2023

*Developed by*

*Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 Capacity Building Expert*

# Agenda – Day 1

10:00 – 10:20	<b>Welcoming and introduction of agenda by Ms Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 Capacity Building Expert</b> <b>Getting Acquainted</b>
10:20 – 11:00	Let's discuss the basics: What do we consider as monitoring? Where is the monitoring of grants placed in the Project Cycle Management process? Monitoring vs. verification control
11:00 – 11:30	Key segments of the monitoring process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Monitoring plan and data collection</li><li>- Risk assessment</li><li>- Types of monitoring</li><li>- Monitoring tools</li></ul>
11:30 – 12:00	Break
12:00 – 13:30	Data collection and indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Which data are we collecting?</li><li>- How to interpret data?</li><li>- Proof documents for narrative and finance reporting</li></ul> Closure of the day

# Agenda – Day 2

<p><b>10:00 – 11:30</b></p>	<p><b>Monitoring site visits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Types of site visits</li> <li>- Preparation for site visits</li> <li>- Site visit agenda</li> <li>- Site visit questionnaire and data collection</li> <li>- Key challenges during the site visit</li> <li>- Reporting on site visit conducted and follow-up actions</li> </ul>
<p><b>11:30 – 12:00</b></p>	<p>Break</p>
<p><b>12:00 – 13:15</b></p>	<p>Other open questions regarding monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key issues and challenges</li> <li>- Reporting towards Contracting Authority</li> <li>- Other open questions of the training</li> </ul>
<p><b>13:15 – 13:30</b></p>	<p>Evaluation and closure of the training</p>



Let's get acquainted!



***What do we consider  
when talking about  
MONITORING in one  
word?***

# Monitoring is also....

- LEARNING
- OBSERVING
- CONTROL
- REPORTING
- IDEAS
- CHALLENGES



Learning is the key point of monitoring!



We learn about the project, organisation, community, and target groups.



We learn **to understand** why certain approaches and project decisions are made.



Why something is possible and impossible.



That is why we start the monitoring visits by **listening!** – *will talk more about it on the second day*

## Monitoring as learning

# Monitoring as observing



We observe at several levels.



*What does the project documentation look like?*



*What is the level of response from the grant beneficiary (trainings, e-mails etc.)?*



*How often do grant beneficiary ask for assistance?*



*How does the environment in which grant beneficiary operate (politically, economically, socially)?*



## Monitoring as control

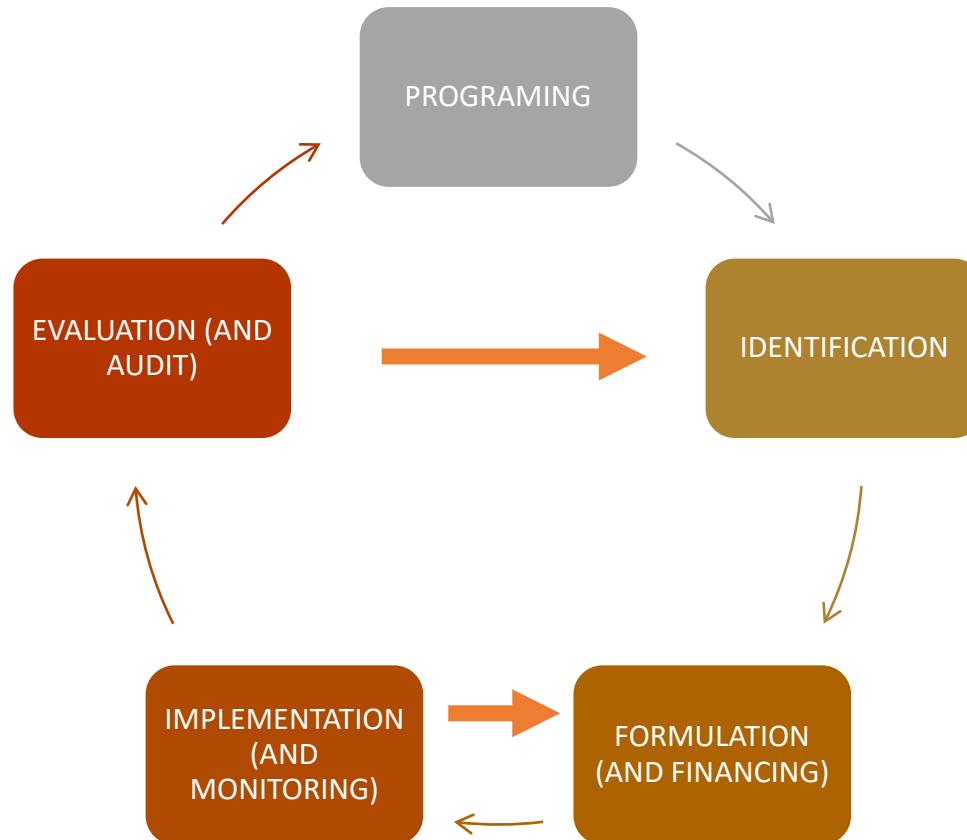
*Is control different  
or separated from  
monitoring?*



## Monitoring vs verification control

- Practical examples of such diversification can be found in the (decentralised) management of EU funds.
- Departments/institutions with separated duties:
  - Programme/project content level (narrative reporting)
  - Finance level (financial reporting)
- **Monitoring phase:** learning and advising.
- **Control phase:** verification of achievements and documents.

# Project Cycle Management and Monitoring



## Small group work

*What would you say, what are the key grant monitoring phases?*



- ✓ 15 minutes
- ✓ presenter
- ✓ notes

# Key segments of the monitoring process



Monitoring plan  
and data collection



Risk assessment



Types of  
monitoring



Monitoring tools

# Monitoring plan and data collection

## 1. What do we monitor?

- Specific segments of the project (progress/efficiency, effects/results, management, visibility, target group, budget...)
- Project implementation (in line with the Description of the Action and Budget/Project Proposal)
- Specific activities (i.e. events)
- *Anything else?*

## 2. How?

- Notes (from mentoring, help desk, training)
- Review of reports and quality of outputs
- Site visits
- *Want to add more?*

## 3. Which data we collect?

- Qualitative data
- Quantitative data
- Based on (our) project indicators
- Available in reports and verifiable
- *What means data are verifiable?*

## 4. When?

- Monthly, quarter, 6-months, end of the project
- *What is your approach?*

## 5. Who?

- Our team members
- External support
- *What says your monitoring policy?*

# Monitoring and data collection plan

What/monitoring area	Which data/indicators	How/monitoring method	When/how often/dates	Who/responsible person
Progress in project implementation/efficiency	Activities completed, activities started, activities delayed.	Monthly reports, quarterly monitoring visits	Monthly	Grant Manager/Name
Results achieved/effectiveness	Proofs of effects of the activities implemented or in the last phase of implementation.	Monitoring visits	Quarterly	Grant Manager/Name
Project management	Project team formed, management system in place (planning, procurement, reporting).	First monitoring visit; progress reports	First month of the project; Quarterly	Grant Manager/Name
Visibility	Visibility rules followed; number of events, promo actions.	First monitoring visit; progress reports	First month of the project; Quarterly	Grant Manager/Name



## Small group work

*What would you consider in a particular monitoring situation?*



- ✓ 15 minutes
- ✓ presenter
- ✓ notes

# Case studies for small group work

## Group no. 1:

- *You assessed that project activities are delayed. What are you going to do now?*

## Group no. 2:

- *Grant beneficiary reported that elderly people (target group) are very satisfied with the in-house social service they receive. How they should prove that?*

## Group no. 3:

- *You are visiting the grant beneficiary for the first time. How you will check whether their project management system is in place?*

## Group no. 4:

- *You are attending the opening event of the project. What are you going to observe?*

## Risk assessment



- **When:** After the signing of grant contract and before the start of the monitoring process.
- **What we consider:**
  - Quality of the project proposal and how the project was assessed
  - Comments and recommendations from assessors
  - Possible critical points in implementation:
    - Number of activities (i.e., too many events)
    - No. of the target group (i.e., high target numbers)
    - Renovation of premises
    - Procurement of equipment
    - Overall situation in the community (i.e., political, social etc.)

# Types of monitoring



# Monitoring tools



**Notes:** paper and pan 😊

**Checklists:** different kinds of reminders which have to be analysed not just

**Questionnaires:** standardised in line with the grant scheme

**Databases:** excel, online, large charts on the walls

**Skills:** listening, reviewing, analysing, decision making, actions



Monitoring  
site visits



## Why visits?

- Appreciation
- People behind paper
- Learning in the real-time environment of the project



## Are they...?

- Time-consuming
- Requiring lots of preparation
- Requiring significant reporting
- Sometimes unpleasant
- Requiring travel
- Expensive

YES! 😊





# Types of visits

## Regular

- Usually on quarterly or 6-months basis
- Focused on checking the progress and capacity building

## Ad-hoc

- In case of reported problems, irregularities
- Donor requirement (i.e. Donor field mission)

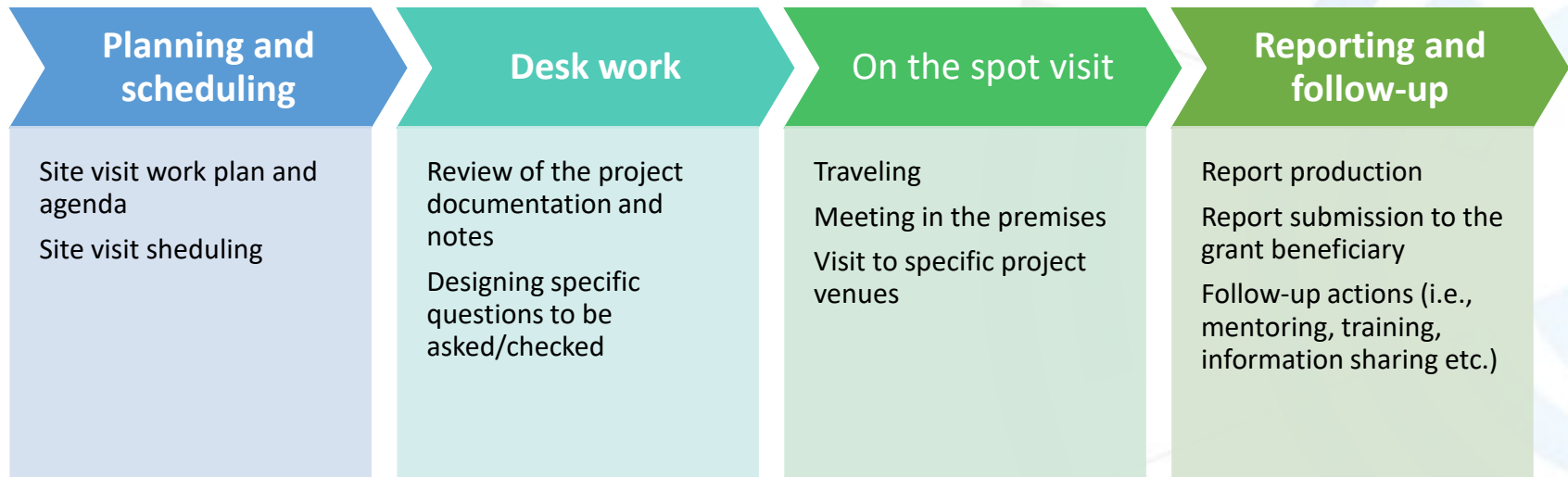
## Events

- Different project related events
- Opening, closing, conferences, trainings, community events

## Verification

- Final check of project achievements and proof documents

# Site visit phases



## Small group work

*Let's create a site visit agenda!*



- ✓ 15 minutes
- ✓ presenter
- ✓ notes

## Site visit agenda

- Coffee, **welcoming**, getting acquainted
- Presentation of the **agenda and methodology** of work (i.e., first meeting then other visits)
- Tell us a bit about **your organisation** and the project (ice-breaker, appreciation)
- Semi-structured **interview based on our questionnaire** (make notes, check whether you asked all relevant questions, ask for documentation/proof docs immediately, provide clarifications immediately/if possible)
- **Conclusions** and follow-up actions
- **Other visits** to the community, target group, municipality etc.
- Do not forget to have a **break** if needed!

## Small group work

*Let's analyse one  
site visit  
questionnaire!*



- ✓ 20 minutes
- ✓ presenter
- ✓ notes

## Site visit questionnaire and data collection

- Often, you can't control the flow of the meeting.
- That is why you need to check your questionnaire from time to time (to remind yourself what is not covered yet).
- People tend to talk widely, usually with lots of (not relevant) details.
- When needed, ask them to be more specific, to clarify and to provide you with the (proof) document.
  - *Is it done or will be soon completed? When you say „soon” what that means?*
  - *How do we know that beneficiaries are happy?*
  - *This policy brief seems very short. Are you still planning to work on it or this is the final version?*
- Make notes immediately, and type them if possible.

## Proof documents

- First, we need to be clear on **what is needed** as a proof document!
- When working with small initiatives it is recommended **to prepare in advance samples of forms** they can use.
- **People will always complain.** You can't avoid that:
  - Why you did not prepare sample forms for us?
  - We are overwhelmed with your forms.
- **Availability of information**, forms etc. on what is expected, already at the time of the grant tender announcement **can help to overcome** issues and complaints but not to avoid it completely.
- The key point of the capacity-building process as part of the grants is **to understand** why certain proof document is needed.

## Group discussion

*What are your key challenges when conducting site visits?*





## Key challenges during the site visit

- Inadequacy of **premises** (i.e., no heating in the winter, not accessible for persons with disabilities).
- Strong **emotional** reactions (i.e., people are very excited, afraid etc.).
- Site visit is perceived as an **exam** exercise. *Did we pass? Are we good?*
- Key team members **not present**.
- Key team members are **reluctant** to provide information or documentation.
- Documentation **not available**.
- **Too many people** present.
- Someone called that **lunch is ready!** 😊

- Finalise report as soon as possible.
- Be neutral and to the point.
- Be specific, especially in providing recommendations.
- Enclose annexes to the report.
- Once you finalise the report, send it to another team member for the quality review (if possible).
- Share the report with the grant beneficiary.
- Report is the proof document on your work towards the Contracting Authority.
- Conduct follow-up actions on your side and send reminder (if needed) to grant beneficiary.
- Inform the Contracting Authority on the progress, and new developments.

## Group discussion

*How do you inform  
the Contracting  
Authority of your  
FSTP activities?*



## Group discussion

*What are other open questions not discussed yet?*



