So, What Does It All Add Up To?
Measuring Agency-Level Results in International NGOs

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Study data sources

• 17 case studies submitted by InterAction members
• 26 interviews with InterAction members, consultants, a donor and a rating agency
• Focus group with 35-38 EPEWG members
• World Café with 55-60 InterAction member CEOs
• Survey with 75 US and Europe-based INGO staff (primarily HQ-based)
• Literature review
Agency-level measurement system definition

• A system designed to help an organization assess what it is achieving at an agency level, potentially including...
  • Progress measured against agency-level priorities
  • A sum of project-level achievements
  • Measures of agency-level operational effectiveness
  • Some or all of the above
A menu of common indicators from which projects can select

Common indicators that map to higher-level indicators aligned with strategy, mission or vision

Standard indicators that projects are required to use

Meta-reviews or meta-evaluations by program area or sector

Agency-level measurement systems designs
Agency-level measurement system approaches

Top down

Bottom up
Challenges

- Complexity, time and cost are higher than expected: 63%
- Country staff find the system too burdensome: 46%
- People do not trust the data: 32%
- Executives want information quickly: 32%
- The data provided is not actionable: 26%
- The information produced is seldom used: 24%
- Executives are disappointed with the system outputs: 20%
- The system does not have a real owner: 19%
- Complexity, time and cost outweigh the benefits: 15%
- We have no challenges with our system: 7%
- The system works well, but the organization has lost interest: 6%
An organizational readiness checklist includes…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Organizational culture</strong></th>
<th>An organizational learning culture that values data-driven decision making</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive champion</strong></td>
<td>A champion within the executive leadership who invests time in it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational priorities</strong></td>
<td>A clear organizational strategy, theory of change and/or priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Audience and purpose</strong></td>
<td>A clear audience and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td>Adequate skills for data collection, management, analysis and use</td>
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# What it takes to build a successful system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational readiness</td>
<td>Meet organizational readiness criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aligned with priorities</td>
<td>Align the system to organizational priorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time and resources</td>
<td>Allocate adequate time and resources (funding, staff).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broad staff buy-in</td>
<td>Take steps to ensure broad staff buy-in into the system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>User friendly</td>
<td>Ensure the information management system is user friendly.</td>
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To avoid pitfalls in information use...

• Clarify what the information in the system does and does not say.
  • Complement indicators with qualitative information to tell a complete story.
  • Avoid misuse.

• Recognize that information raises questions rather than providing answers.

• Recognize that data quality concerns may persist.

• Be patient while awaiting outcome data, recognizing that this more meaningful information takes longer to collect.
Intended audiences and satisfaction

- Senior leadership: 89%
- Board of Directors: 67%
- Marketing and communications staff: 67%
- Donors (institutional and individual): 66%
- Program staff: 64%
- Fundraising staff: 58%
- Policy and advocacy staff: 41%
- General public: 36%
- National governments where we have country programs: 19%
- U.S. government: 16%
- Other (please specify): 13%
Used for what?

- Accountability to leadership: 9
- Communications: 8
- Project management: 8
- Technical quality: 8
- Strategic decision making: 5
- Learning: 5
- Business or proposal: 5