Monitoring under conditions of uncertainty

The complexity of market systems means that it is often very difficult to know in advance how interventions will work in practice. This uncertainty applies not only to the desired results, but also to the unexpected effects they may have. As a result, programmes will not be able to rely on analysis taken at the design and planning stage, or to implement a pre-determined plan in a rigid manner.

Instead, they need to be able to adapt over time in order to have a reasonable chance of achieving their intended results. This means exploring different options, testing the water, learning from experience, and reacting and adapting accordingly.

This places a premium on being able to generate the right kind of monitoring data at the right time. Indeed, programme monitoring and programme management need to be closely integrated, and led by the team leader or programme director.

The implications of adaptive programming for the monitoring framework and the way that monitoring data is used is discussed in Module 6.