## Performance Measurement and Evaluation Glossary of Terms

## Al Kurki, NCAT, 2012

**1) Activities** – what we do: organize events, conduct research, write and distribute educational materials.

**2) Outputs** -- what we create: workshops; web-based curricula, training materials, journal articles, networks.

Activities and outputs are the “intervention” -- the project or program.

**3) Outcomes** – are the results of what we do and create. These usually expressed as a change in:

\* *Learning* – awareness, attitude, knowledge and skills.

\* *Action* or behavior – what did the person who *learned* something new *do* differently?

\* *Conditions* -- environmental, economic, social, institutional or policy factors. As a rule, measuring changes in conditions is long-term, expensive and problematic due to intervening factors.

Activities 🡪 Products 🡪Results: Learning (usually short-term)🡪Action (medium term)🡪Conditions

Evaluation strives to establish a cause- effect relationship between activities, products, learning and conditions. What is more likely is that what we do can *contribute* to results, but it’s rare that we can *attribute* what we do directly and exclusively to the results.

**4) Indicators** – metrics of a program’s or project’s performance, quality or outcomes that can be measured or tracked. “Indicators tell us whether something is increasing, decreasing or staying the same.” (1)

**5) Performance measurement** is the process of regularly measuring the amount and quality of work done by a project or program and measuring the outcome indicators of that work. (2)

**6) Evaluation** “takes us deeper into asking why indicators are moving the direction they are, how the movement of indicators are related to specific interventions (programs), what is driving the movement of indicators and what values should guide the interpretations of indicators in making judgments.” (3)

**7) Formative evaluation** is conducted during the course of a project to make necessary corrections to meet the project objectives and outcomes, or to discover problems internal to the project that may be hindering its progress.

**8) Summative evaluation** is conducted at the end or after a project’s life to assess a project’s impacts -- changes in learning, action, or conditions.

References:

(1) and (3) Patton, M.Q. (2008) Utilization-focused evaluation (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA. Sage.

2) Ganiel, Carla (2011) “Performance Measurement” presentation. Washington, DC. Corporation for National and Community Service.