**PROJECT MONITORING**

Monitoring and Evaluation activities provide timely and useful information to the project management/implementation agencies and also a feed-back to the policy makers. The linkage between the stages is also important. Each stage leads to the next and the last phase, in turn, produces new approaches/ideas, improving the planning, implementation and supervision process of future projects. This makes the “Project Cycle” self-renewing.

**Conceptual Definition:** Conceptually “monitoring” means to check and assess the implementation status of a project/program/plan during implementation period on a regular basis. The system of watching/monitoring the progress of a program/project implementation helps in the identification/removal of bottle-necks and expediting action.

There are two kinds of monitoring i.e. Internal Monitoring and external monitoring. Internal monitoring is the responsibility of those sponsoring Ministries/Divisions and executing agencies who are directly involved in project formulation, appraisal/approval and implementation. A close collaboration and understanding between the project management and the monitoring unit is very important. External Monitoring is always undertaken by an outside agency like the Provincial Planning & Development Departments, Projects Wing of the Planning and Development Division and foreign donors. This is done to watch the progress of development projects to gain insights for the project benefits from the macro-planning point of view and that of the sponsoring agency for strategic feedback on the progress of implementation and its sectoral impact. The internal monitoring unit has to feed the external monitoring unit with necessary information.

**Monitoring Cells**

The project executing/sponsoring agencies need to monitor/review their projects in totality as each project has its own sectoral importance. Therefore, establishment of Planning and Monitoring Cells in Ministries/Divisions are essential as directed by the ECNEC.

**Monitoring Methodology**

The methods or techniques adopted for project monitoring should effectively measure the progress of a project, in comparison to its approved cost, scope, time schedule and objectives and be capable of producing the information, according to the requirement of all concerned. Recently, a new concept of Result Based Monitoring (RBM) has been introduced by the Projects Wing. This exercise focuses on the achievement of results i.e. input, output and outcome during the currency of implementation of projects.

Stages of Supervision/Monitoring

Monitoring of a development project has normally three broad phases, which may overlap:

**Starting Phase**

Supervision initially concentrates on ensuring timely preparation of PC-I including feasibility study, if necessary and finalization of financial arrangements including foreign aid etc.

A number of actions listed below are usually required to get the project take off to a good start:

a) Approval of the project,

b) Issuance of administrative approval,

c) Establishment of organizational/institutional arrangements for implementing the project,

d) Appointment of Project Director, key staff and consultants,

e) Completion of local funding and foreign lending arrangements, and

f) Preparation of cash/work plan and tender documents.

**Investment/Execution Phase**

Most supervision/monitoring are carried out during investment or project execution stage. Project Director has to keep sponsoring agency and Projects Wing of the Planning Commission informed of:

Progress in all major aspects of a project,

b) Any significant deviations from original plans with reasons and justifications, and

c) Bottlenecks hindering the progress and steps necessary to keep project on `track.

Completion/Operating Phase

Except for the preparation of Project Completion Report and Evaluation Report in case of completed projects; there is usually little monitoring left after the project has been completed.