

Centre for International Development - Department of Economics, University of Bologna,  
***Summer School on Monitoring and Evaluation  
of International Development Programs***

## **Outcome Harvesting module**

**18-19 June 2015**

**Instructor and Facilitator: Ricardo Wilson-Grau**

**Purpose:** Introduce people responsible for monitoring and evaluating development programmes in substantially complex circumstances to applying the Outcome Harvesting tool.

**Expected Result:** Participants will have sufficient knowledge and skill to be able to continue applying the Outcome Harvesting tool following the workshop.

**Overview:** Outcome Harvesting is a utilisation-focused, highly participatory tool that enables evaluators, grant makers, and managers to identify, formulate, verify, and make sense of outcomes they have influenced when at the time of planning the relationships of cause-effect were substantially unknown. As the UNDP says, Outcome Harvesting is “an evaluation approach that – unlike some other methods – does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backward to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change”.<sup>1</sup>

During two days, participants work through the Outcome Harvesting steps:

1. Design the harvest
2. Review documentation and draft outcomes
3. Engage with informants
4. Substantiate
5. Analyse, interpret
6. Support use of findings

**Methodology:** The workshop will embody the hands-on, participatory values that are at the core of this utilization-focused evaluation tool, combining theory and examples with group discussion, individual reflection, small group practical exercises all developed round a case study especially written for this CID workshop. Special attention is given to dealing with the uncertainty about the causal relationships linking inputs, activities and outputs with the outcomes of development interventions. The participants will apply all concepts in working groups. Thus, they will build their practical capacities and leave the course with skills in using this tool to evaluate their interventions for the purposes of both accountability and improving performance.

**Facilitator:** Ricardo Wilson-Grau, evaluator, organizational development consultant and president of *Ricardo Wilson-Grau Consultoria em Gestão Empresarial Ltda* will deliver the workshop. Since 2004, working with colleagues Ricardo developed the Outcome Harvesting tool through two dozen evaluations generating thousands of outcomes achieved in 143 countries by almost 400 networks and associations, NGOs, community-based organisations, research institutes and government agencies. In 2013, the UNDP selected Outcome Harvesting as one of eleven promising innovations in evaluation practice. Ten World Bank Institute teams piloted a customised version of Outcome Harvesting and the World Bank published a [booklet](#) of the cases and now lists the tool amongst its resources for monitoring and evaluation. [USAID](#) highlights Outcome Harvesting as one of five approaches especially well-suited for evaluation practitioners operating in dynamic, uncertain situations who need tools to evaluate the change and results they

---

<sup>1</sup> UNDP Discussion Paper, “Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluation”, August 2013, see <https://undp.unteamworks.org/node/370238>.

are achieving through interventions where relations of cause and effect are not fully understood.

Introduction to Outcome Harvesting (OH) Workshop program 18 - 19 June 2015			
Time	Sessions	Learning objectives	Activities
Thursday, 18 June			
09:00-09:30	Introductions		
09:30-11:00	The Outcome Harvesting approach: essential concepts	Identify a development outcome (and distinguish it from outputs and impact); identify the causal contribution of the development intervention	<i>Personal reflection:</i> Participants' understanding of development "results"  <i>Conceptual presentation:</i> Definition of outcome and contribution to it  <i>Exercise:</i> Application to case study  <i>Questions &amp; Answers</i>
11:00-11:15	Coffee		
11:15-13:00	Step 1. Design Primary users, principal uses and useful harvesting questions	Distinguish OH users and their uses from audience for the harvest  Formulate actionable harvesting questions	<i>Personal reflection:</i> Participants' understanding of useful M&E questions  <i>Conceptual presentations:</i> Primary users and principal uses versus audience  From "What" to "So What" harvesting questions  <i>Exercises:</i> Identify users and uses of OH for case study  Harvesting question case study  <i>Questions &amp; Answers</i>
13:00-14:00	Lunch		
14:00-15:30	Step 2. Review documentation and draft outcomes	Identify and formulate a change in a social actor and how an intervention contributed	<i>Personal reflection:</i> What information is necessary to answer the harvesting question?  <i>Conceptual presentation:</i> Review of outcome definition

*Summer school on Monitoring and Evaluation of International Development Programs*

Time	Sessions	Learning objectives	Activities
			<p><i>Exercise:</i> Identification and formulation of outcome from case study</p> <p><i>Questions &amp; Answers</i></p>
15:30-15:45	Coffee		
15:45-16:45	Step 3. Engage with informants	Craft verifiable outcomes	<p><i>Personal reflection:</i> What makes monitoring and evaluation data credible?</p> <p><i>Conceptual presentation:</i> S.M.A.R.T. outcomes</p> <p><i>Exercise:</i> Craft a SMART outcome</p> <p><i>Questions &amp; Answers</i></p>
16:45-17:00	Evaluative reflection on first day		
<b>SECOND DAY</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of the first day		
09:30-10:45	Step 4. Substantiation	Apply criteria for selecting substantiators	<p><i>Personal reflection:</i> What more information is required for credible-enough data to answer the harvesting question(s)?</p> <p><i>Conceptual presentation:</i> Substantiation in OH</p> <p><i>Exercise:</i> Substantiators for case study outcomes</p> <p><i>Questions &amp; Answers</i></p>
10:45-11:00	Coffee		
11:00-13:00	Step 5. <b>Analysis</b> and interpretation of outcomes	Organise the findings to be able to provide evidence-based answers to the useful harvesting questions	<p><i>Personal reflection:</i> What is the difference between “analysis” and “interpretation”.</p> <p><i>Conceptual presentation:</i> Organising the outcome data in order to be able to answer the harvesting question(s)</p>

*Summer school on Monitoring and Evaluation of International Development Programs*

Time	Sessions	Learning objectives	Activities
			<p><i>Exercise:</i> Classifying case study outcomes</p> <p><i>Questions &amp; Answers</i></p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch		
14:00-15:30	5. Analysis and <b>interpretation</b> of outcomes, continued	Answer with evidence the useful harvesting questions(s)	<p><i>Conceptual presentation:</i> Lenses through which to understand outcomes</p> <p><i>Exercise:</i> Interpreting the case study outcomes to answer the harvesting question(s)</p> <p><i>Questions &amp; Answers</i></p>
15:30-15:45	Coffee		
15:45-16:45	6. Using the harvested findings	Communicate harvest findings in the most useful manner possible	<p><i>Personal reflection:</i> How can harvesters appropriately support the use of the findings?</p> <p><i>Conceptual presentation:</i> Range of potential support</p> <p><i>Exercise:</i> Support for the use of findings</p> <p><i>Questions &amp; Answers</i></p>
16:45-17:00	Evaluation	Contribute to critical reflection of achievements of the workshop	Answering a questionnaire