



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 82

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Using the 3 Es (efficacy efficiency effectiveness) for monitoring and evaluation of Living Labs

Living Labs are increasingly used as a concept and process to co-research with stakeholders in context. In AgriLink, the aim has been to use 6 Living Labs involving researchers, farmers, and public and private advisors to learn about, monitor, evaluate, and promote innovation in agricultural advisory and support systems (see PA5, PA76). But working in context-relevant ways means that each Living Lab is unique in its form, focus, stakeholders, composition, methods, practices, and outputs. This uniqueness presents problems when monitoring and evaluating Living Labs, especially determining meaningful indicators and measures of progress which are generalisable but also capture and reflect diversity and context. Rather than focussing on developing lists of individual indicators, we have drawn on systems ideas and concepts to understand Living Labs as learning systems. In particular we have used the established 3 Es for monitoring and evaluating systems: efficacy, efficiency, effectiveness. Each criterion is expressed as a question: Efficacy - has the Living Lab achieved its purpose (as defined by the stakeholders)? Efficiency - has the Living Lab used resources well (including time, energy, and enthusiasm)? Effectiveness - has the Living Lab contributed to its wider purpose within AgriLink? Used in our quarterly and annual monitoring and evaluation reports, the 3 Es allow each of the Living Lab monitors to document context-specific answers and also monitor and evaluate learning to date about the aims, processes, and activities of their and other Living Labs. It also provides the wider AgriLink consortium with an understanding of the potential for Living Labs as learning systems for innovative practice in agricultural advisory services.

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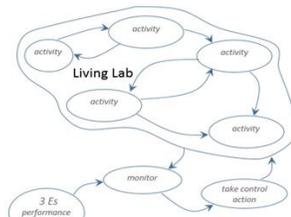
Not applicable

KEY WORDS:

#diagrams, #systems thinking, #design thinking, #reflexive monitoring, #Living Labs

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Monitoring usually involves observing, measuring and checking what is occurring in relation to planned activity, objectives or some expectations. Evaluation involves making a value judgment against criteria or standards. It is usually about the importance, worth, usefulness, success or benefit of something. Both monitoring and evaluation can be formal and/or informal, active and interactive, criteria can be explicit or implicit and they can be carried out continuously and/or at specifically agreed time intervals. Both processes can focus on different levels of activity, using a range of supporting tools and techniques. In the Living Labs, the monitoring and evaluation was aimed at supporting the implementation of the intervention strategy, documentation of the lessons learned, and also evaluating and documenting the outputs and impacts. Evaluation is often a first order process of systematic determination of merit, worth and significance against stated objectives, using set criteria. In AgriLink, we combined reflexive monitoring with systems thinking to develop second order 'systemic evaluation' using the 3 Es. Acknowledging multiple perspectives, recognising and understanding inter-relationships and reflecting on boundary judgements, systemic evaluation is often about making a judgment about whether something is on track in a way that takes account of its context through the answers to each 'E'.



Using 3 Es as performance measures in monitoring a LL
(Source: AgriLink, after Checkland and Scholes, 1999)



ABOUT AGRILINK

AgriLink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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