

»»» eLearning Tools



Source: istock/Zimkevych

PEA project manager with laptop and learning material preparing for her first training on RMMV in English

Relevance of this Tool Type within the Project Cycle



eLearning tools assist in the remote implementation of tailored trainings and workshops throughout the project lifecycle. They can include trainings for Project Executing Agency (PEA) staff and other project participants on how to conduct remote project management and monitoring.

Definition

eLearning tools are primarily web-based software for the PEA, implementation-consultant, or eLearning providers to deliver training and content across a variety of electronic devices, including desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and smart-phones. eLearning can be conducted either in individual training sessions or in refresher courses as an instrument of continuous learning. It is especially advantageous in scenarios where beneficiaries or partners:

- ✓ are in different locations
- ✓ face mobility challenges
- ✓ request short training sessions
- ✓ have reliable connectivity
- ✓ want to learn at their own pace

Types of eLearning Approaches

Usually, remote eLearning interventions incorporate both of the following types of eLearning (blended learning):

Face-to-face workshops: eLearning tools are used to facilitate in-person and live capacity building sessions.

Virtual learning: eLearning tools enable users to study individually and/or participate in communities of practice.

Step 1: Integrate eLearning into Remote Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems

A clear definition of the learning objective needs to be elaborated to integrate eLearning into M&E systems, including relevant indicators on every impact level. This will allow for evaluation of the eLearning intervention in surveys with learners.

Step 2: Assess Needs and Feasibility

Before eLearning tools are applied, the need for training and suitable content must be determined in dialogue with the learners and the PEA. Further, the feasibility of eLearning interventions based on the targeted learners' ecosystem must be assessed, including:

- ✓ Availability of IT devices
- ✓ Access to and costs for sufficient internet connection
- ✓ Reliable electricity provision
- ✓ Digital divide in access to IT resources based on local inequalities
- ✓ Familiarity of learners with eLearning and digital literacy
- ✓ Experience with learning in groups and social dynamics
- ✓ Language requirements, literacy
- ✓ Availability of learners during specific times of the day

Step 3: What Kind of eLearning Tool Should I Choose?

The choice of an adequate tool is based on both the characteristics of the learners identified and the preferred eLearning approach.

Potential tools used in eLearning are:

Collaboration tools

Collaboration tools for conferencing (> [Fact Sheet Collaboration Tools](#)) can be used to organize live and in-person online trainings. Commercial providers of such tools often also offer a related webinar product to handle large numbers of learners. The most commonly used communications tools, like Signal or WhatsApp for instant messaging, can be used to establish links between learners and create communities of practice. File-sharing tools may also contribute to sharing content with and between learners.

Learning Management Systems (LMS)

LMS are online software that can be customized to create courses for learners to study at their own pace and attend live courses. Among the most common functionalities are the creation of digital courses, file sharing for course content, discussion forums for communities of practice and learner teacher communication, test automation, and assignment grading. Most solutions include a mobile application. Several open-source options exist (e.g., Moodle, Opigno).

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

MOOCs are courses that are made available online to a large audience. Course material and lectures are usually provided at no additional costs and cover a range of topics. Costs may be incurred however for course certification. Popular MOOCs with a large course catalogue include [EdX](#), [Coursera](#), [Futurelearn](#), and so on. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development also offers the free eLearning platform [Atingi](#) for all kinds of trainings for end users in the Global South, including certified vocational trainings. Atingi can be used to create courses from scratch as well, and offers methodological support and evaluations for remote M&E purposes. MOOCs with a specific focus on RMMV-related content include [NASA ARSET](#) (Satellites, Sensors), [Copernicus MOOC](#) (Satellites), and [SERVIR Global](#) (Satellite, GIS). Further RMMV learning content is available for free from reputable research institutions on [Edx](#), [Coursera](#), [MIT OpenCourseWare](#) (GIS), and [OPEN.ED@PSU](#) (GIS).

Mixed eLearning approaches

To create the necessary preconditions for successful learning in ecosystems with low availability of IT infrastructure, internet access, and insufficient learning environments, using a physical teaching facility as a learning hub for learners can be beneficial. Learners can then access the web-based eLearning tools described above in such facilities. Sustainable strategies for this type of mixed eLearning would be to connect local institutions and internationally operating schools to avoid additional local competition and ensure continued funding in sustainable business models to cover recurring costs as well as personnel costs.

Lessons for Face-to-Face Workshops Via eLearning Tools:

Planning ahead and clear communications: Provide a clear schedule for training ahead of time and consider time differences. Communicate objectives and topical integration into the trainings at the beginning.

Connectivity: Test connectivity with participants beforehand, opt for low bandwidth options and record sessions for later sharing.

Engage participants: Plan for practical exercises during the trainings and interactive homework assignments. Allow for questions and ask participants to prepare questions.

IT support: Ensure that regular and ad-hoc support for your eLearning tool is available to help instructors and learners with technical difficulties.

Legal Aspects

The chosen **license model** of the eLearning tool must ensure sufficient access to the eLearning tool (ideally open-source). The license must also ensure that students may reasonably use the learning materials for private study. The PEA has to warrant that constraints of the respective license agreement are complied with—for example, that inadmissible copying of material is prevented > [RMMV Guidebook Section 2.2.2](#).

Data protection: the personal data of the students must only be collected and processed to the extent necessary for the training purpose.

The eLearning tool must have adequate **security to protect the collected personal data** of the students, such as their names and addresses. Flawed or inadequate data security puts the rights of participants at risk, who should enjoy robust data protection allowing them to freely use the eLearning tool without fear of negative personal consequences > [RMMV Guidebook Section 2.3.1](#).

Project Examples/Use Cases

Global eLearning platform for end users Atingi, www.atingi.org

The digital learning center TUMO in Berlin <https://www.kfw.de/stories/society/education/tumo-berlin/>

In the educational [project Activate! in South Africa](#) (Activate; PN: 34017), a digital learning platform was built to enable technical and vocational training for teachers.

Links to Further Sources

How to select digital tools to support training and capacity building

<https://digitalprinciples.org/resource/howto-select-tools-training-capacity/>

BMZ Toolkit Digitalisierung

https://toolkit-digitalisierung.de/app/uploads/2020/12/BMZ-Toolkit_-Digitale-Bildung.pdf

KfW eLearning platform **Sustainability Training** to support our partners in the financial sector and beyond on environmental social governance topics and environmental & social risk management:

<https://kfwdeg.sustainability.training/>

Linkages to other tool types



Collaboration Tools



(Remote) Management Information Systems



Maintenance Management Systems



Mobile Data Collection Tools



Crowdsourcing Tools



Cameras



Drones/UAV



Earth Observation via Satellites



Geospatial Tools



Sensors/SmartMeters



Building Information Modeling



Data Sources

Further information on how to use this tool type in an RMMV context can be found here:

