SOUL AND SOCIETY FRAMEWORK
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WHY DO WE NEED TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE?

Besides helping the recovery of ecological functions, the ERC movement aims at the restoration of interrelated human systems, both at the individual (Soul) and the social/community level (Society). As we work together to restore degraded ecosystems, individuals and communities within and around camps change too. Such multidimensional transformation is what we intend to monitor and evaluate using our Soul and Society indicators.

So, to understand what is happening, monitoring and evaluation is required. This way we can assess how the work we are doing at the camps is affecting the livelihoods, thoughts, views, attitudes, knowledge and skills of the people that experience the camp. This includes those running the camp, those volunteering, learning or working at the camp and/or living around it.

For example, the goal to ‘empower everyday, ordinary people to take the lead in ecosystem restoration’ could be monitored by assessing whether our camps are having so-called ripple effects, inspiring wider circles of people to work in restoration, or even starting new camps.

By learning how these people think and feel about our work, we will be able to adapt what we offer at the camps to something more in line with what people are looking for. We can learn from our mistakes, and improve our offerings and our practices.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MONITORING AND EVALUATION?

In this context, monitoring is the regular collection of information to learn about the impact that our work is having on the individuals and their communities. For the Soul and Society indicators, which this guide is written to guide you through, our main method of monitoring is surveys. Additionally, semi-structured interviews might be used to follow-up with individuals or cases of increased interest (key-informants). Sending off these surveys to their targeted audience to collect regular information is key to successful monitoring of Souls and Societies undergoing restoration. Evaluation is gathering the responses from the surveys and analyzing them, to pull out patterns and trends to tell a story of how the camps are changing the world.
**OUR HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK**

We have designed a monitoring and evaluation framework that measures the impact that the camps are having according to three categories: Soil, covering the ecological transformation happening on the ground; Soul, reflecting changes in people’s attitudes and behavior; Society, relating to the positive impact on human societies and economies linked to the degraded nature of the ecosystems around them. We know that ecosystem restoration affects all three of these areas, hence our designing of a holistic framework that measures changes across all three.

To see the indicators and tests/means of verification for the Soil indicators, please refer to the Soil Guide, [here](#).

**SOUL**

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<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
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<td>Those interacting with the camp as campers (visitors, students/interns, volunteers) are positively impacted by their experience</td>
<td>ERC KPI: # people reporting positive personal changes (supported by stories of change) Other: #people reporting feelings of empowerment, after leaving the camp and 1 year after #people feeling empowered to, e.g, apply restoration techniques #people reporting increased oneness with nature</td>
<td>Camper Survey #1 Camper Survey #2 Camper interviews</td>
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<td>High numbers of people are engaging with the camps</td>
<td>ERC KPI: # of people that participated in camp activities Other #people reporting wanting to come back/try new camp #people returning to camps</td>
<td>Camp Manager Survey Camp Manager interviews Camper Survey #1 Camper Survey #2 Community Survey</td>
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### SOCIETY

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<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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| A growing and strengthening community of actors working together to restore degraded landscapes on and around the campsite | ERC KPI: # beyond the fence local community partnerships/involved stakeholders of camp  
Other: #people reporting to have regular contact with the camp | Community Survey  
Camp Manager Survey  
Camp Manager Interviews |
| The presence of the camp is positively affecting the livelihoods of the people living on and around the camp | ERC KPI: # of livelihoods created/impacted  
Other: #people reporting improved economic situation  
#people reporting benefits from skills/knowledge provided by camps  
#people reporting camp benefiting their community | Community Survey  
Camp Manager Survey  
Camp Manager Interviews |
WHAT ARE WE MEASURING?

As you can see from the tables above, there are some targets or outcomes we hope to, (to a significant degree), see happening as a result of our work. The indicators mentioned are specific, observable, and measurable phenomena that we can use to show changes or progress towards achieving those desired outcomes. Through means of verification like digital surveys, interviews and log systems (e.g. spreadsheets, diaries and journals), we qualify and quantify those indicators.

At the global level of the global ERC network, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) have been identified as critical indicators of ecosystem restoration, thereby helping us to work towards shared goals and communicate progress. Besides the KPIs, several other indicators can be defined and/or “extracted” from survey questions in alignment with camp-specific targets. To do this, we need methods (surveys and semi-structured interviews) that enable us to collect data on *Soul* and *Society* indicators from our target/sample audience. These surveys (or means of verification), allow us to assess, quantitatively and qualitatively, our progress so far and whether we've achieved our stated outcomes or not. At a later stage, after the collection and preliminary analysis of survey data, semi-structured interviews might be useful to get a deeper understanding of how people are being impacted by ecosystem restoration camps, while capturing or sharing/voicing personal and societal shifts.

Our surveys have been developed using KoBo Toolbox\(^1\), an open source toolkit for data collection and management, widely used in humanitarian contexts. KoBo Toolbox allows users to not only design the surveys, but also to distribute them in different ways, store respondent data in the KoBo cloud, and access/analyse data easily.

This platform allows for 3 different means of survey distribution (the context of each camp should be considered in determining which one to use):

1. **Online via a link**: each survey has a link associated to it that needs only to be shared, for example, via email, so that sampled individuals have access to it and can fill it in. The submissions will be automatically saved on the KoBo Toolbox website and available for analysis or download.
2. **Online/Offline** via KoBo Toolbox app: with the KoBoCollect app, it is possible to access and distribute the surveys, either online or offline, using a mobile phone or a tablet. The submissions will be saved on the KoBo Toolbox website and available for analysis or download.
3. **Offline** via printed forms: a printable version of the surveys is possible when the previous alternatives are not feasible. Collected data needs to be sent to the Monitoring & Evaluation team via email, either as photographs or scanned documents.

\(^1\) Check [this video](#) tutorial on how to utilize KoBo Toolbox app, KoBo Collect.
SAMPLING DESIGN AND TIME FRAME

In statistical language, samples are representative subpopulations of the whole population we are interested in surveying. In situations where the group of interest is very large, it would be too difficult and time consuming to survey every single individual. In such cases, sampling, i.e., selecting a smaller target group, is recommended.

As we are measuring progress and changes in time, a timeframe is necessary to define how often and when these surveys should be conducted. Below is what we suggest in terms of how to select your sample sizes and timeframes for each survey (hyperlinked), and for the interviews.

CAMPER SURVEY #1

This first survey has been created to assess how campers, i.e. people experiencing your camp, feel about their experience and whether, and how, it has impacted their life. There are 28 questions in this survey and it should take the camper around 15 minutes to fill it in.

If possible, we recommend sending this survey to all campers via email, on the last day of a camp experience (e.g. volunteering and/or participating in actions, workshops and other offerings at camps). The best is to allocate time for campers to fill this survey at the end of a camp experience/program, while they are still on site and the effects of their work “fresh”. If that is not possible, it is good to remind campers of (the importance of) filling this in as soon as possible. As we do not expect that everyone receiving it will fill it in, the sample size is not predefined and instead depends on the number of responses obtained.

When it is not possible to send surveys via email to all campers (for example, due to limited digital devices or access to internet), consider having a tablet with the app installed on site to carry the surveys, or to have always printed versions available. When using these methods, the sample size can be determined both by the expectations on the digital literacy of the group and by the camp resources. Good practice would be to have at least 50% of the participants of each experience answering the survey.

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2 See Appendix 1 for a template email/message for this purpose
CAMPER SURVEY #2 / INTERVIEW

VIEW SURVEY TWO

This survey is a one year follow up of Camper Survey #1. It is very similar in content to Camper Survey #1, as it intends to investigate how the feelings and impacts reported in the first survey by the camper have changed or been sustained over time.

Hence, this survey should only be shared with those campers who filled in the Camper Survey #1, around one year after the first survey was completed. By surveying one year after the camp experience, we hope to be able to assess longer-term effects of restoration experiences on participants.

For the Camper Survey #2, it might be necessary to reach out to campers via email. We recommend sending the survey to all campers that filled in survey one. This way, your final sample will be composed of those campers that have filled in both surveys, which you can use to analyze your findings. Where more nuanced data from campers is required or desirable, semi-structured interviews are strongly recommended (see Appendix 4).

CAMP MANAGER SURVEY / INTERVIEW

VIEW SURVEY THREE

This is the survey where you, as managers of the camps, can share your thoughts, feelings and interactions with the camp and your role as camp manager. It is also the moment we have to better understand how the ERC foundation can better support the work of camps. Another important outcome assessed by this survey is, for example, the number of collaborations/partnerships established between the camp and the surrounding community (question 25).

We recommend that you do some stakeholder mapping in preparation for this survey. This exercise should help you to get your head around the constellation of people and players around your camp community that you should consider, particularly when answering questions 23 and 24.

If you are a camp manager reading this, it's as simple as filling it in once a year, at the same time each year. For example, you could fill it at the end of the year.
COMMUNITY SURVEY / INTERVIEW

The community survey has been designed to find out what members of the local/regional community of the camp think and feel about the camp and its activities.

We recommend that you do some stakeholder mapping\(^3\) in preparation also for this survey. After defining the constellation of people and players around your camp that you should consider, select 10 community members from your map that are representative of the different voices and positions within your community, and set up times to interview them. The survey questions can be used as an interview script.

In addition to the previous, in order to measure how well the camp is integrated in the surrounding community, a randomized sampling is recommended. This can be achieved, for example, by randomly choosing individuals in the street to survey. Another good idea is to target places where community members are likely to be found (e.g. local markets, associations, shops and/or coffee places).

It is important that a neutral person (e.g. one camper or member of the M&E data collection team), is the one to carry out these surveys, and not the camp managers. This is because whoever is answering the survey may struggle to be completely honest and say what they really think and feel about the camp to the people managing it! They will feel more comfortable being unfiltered and truthful to a neutral interviewer. You could also send the survey to them electronically and allow them to fill it in themselves, particularly when time/human resources are limited.

It is likely that the community members that live around your camp will not be English speakers. Therefore, translation of the survey might be needed before it is conducted/sent out. The ERC Knowledge & Impact team is available to help you think through how this can best be done.

\(^3,4\) See appendix 2 and 3 for examples of stakeholder mappings.
WHAT WE’LL DO WITH THE RESULTS

Once the surveys have been filled in, our Monitoring & Evaluation team at the foundation will read through all the responses and pull out the findings. We will analyze the responses to discover how the camps movement is impacting the people that interact with it, and we will create annual reports that tell the numbers and story of how the camps movement is transforming individuals and communities. We will also learn based on the feedback from the surveys, on how to change, improve and adapt what we do to better suit the people engaging with the ecosystem restoration camps movement.

Data collected from each camp will be accessible to its managing team either through ERC’s open M&E database or through the Knowledge & Impact team. Towards the end of each calendar year (or beginning of the next year), annual reports will be published on the ERC website, including infographics based on survey data for Soul and Society data. Quotes from surveys and interviews, when approved by the author, might also be included in such reports and/or shared through ERC’s social media and communications channels.

CONCLUSION

The best way to grow, develop and improve as a movement is to find out about the impact we are having on the ecosystems, the people doing the restoration work, and the people that live in/around those ecosystems.

By putting together these surveys, we hope that they will achieve this ambition of discovering the thoughts, feelings, improvements in knowledge, skills and livelihoods that the camps movement exists to enhance and transform.

If you have any further questions or needs for clarification about the surveys, please email mick@ecosystemrestorationcamps.org for support.

Together we are restoring the earth and the human spirit.
APPENDIX 1. TEMPLATE EMAILS FOR CAMP MANAGERS CONTACTING CAMPERS

(send at the end or shortly after camp experience)

Dear camper,

We sincerely hope you had a meaningful time during our (camp/experience/course name). While the experience is “fresh”, we would love to hear your feedback via this survey (should take approx. 15 minutes of your precious time). Your input is invaluable as it helps us to monitor our objectives and essentially improve the quality of future ERC offerings for people like you.

Huge thanks on behalf of camp xyz, the ERC Foundation and the whole planet,

(signature)

(send 1 year after “camper survey 1” was filled in)

Dear camper,

We hope you are well and somehow continuing your journey of ecosystem restoration...?

One year has passed since we received your important feedback on your experience at the (camp/experience/course name). Thank you for the useful input you offered! We are curious to hear what still resonates and what might have gotten blurrier since you had that experience with us. Therefore, we invite you to fill in one other survey (takes approx. 15 mins).

Huge thanks on behalf of camp xyz, the ERC Foundation and the whole planet,

(signature)
APPENDIX 2. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING BY INTEREST & POWER

+ INTEREST
(Most affected/impacted by camp's activities)

- POWER
(Least influence on camp's activities)

- INTEREST
(Least affected/impacted by camp's activities)

+ POWER
(Most influence on camp's activities)
APPENDIX 3. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING BY SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

- International stakeholders
- National stakeholders
- Local & regional stakeholders
- Camp management
APPENDIX 4. GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews can be a powerful tool to collect unbiased information and more nuanced insights. They allow the interviewer to adapt to the individual in front of them, while keeping a general common structure.

For the community members, we recommend using Survey 4 - Community Survey, as the general common structure to follow, i.e. these questions are posed to all the surveyed individuals, no exception. In addition to the question items on the survey, the interviewer can, and should, ask follow-up questions whenever pertinent.

Let’s consider a few examples of how this may look like in practice: if someone affirms to be collaborating with the camp (answering ‘yes’ to question 9), when asking them about the nature of their collaboration (question 10), the interviewer can follow up with questions regarding personal/professional motivations behind - or satisfaction/benefits perceived in - such collaborative efforts; whenever further clarification is required, the interviewer may ask “why” or “what is meant by” questions; topics of great great interest to the camp and/or interviewer can be explored through more in-depth conversations, though appropriate time management is key to cover the main structure of the interview.

In sum, the interviewer has the freedom to go beyond predefined questions while adopting a systematic (semi-structured) approach, which is particularly useful when key information and knowledge could be left out by following scripts rigidly.

For the campers, there might also be situations when semi-structured interviews prove to be extremely useful. Namely, for story-telling or communication purposes, having a follow-up interview with a camper whose survey responses were specially interesting allows the ERC foundation to capture deeper stories, opinions or thoughts relating to the impact of camps; these stories can be turned into blogs videos, and other forms of (social) media content that can be shared with the wider ERC movement.

For these interviews, we recommend that you use the camper’s answer to the previous surveys as a starting point, and further develop those you have a special interest in. For instance, one camper mentions having felt empowered and improved their feelings of hope towards the future, both on Survey 1 and Survey 2, and shows enthusiasm in the open questions; however, no answers were obtained when asked for specific examples. In the interview you have the opportunity to ask for such examples of personal change. It might also be true that a camper had a very negative camp experience. In this case, semi-structured interviews might help to better understand what happened and how camp experiences can be improved in the future.