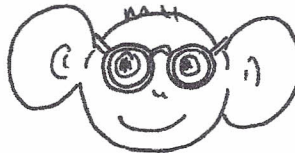# Feedback
How are we doing?

It's important to keep your ear to the ground, even if you're implementing a small exercise that lasts just a few days. Not to mention making sure that large long-term projects and programs are on track. One needs to ask questions like:

Reaching the right places & people?

How do staff, target groups & broader publics perceive & react to what we're trying to do?

Any bottlenecks & delays that need attention?

Are we documenting what we're doing well enough?

Are funds, staff & facilities being utilized effectively?

Formal arrangements for obtaining feedback could be useful, such as:
- Public meetings and hearings
- Progress reports at regular intervals
- Site inspections
- Program reviews at key milestones
- Suggestion boxes, web site pages and other ways to encourage spontaneous feedback

But **informal feedback** can be just as important. Much can be done just by being a keen observer and good listener. Get out to where the action is, seeking out relevant people, and encouraging them to tell it like it is. Avoid the common problem of associates and contacts telling you what they think you want to hear. View actions, impacts and problems through the eyes of target groups and operational staff. Encourage constructive, forward-looking thinking instead of bogging down with negative backward-looking criticisms.

Put another way, if you as a project leader or advisor *do not* take the initiative in seeking timely, constructive feedback, you are likely to get feedback anyway. And it may give a distorted picture. Such **unelicited feedback** may come in very public ways, like adverse newspaper articles, or complaints to elected officials. Or it may be subtle, such as local leaders dragging their feet when implementing a new state or national program, without you really understanding why.

For a related topic, see the Evaluation item on this web site.