

Independent Monitoring and Verification

Twelve lessons from ASWA II

September 2021





OVERVIEW OF THE IMV ASSIGNMENT

Accelerating Hygiene, Sanitation and Water for All II (ASWA II)

- A £56 million programme financed by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- A follow on from ASWA I, it began in October 2017 and is due to run to March 2022
- Operated in Haiti, Niger, Eritrea, South Sudan, Madagascar, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar

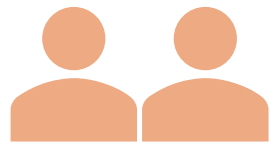
Intended outcome: the sustained use of safe water supplies and sanitation services, and sustained adoption of hygiene practices, by poor and vulnerable people in targeted areas, especially by women and girls.

Independent Monitoring and Verification (IMV)

FCDO appointed a consortium of three consulting firms (Itad, IWEL and Aguaconsult) as the supplier of IMV services to:

- quality assure ASWA II programme monitoring systems.
- ensure studies used sound methodology & analysis.

The IMV team was made up of:



Project Manager and Team Leader at global level



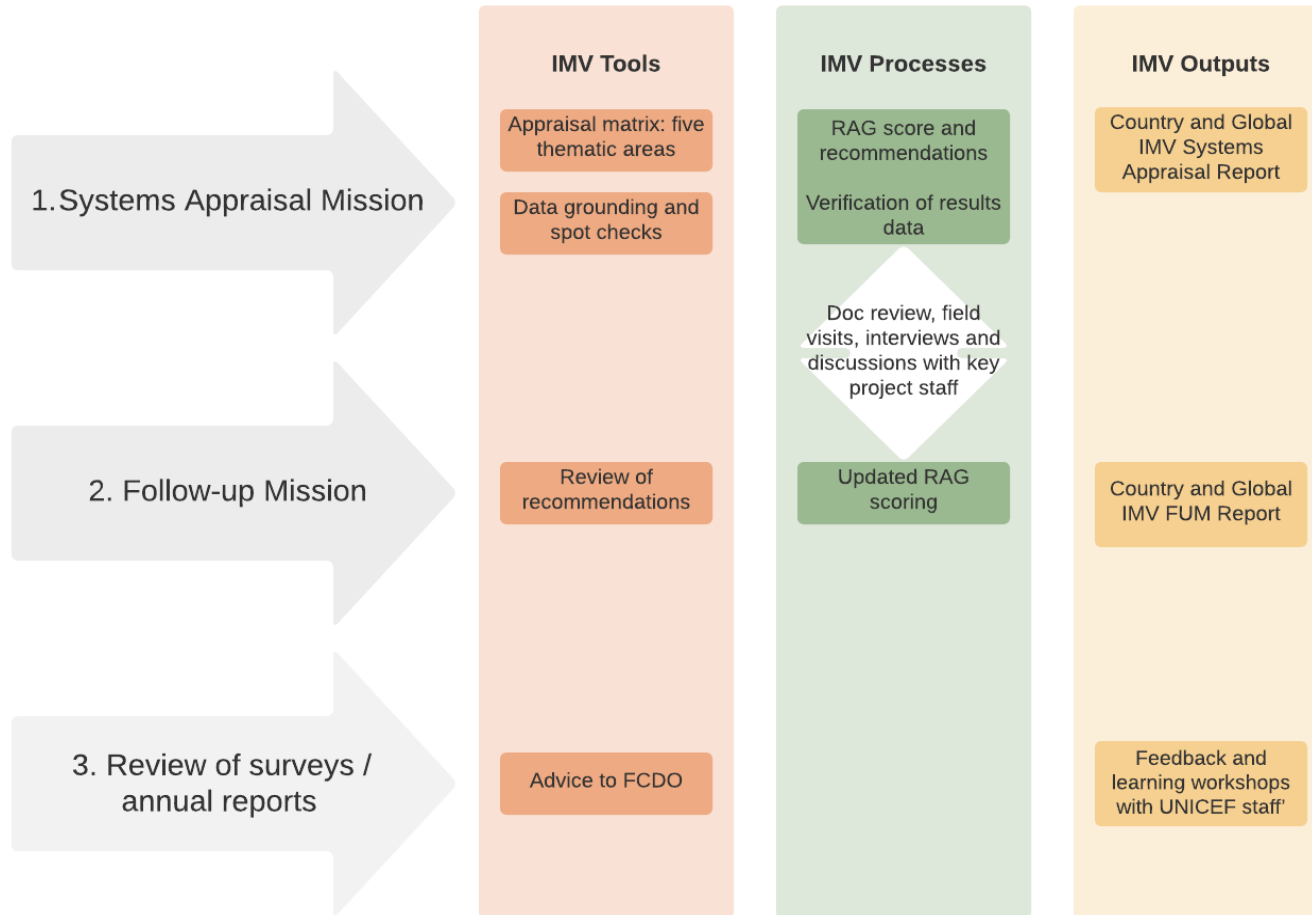
4x Regional Team Leaders

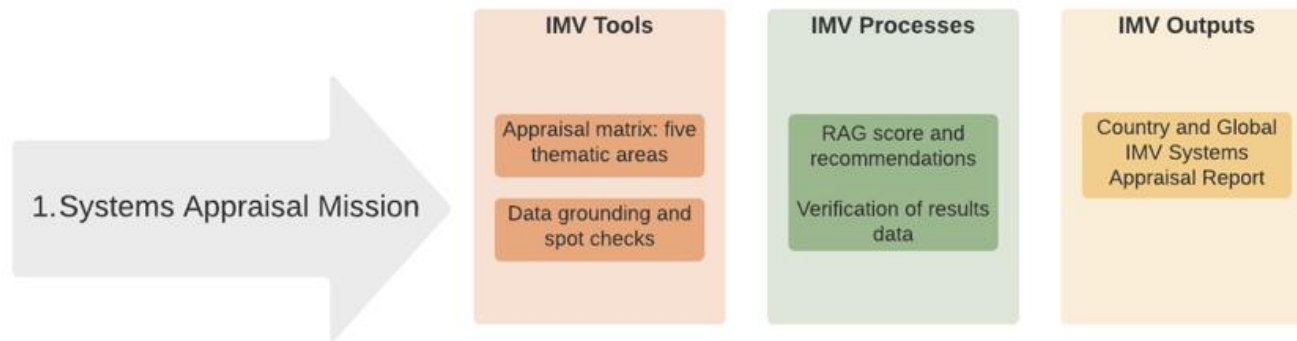


10x
Country
Monitors
and
Verifiers

IMV approach

IMV's approach comprised three key elements:



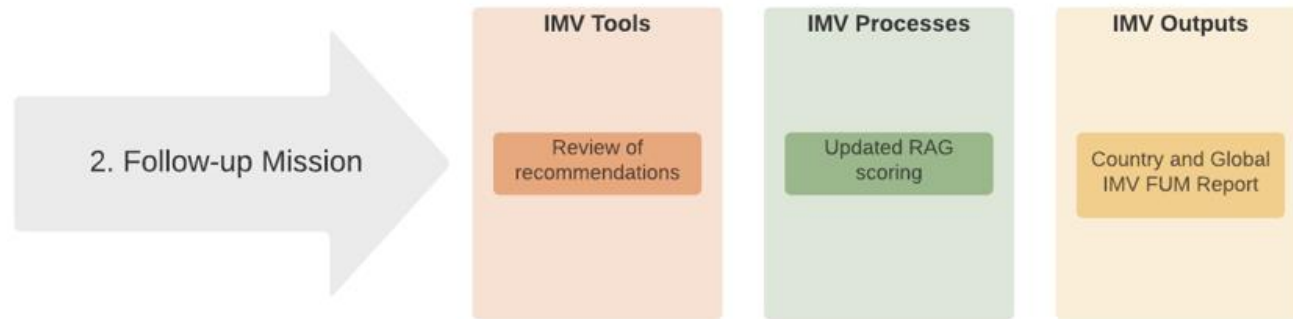


The first mission each year was known as the annual monitoring systems appraisal. It involved a detailed assessment addressing 17 questions across five thematic areas:

1. Capability of the reporting structures
2. Clarity and robustness of monitoring processes
3. Soundness of data management processes
4. Attention to vulnerable groups
5. Attention to conditional performance incentive indicators

The questions were structured into a matrix, with findings scored using red/amber/green (RAG) ratings depending on whether they were considered good, satisfactory, or limited.

Data grounding was added from year two to check data collection and aggregation accuracy and consistency as results passed up the reporting chain from household to national level.



A follow-up mission would be conducted roughly six months after each appraisal mission, to:

- check whether appraisal recommendations had been implemented
- update the appraisal score with a focus on assessment areas that were scored amber or red last time (or left grey because they could not be assessed).

Some missions also took a 'deeper dive' into specific thematic areas, such as how country offices monitored the number of people living with a disability among programme beneficiaries.

Impact of IMV services

On programme monitoring:

- Upward trend in appraisal RAG scores (per country and overall) gave FCDO increasing confidence in the reported results.
- Specific issues within countries remained – for example, how to monitor access to handwashing facilities.
- Annual systems appraisals and follow-up missions included assessing how the programme design addressed vulnerability, and how the programme monitored the extent of benefits to vulnerable groups.

Impact of IMV services

On government systems:

- There was no FCDO requirement for IMV to strengthen sector monitoring systems at a national or regional level
- In practice, IMV appraisals took in government monitoring and reporting systems where government agencies implemented some programme components
- In some countries – Eritrea, Nepal, and Pakistan – government agencies were the lead IPs for ASWA II overall so IMV could potentially influence the operation of government systems quite significantly

LESSONS LEARNT

Scope of IMV's role - lessons learnt

1. Focusing on the quality of M&E systems proved effective and helped the IMV-UNICEF relationship.
2. Restricting the IMV role to quality assurance, with no technical assistance component, helped maintain IMV's independence.
3. Careful attention was needed to formulate IMV recommendations that were relevant and actionable but not too prescriptive.

Scope of IMV's role - next time

- Include a role for the third-party monitor to share lessons on good monitoring practices that emerge from programme experience. Prioritise cross-country sharing within the programme and producing knowledge products for a wider audience.
- At the programme level, avoid making time-bound recommendations that require government system changes unless government actors have been involved in creating these recommendations.

Approach, methodology and tools - lessons learnt

4. A common interpretation of the programme logframe and associated indicators was essential at all levels.
5. The appraisal matrix, based on five thematic areas of investigation, was found to be appropriate, and both UNICEF and IMV personnel considered it to be a useful tool.
6. Data grounding was more challenging than the appraisal process.
7. Transparency and consistency in implementing IMV processes were important for securing and maintaining UNICEF's positive engagement with the IMV team.

Approach, methodology and tools - lessons learnt (cont.)

8. The frequency of IMV missions (every six months) was about right. Had missions taken place less often, it would have been challenging to get the depth of insight needed or to provide timely recommendations.
9. The focus on monitoring systems more than the quantity of results meant that unannounced spot checks to project offices and communities were rarely necessary.
10. It would not have been possible to carry out the entire IMV assignment remotely since some monitoring practices could only be assessed in the field.

Approach, methodology and tools - next time

- Accommodate the use of mobile-to-web monitoring in any future appraisal matrix.
- If data grounding is to be used in future, further piloting may be needed first to ensure its viability and usefulness.
- The timing of third-party monitoring system assessments should be aligned with implementing agency reporting schedules to make updated results data available during missions.

Team composition and roles - lessons learnt

11. IMV's global - regional - country team structure was a good fit for the programme.
12. Programme management at the global level had an important enabling role for IMV.

Team composition and roles- next time

- Ensure effective communications with country offices – particularly around decisions that affect programme monitoring such as changes to the global logframe or to donor expectations around how specific outputs should be measured and reported.

CONCLUSIONS

IMV achieved its objective of increasing donor confidence in reported results

- It was also good value for money.
- Demonstrated IMV services can strengthen government systems over time, at least at the local level.
- Future third-party monitoring may need to encompass national WASH systems while becoming more additive than auditive.

Thank you for
listening.