The Evaluation Cycle

Stage A: What are you trying to achieve?

Creating a Situation Map

Step 1. What are your goals and objectives?

Step 2. What threats and assets affect your project?

Step 3. What strategies are needed to achieve objectives?

Step 4. What are the relationships between your objectives, threats and assets, and strategies?

Step 5. What process issues and concerns affect your project?

Stage D: How will you use the information in decision-making? Creating an Action Plan

Step 1. What are your trigger points? Step 2. What actions will be taken in response to reaching a trigger point?

Step 3. Who will respond?

Step 4. How will you summarize and present your findings?

Stage B: How will you know you are making progress?

Developing an Assessment Framework

Step 1. What do you want to know?

Step 2. What do you need to know?

Step 3. What will you measure to answer your evaluation questions?

Step 4. How might you use the information?

Stage C: How will you get the information you need?

Preparing an Information Workplan

Step 1. Does available information suit your needs, and, if not, how will you collect it?

Step 2. What are your analysis needs?

Step 3. How will the necessary activities be accomplished?



Material adapted from Yaffee, Schueller, Higgs, Dotzour and Wondolleck, *Measuring Progress: An Evaluation Guide for Ecosystem and Community-Based Projects.* Copyright © 2003 School of Natural Resources & Environment, University of Michigan. All rights reserved. www.snre.umich.edu/emi

What is the EMI Evaluation Cycle?

In **Stage A**, you get a clear picture of your project's situation and define project success on multiple levels by addressing:

- What are the ecological, social and economic *goals* and *objectives* of my project? What do we aim to achieve or change?
- What are the *threats* and *assets* affecting my project? What is preventing progress and what is moving us forward?
- What are the *strategies* and *activities* of the project? What are our onthe-ground approaches and how are we implementing them?
- How do our strategies minimize threats and/or capitalize on assets to move us closer to our goals and objectives? That is, what is the *connected story* behind what we are doing and aiming to achieve within a complex system?
- What organizational process issues, such as leadership or communication, affect our project's progress?

In **Stage B**, you use the situation map you created in Stage A to lay out a framework for measuring progress on multiple levels by answering:

- What do we want to know? That is, what *evaluation questions* do we want to ask about the impact, implementation or approach of our project or about the situation in which we work?
- > What do we need to know? What are our *evaluation priorities*?
- What *indicators* will we measure and what will we *compare* these measures against to answer our questions and assess progress?
- How might you use this information to affect decision-making or communicate with stakeholders?

In **Stage C**, you prepare for the logistics of undertaking your evaluation plan. This includes thinking about:

- Where will *data* come from? Is it already available or will we collect it, and if so, how?
- How will we need to *process* or *analyze* the data to give us a clear answer to our evaluation question?
- > Who will be responsible for these activities?

In **Stage D**, you consider ways to tie the evaluation back to decision-making by answering:

- What will be our *trigger points*? At what level, amount or rate of change of an indicator will we change course or reconsider our strategies?
- > What possible *actions* might we take if a trigger point is reached?

