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# ACTIVITY MONITORING, EVALUATION, & LEARNING PLAN Guidance Document

***Note:** This IP Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan Guide was developed in November 2017.*

# List of Abbreviations

ADS	Automated Directives System
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CIRS	Context Indicator Reference Sheets
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contract Officer's Representative
DO	Development Objective
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
HO	Home Office
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
Logframe	Logical Framework
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPR	Performance Plan and Report
RF	Results Framework
SOW	Statement of Work
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VEMSS	Vietnam Evaluation, Monitoring and Survey Services

## Contents

1.	Introduction to the Guidelines .....	2
2.	Key Components of an Activity MEL Plan.....	4
2.1	Introduction.....	4
	Activity Theory of Change and Logic Model.....	4
2.2	Monitoring Plan.....	5
	Performance Monitoring.....	5
	Context Monitoring.....	7
	Cross-cutting Issues.....	7
2.3	Evaluation Plan.....	8
	Internal Evaluations.....	8
	Plans for Collaborating with External Evaluators.....	8
2.4	Learning Agenda .....	9
	Overview .....	9
	2. Learning Agenda Development.....	9
	3. Important Tips .....	11
2.5	Data Management.....	11
	Data Collection .....	11
	Data Quality Assurance.....	11
	Data Storage .....	12
	Data Security.....	12
	Data Analysis and Use .....	12
2.6	Roles, Responsibilities, and Schedule.....	12
2.7	Resources.....	13
2.8	Change Log.....	13
3.	Annex: Links to USAID Learning Lab Reference Materials.....	14

# I. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

This guide provides detailed instructions and outlines practical steps for Implementation Partners (IPs) who will need to complete their Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan in alignment with USAID standards stated in the How-To Note Supplements to the ADS.

Before going into detail about development of Activity MEL Plans, IPs need to understand the key terms and related definitions that are used in this plan. These terms, as well as others used in the Activity MEL Plan, can be found online at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201>.

## **Key concepts:**

**USAID CDCS (Country Development Cooperation Strategy):** The strategy that defines a Mission’s chosen country approach and provides a focal point of the broader context for projects and activities. A CDCS presents expected results within a time-defined period, provides a common vision and an organizing framework, and summarizes the status of the ongoing portfolio and how that will be continued, updated, or revised to address new priorities, lessons learned, or changing circumstances. The CDCS generally covers a five-year period. USAID/Vietnam’s CDCS can be found at <https://www.usaid.gov/vietnam/cdcs>.

**USAID Project:** A set of complementary activities with an established timeline and budget intended to achieve a discrete development result, often aligned with an Intermediate Result (IR) in the USAID CDCS Results Framework. Taken together, a Mission’s suite of project designs provides the operational plans for achieving the objectives of the CDCS. A USAID project is not an implementing mechanism; rather it is a planning and management framework under which several activities, or project sub-components, are funded and executed on an integrated basis to achieve an Intermediate Result (IR).

**USAID Activity:** Per ADS 201 definitions section, p. 140: “An activity carries out an intervention, or set of interventions, typically through a contract, grant, or agreement with another U.S. Government agency or with the partner country government. An activity also may be an intervention undertaken directly by Mission staff that contributes to a project, such as a policy dialogue. In most cases, multiple activities are needed to ensure the synergistic contributions necessary to achieve the project’s desired results.” Note that a USAID activity is a sub-project contributing to the achievement of Project Development Objectives.

**USAID Performance Management Plan (PMP):** A tool to plan and manage the process of monitoring strategic progress, project performance, programmatic assumptions and operational context; evaluating performance and impact; and learning from evidence to inform decision-making, resource allocation, and adaptation at the strategy level. PMPs are Mission documents and are distinct from Project MEL Plans and from Activity MEL Plans.

**Results Framework (RF):** The predominant logic model for representing the development hypotheses underlying the Mission’s strategy. The Results Framework diagrams the development hypotheses, outlining the logic for achieving Development Objectives (DOs) over time, including causal logic (at levels up to IRs) and the of IRs to the DO, and between DOs and Goals. The Results Framework includes the CDCS Goal, DOs, IRs, and sub-IRs (ADS 201).

At the Activity Planning and Implementation level, a Results Framework could be defined as a graphic portrayal of the development hypotheses through which an IP activity expects to achieve its overall development goal. Visually, a Results Framework brings together several, often quite distinct, streams of results, which function synergistically to produce higher-level outcomes, or broad development changes.

**Theory of Change:** A narrative description, usually accompanied by a graphic or visual depiction, of how and why a purpose or result is expected to be achieved in a particular context.

A Theory of Change contains five elements:

- The context within which the development problem is situated.
- The if-then (causal) outcomes needed to achieve the desired change. This may be presented graphically in a Results Framework, or through other means such as a Logical Framework.
- Major interventions that will be used to achieve the outcomes.
- Key assumptions that underlie the success of the activity, or theory of change.
- Key indicators used to monitor implementation progress toward the achievement of objectives.

**MEL Plan (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan):** A plan for monitoring, evaluating, and learning from a USAID activity (Activity MEL Plan) or project (Project MEL Plan). They are distinct from Mission-wide Performance Management Plans (PMP).

**COR/AOR (Contract Officer's Representative/Agreement Officer's Representative):** The individual who performs functions that are designated by the Contracting or Agreement Officer, or who is specifically designated by policy or regulation as part of contract or assistance administration.

**Data Quality Assessment (DQA):** An examination of the quality of performance indicator data considering the five standards of data quality (validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness) to ensure that decision makers are fully aware of data strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which data can be relied on when making management decisions and reporting (see data quality standards).

**Outcome:** The conditions of people, systems, or institutions that indicate progress or lack of progress toward achievement of project/program goals. Outcomes are any result higher than an output to which a given output contributes but for which it is not solely responsible. Outcomes may be intermediate or end outcomes, short-term or long-term, intended or unintended, positive or negative, direct or indirect.

**Outputs:** What are produced as a direct result of inputs. They are the tangible, immediate, and intended products or consequences of an activity within USAID's control or influence.

**Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan:** The document that guides activity monitoring and learning. The Activity MEL Plan serves multiple purposes, but primarily describes how USAID and the IP will know whether an activity is making progress toward stated results. For the IP, the plan describes the process for monitoring, evaluating, and learning from implementation to adapt and achieve results. For USAID, it ensures adequate information is available for activity management and that data collection is consistent with data and learning needs

of the Project MEL Plan, the Mission's PMP, and the Mission's annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR). The Activity MEL Plan is developed by the IP and submitted for USAID approval. Documenting and sharing the plan increases buy-in from the COR/AOR who uses the information, as well as buy-in from any partners who contribute to data collection.

## 2. KEY COMPONENTS OF AN ACTIVITY MEL PLAN

### 2.1 Introduction

An introduction enables the Activity MEL Plan to act as a standalone management tool for both USAID and the IP. This section introduces the Activity MEL Plan, describes the structure of the Plan and possibly its intended use. In a maximum of one page, the introduction should provide a clear and precise description of the guiding principle for the Activity MEL Plan; for example, the intent/purpose, economy of effort, participation, and contribution to the Project MEL Plan. A brief description of the activity should be presented, including the activity's overall purpose, start date and duration, key partners and geographic areas of operation.

**Sample text for consideration by IPs:** *The purpose of this Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan is to guide activity monitoring and learning. The Activity MEL Plan describes how USAID and <implementing partner> will know whether <activity name> is making progress toward stated results. For <implementing partner>, the plan describes the process for monitoring, evaluating, and learning from implementation to adapt and achieve results. For USAID, it ensures adequate information is available for activity management and that data collection is consistent with data and learning needs of the Project MEL Plan, the Mission's Performance Management Plan (PMP), and the Mission's annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR).*

### Activity Theory of Change and Logic Model

Include a summary description of the activity's theory of change from activity planning documents. Typically, this will include information on:

- The context in which the development problem is situated;
- If-then (causal) outcomes needed to achieve the desired change;
- Major interventions that the activity will undertake to catalyze these outcomes; and
- Key assumptions that underlie the success of this theory.

Insert a graphic of the activity logic model. You may choose to embed descriptions of monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts that correspond to various components of the logic model.

A logic model is often used as a facilitation tool during the design process. Logic models serve as a snapshot or approximation of the overall theory of change, but do not include all the elements of a complete theory of change.

There are many types of logic models, including but not limited to a results framework, logical framework (logframe), results chains, and local actor-oriented models, among others. IPs may use whatever logic model they are most comfortable with, and which they feel best represents their activity. Two common logical models are the Results Framework and Logframe (or logical framework). Additional information on logic models for USAID activities can be found in the [How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model \(and its Associated Theory of Change\)](#).

## 2.2 Monitoring Plan

USAID Missions comprehensively monitor the performance of their activities and the context in which they operate. Each IP's Activity MEL Plan must include performance indicators and should include context indicators, but should also look beyond indicators to incorporate other monitoring approaches. Context monitoring tracks the assumptions or risks defined in the logic model. In other words, it monitors the conditions beyond the project's control that may affect implementation.<sup>1</sup> Other approaches can provide qualitative insights, data collection on a more ad hoc basis, or more in-depth exploration of how results are achieved. The monitoring plan should explain each monitoring approach used and associate it with specific results from the activity's logic model.

### Performance Monitoring

Describe the efforts that the activity will monitor to detect progress towards the results included in the activity's logical model, such as the objectives included in the Results Framework. This should include monitoring the quantity, quality, and timeliness of outputs and relevant outcomes to which the activity is expected to contribute. Efforts to monitor performance may include a range of quantitative and qualitative methods such as surveys, tracking of third-party indicators, direct observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, expert panels, and administrative record keeping.

List in a summary table in Annex I all performance indicators that the activity will report to USAID, the corresponding results that the indicators intend to measure, and other relevant information about these performance indicators, including baselines and targets. Include all performance indicators required or requested by USAID and all additional performance indicators deemed necessary by the activity for monitoring and reporting on progress. A [Performance indicator Reference Sheet \(PIRS\)](#) for each performance indicator should be attached in Annex II.

Some guidance for performance monitoring are provided below:

#### *Performance Monitoring Indicators*

Performance indicators are required for each of the activity's DOs. The number of indicators should be sufficient to determine the achievement of intended objectives. Preferably, there should not be more than three performance indicators per result or objective. The specific indicator language is critical to ensure that the indicators – as currently worded – measure the results with which they are associated.

Each performance indicator should directly link to a result. Indicators should also be worded as specifically as possible using unambiguous terms (e.g., “achieved” is better than “addressed”).

Important tips when selecting indicators:<sup>2</sup>

- Key Results are significant outputs and outcomes relevant for management and oversight. They must be monitored using performance indicators, but not all expected results require indicators.
- Selected indicators should strike a balance between the costs associated with collecting data for each indicator and the indicator's utility for activity management.
- Selected indicators should reasonably meet USAID data quality standards of validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness.

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<sup>1</sup> USAID How-To Note: Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan

<sup>2</sup> USAID How-To Note: Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan

- Consider the entire life of the activity, including indicators that are not relevant until near the end of implementation, such as indicators monitoring higher-level results.

Guidance on the use of different types of indicators follows.

**Standard indicators.** Standard foreign assistance indicators were developed to measure and illustrate what foreign assistance accomplishes. Standard foreign assistance indicators measure both the outputs directly attributable to the U.S. government as well as outcomes to which the U.S. government contributes.<sup>3</sup> The COR/AOR should inform IPs of any required standard indicators that must be included for reporting before the IP develops its Activity MEL Plan, e.g., including standard indicators and indicators required to measure earmarked funding, such as for biodiversity activities. The AOR/COR should insert those indicators here and include the PIRS definitions as well. This section also should describe what a standard indicator is.

**Performance indicators.** Indicators should be written in indicator language that is measurable and unambiguous and that follows USAID guidance for validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness. Where indicators are reported “up” to the DO or Mission PMP levels, they must have the same definition and collection and calculation methodologies as the higher-level indicators, and the same as indicators of any other activity that contributes to these.

*Note: Performance indicators may include Standard Indicators and Custom Indicators that are developed by IPs for specific cases for the activity monitoring and evaluation purpose.*

### **Non-Indicator Performance Monitoring**

In addition to common numeric performance indicators, IPs should also consider the use of measurement systems that measure progress or the achievement of key milestones or events. For example, when working on policy change programs it may be appropriate to develop a policy reform scale to document milestone achievements in the process.

#### Example: Policy Reform Monitoring

The system and measurements must be user-friendly, in this case providing an understanding of the status of the relevant policy. This could be done by a system that:

- Describes the stages used for rating progress toward a policy’s approval.
- Follows the reform process through completion of policy *implementation*.
- Describes the methodology:
  - Policy reform measurement systems often include attention to the scale or importance of key stages (sometimes weighted for significance), a forecast of key events, and/or identification of milestones and implementation actions (enactment of the policy, regulation or reform). Below is an example of a policy reform measurement system.

The following box is an example of using a system of weighted benchmarks for tracking and reporting progress in policy reform. Under such a system, the significance of different milestones is weighted as per the importance of their contribution to the overall desired change.

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<sup>3</sup> Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators, US Department of State <https://www.state.gov/ff/indicators/>

Key Phases	Weight Assigned
1. Identification and analysis of the problem	10%
2. Elaboration of proposed interventions to address the problem	10%
3. Dialog, lobbying, public discussion, validation of the proposal	20%
4. Adoption through decree, regulation, legislation, or creation of an implementing team, unit, office, or organization	20%
5. Implementation or enforcement through concrete action	40%

Example: Training Results and Institutional Development

Common measurement systems or scales exist for measuring the results of training (e.g., the Kirkpatrick Model) and for measuring institutional development (e.g., USAID’s Organizational Improvement Index). Below is an example of the Kirkpatrick training measurement framework and the levels of learning and application that are measured.

Level	Description	Measurement Method
1	Satisfaction with training	“Smile sheet” satisfaction survey at the end of training
2	Learning has occurred	Pre- and post-tests of training content
3	Learning is being applied	Surveys of learner or learner’s supervisor, typically 3—6 months after training
4	Application of learning has led to desired organizational outcome	Difficult to measure, surveys, focus groups, assessments

### Context Monitoring

Describe the efforts that the activity will undertake to monitor the conditions and external factors relevant to activity implementation, including environmental, economic, social, or political factors, programmatic assumptions, and operational context. Efforts to monitor context may include a range of quantitative and qualitative methods such as surveys, direct observation, tracking of third-party indicators, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, expert panels, administrative record keeping.

If the activity is planning to track context indicators, these should be reported in the summary list of indicators in Annex I. Context Indicator Reference Sheets (CIRS) may be included in Annex II.

### Cross-cutting Issues

Describe any relevant cross-cutting themes. Common cross-cutting issues in USAID programs include: 1) gender; 2) sustainability; 3) science, technology, innovation and partnerships (STIP); and 4) support for local institutions. However, for an Activity MEL Plan, only cross-cutting issues that are critical to advancing the achievement of activity’s goal should be included.

An activity description should describe how gender aspects will be addressed in the Activity MEL Plan. At a minimum, all indicators that could have gender aspects should be sex-disaggregated in the collection, analysis, and reporting of the data. This is, in the first instance, anything having to do with

people involved in the activities as beneficiaries, such as farmers, owners, workers, students, trainees, and heads of households.

USAID conducts mandatory Gender Assessments when developing projects/activities. This guidance is evolving and the latest version from ADS, How-To Notes, or another official source should be consulted.

When activities are intended to have a specific achievement related to gender (or for other target groups) the indicators and expected results should clearly address this. For example:

- # of new female business owners (not # of new businesses owners disaggregated by sex)

But, even where activities are not obviously targeted toward distinct groups, IPs should attempt to look deeper to examine if there could be disparate effects on different sexes as a result. For example:

- (May be obvious) Would improving access to basic education have a greater effect on the lives of girls/women and, if so, how? How would this be measured?
- (Less obvious) Would a change in interest rates or fiscal policies affect the lives of women more than men? If so, how? And how measured?

## 2.3 Evaluation Plan

### Internal Evaluations

This section of the MEL plan identifies all evaluations that the IP plans to manage over the life of the activity. Internal evaluations are evaluations that are conducted by the activity implementer or sub-contracted by the activity implementer. Internal evaluations are not required, but IPs may choose to conduct an internal evaluation.

For each internal evaluation, the plan should include (at minimum):

- the type of evaluation (performance or impact);
- purpose and expected use;
- evaluation questions;
- estimated budget;
- planned start date; and
- estimated completion date.

The evaluation plan should also clarify the expected level of USAID involvement, such as reviewing an evaluation statement of work (SOW) or draft report.

The [USAID evaluation toolkit](#) includes an [evaluation plan template](#) that may be adapted for use in this section.

### Plans for Collaborating with External Evaluators

It is USAID's responsibility to inform the implementing partner if an external evaluation of the activity is planned. An external evaluation is an evaluation that is contracted directly by USAID. If such an evaluation is planned, this section may explain how the implementer will interact with the evaluation team to support the external evaluation (e.g., providing monitoring data, responding to data collection efforts, or validating findings) and how evaluation findings will be used for management decisions.

## 2.4 Learning Agenda

### Overview

With reference to the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) toolkit in the USAID's Learning Lab, a learning agenda includes: (1) a set of questions addressing critical knowledge gaps; (2) a set of associated activities to answer them; and (3) products aimed at disseminating findings and designed with usage and application in mind. A learning agenda can help you:

- Test and explore assumptions and hypotheses throughout implementation and stay open to the possibility that your assumptions and hypotheses are not accurate;
- Fill knowledge gaps that remain during implementation start-up; and
- Make more informed decisions and support making your work more effective and efficient.

A learning agenda can also help guide performance management planning by setting knowledge and information priorities. For example, a learning agenda can assist with prioritizing evaluations and research activities as well as in determining key indicators.

A learning agenda can also be a useful process through which to collaborate with peers and colleagues, fill gaps in knowledge, and generate new evidence that can then be used to adapt our work. Ideally, you should develop a learning agenda during the design phase of a strategy, project, or activity, after you have developed a results framework or development hypotheses. At the strategy (CDCS) level, a learning agenda can form part of the Mission's required CLA Plan. The same is true for required MEL Plans at the project and activity levels. Whatever the level, in formulating a learning agenda, the goal is to create a list of prioritized learning questions that, when answered, will help you work more effectively and make better, more informed decisions. To do so, it is important to involve both the generators of knowledge and the users (e.g., program staff, implementing partners, monitoring and evaluation staff, and decision makers).

## 2. Learning Agenda Development

A basic process for a learning agenda is outlined below.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1. Set the context.

- Determine how this fits in the bigger picture.** Determine at what level (activity, project, or strategy) the learning agenda will be used. If it is for a specific activity or project, associate the activity with the project or strategy within which it falls. If the learning agenda is at the strategy level, it can be connected to USAID's overall goal and/or relevant host government goals. Making these connections at the outset ensures that learning at each level remains aligned. It may also help you determine the internal and external stakeholders you should engage to develop the learning agenda.
- Review/clarify the theory of change.** The development hypothesis at the strategy level or the theories of change at the project and activity level are the starting points for developing a learning agenda. Review whether the theories of change are still valid, and identify assumptions embedded within the theory. Articulate the theory of change in an 'if-then' statement if that has not already been done.

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<sup>4</sup> USAID Learning Lab: *Establishing a Learning Agenda and Learning Agenda Template*  
<https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/establishing-learning-agenda-and-learning-agenda-template>.

**2.2. Develop and prioritize learning questions.** The process for developing learning questions is an opportunity to be intentionally curious about our activities, projects, and strategies. When developing learning questions, think about key decision points that will likely arise during planning and implementation. What questions, if answered, would help you make better, more informed decisions at these key points? This reminds us that learning is not the end goal, but a means by which we achieve our development outcomes more effectively and efficiently. There are three main types of learning questions that can be incorporated into a learning agenda:

***Types and Examples of Learning Questions from USAID Missions***

<b>Types</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<i>Theories of Change</i>	Test and explore theories of change	<i>USAID/Uganda Theory of Change:</i> If Ugandans have a strong health system and high-quality service delivery that is accessible, then they will use health services and Ugandans will become healthier.  <i>Learning Question:</i> In what ways does the strengthening of Uganda’s health systems improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health services in the country?
<i>Technical Evidence Base</i>	Fill critical gaps in our technical understanding	<i>USAID/Pakistan:</i> What are the barriers to women receiving higher education scholarships provided by USAID/Pakistan’s Merit & Needs Based Scholarship Program?
<i>Scenario Planning</i>	Develop scenarios and identify “game changers”	<i>USAID/DRC:</i> What, if any, unanticipated game changers developed during the life of the country strategy and impacted results?  Other examples: What if conflict worsens? How will we adjust approaches? What if a specific law passes? How can we support targeted groups?

**2.3. Plan and resource learning activities.** Learning activities are how we generate, analyze, and synthesize learning to answer our priority learning questions. There are several types of learning activities, including:

- Situational analyses, including political economy, sustainability, conflict, etc., as well as special studies.
- Performance and impact evaluations.
- Monitoring performance data, including establishing regular feedback loops with stakeholders and reviewing context indicators.
- Literature reviews or syntheses of existing research.
- Generating and capturing tacit and experiential knowledge through facilitated dialogues and other participatory methods, including before action reviews, after action reviews, mid-course reviews, regular reflection exercises, and peer assists.

Determine what mix of learning activities could best help you answer learning questions. In determining priority learning activities, consider when learning is needed (and at what frequency) to inform key decisions. Additionally, ensure that learning activities align with available resources.

### 3. Important Tips<sup>5</sup>

- **Stay open and curious.** Be open to the possibility that your development hypothesis/theory of change could be wrong.
- **Collaborate with peers.** Learning agendas provide opportunities to engage in iterative, consultative processes that can foster engagement and buy-in, enhance learning agenda relevance and use, and facilitate coordination and collaboration. However, it is also important to know when and how to limit consensus-building to keep efforts moving forward and avoid “consensus fatigue”.
- **Engage with external stakeholders, especially local knowledge sources.** Collaboration is critical in establishing and implementing learning agendas. Bringing stakeholders into the design process will improve the quality of the learning questions and increase stakeholders’ buy-in and willingness to contribute to implementation of learning activities. Moreover, checking whether other stakeholders have already explored your learning questions will help you avoid reinvestigating a question that has already been adequately explored.
- **Include learning activities that go beyond traditional M&E.** Learning for continuous improvement often requires multiple knowledge sources. An IP’s learning agenda will often include monitoring and evaluation activities, but may also include activities like in-person group seminars and workshops, formal presentations among working groups and communities of practice, and the collation and dissemination of case studies and stories related to tacit knowledge and experiences.
- **Keep your learning agenda alive.** As you begin to answer your learning questions, further questions may be sparked, leading the team to question the theory of change, adjust learning questions, or modify learning activities. By evaluating your learning agenda periodically, you can ensure its continued relevance.

## 2.5 Data Management

This section explains how data will be managed at all stages, from collection to reporting. If several organizations are jointly managing the activity, this section of the Activity MEL Plan should touch on how data will be consistently handled across activity partners to ensure a high quality of aggregated data.

### Data Collection

Summarize the data collection methods included in the PIRs or evaluation plans and explain the methods and frequency with which data will be gathered, including potential limitations or challenges. Clarify disaggregation needs and whether data collection methods will result in disaggregated data.

### Data Quality Assurance

Define the procedures to verify and validate the measures of performance, addressing the five data quality standards:

- **Validity:** The data should clearly and adequately represent the intended result.
- **Integrity:** The data should have safeguards to minimize the risk of transcription error or data manipulation.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

- Precision: The data should have a sufficient level of detail to permit management decision-making.
- Reliability: The data should reflect stable and consistent collection processes and analysis methods over time.
- Timeliness: Data should be available at a useful frequency, be current, and timely enough to influence management decision-making.)

If USAID has recently conducted a Data Quality Assessment of indicators included in this plan, include the findings from the DQA and note whether any mitigating actions are being taken to improve data quality.

## Data Storage

Describe the systems and formats in which data will be stored and processes for sharing knowledge internally and externally.

## Data Security

Describe data security protocols for ensuring that information is being safeguarded during storage and transferred to USAID. In particular, describe methods for protecting personally identifiable information (PII).

## Data Analysis and Use

Describe how data will be analyzed and used. If specific software will be employed for this purpose, it may be useful to identify it by name or function.

## 2.6 Roles, Responsibilities, and Schedule

Provide clear and precise descriptions of the Activity's MEL Plan structures, functions, and capabilities, i.e., which staff/position(s) has what type/level of responsibilities for MEL at different implementation levels, and their competencies. Ways to address issues identified should be provided (e.g., plan for staff MEL capacity strengthening, partnership with MEL organization(s) to strengthen the MEL system, etc.).

*Sample text:*

**Implementing the Activity MEL Plan.** *At the start of the project, the MEL Specialist will be the primary person responsible for implementing the MEL plan reported here. He/she will also be responsible for building the capacity of all program staff, and for reporting and supervising general monitoring and evaluation approaches, practices, and tools. The MEL Specialist will cooperate closely with the Vietnam Evaluation, Monitoring and Survey Services (VEMSS) project on the technical level, ensuring that indicators and information are reported as needed by USAID/Vietnam and the AOR.*

**Information Management.** *With reference to ADS 201.3.5.7, [Name of Activity] supports the Mission's efforts to maintain a performance monitoring information system that holds performance indicator data, including data collected by this Activity MEL plan. [A designated staff member] will regularly provide training-related information to TraiNet.*

**MEL Oversight.** *The Chief of Party (COP) will have responsibility for overseeing MEL, assuring that the work of the MEL Specialist meets overall project needs and responds to Mission requests for information. Missions*

in high-visibility locations such as Vietnam have frequent “data calls” and information requests, so assuring that our responses are policy- and decision-relevant is important.

**Home Office Support.** The [name of activity] receives technical support from the home office (HO) MEL staff. [Name of IM awardee] in Washington has assigned a long-term MEL expert to the project. His/her most essential services or responsibilities will be to ensure that high standards are maintained, and activities are consistent with best practices in the field. From project start-up, the HO provides specialized assistance in finalizing the MEL Plan and offers specialized training to the MEL team, when needed.

This section should also describe the various monitoring, evaluation, and learning reports (including individual and recurring reports) that will be provided to USAID during the life of the project. Include general information on the content and how information will be transmitted to USAID (for instance, through a partner portal or as part of a quarterly report submission). A table may be a useful way to summarize anticipated reports and related information.

### Schedule of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Reports to USAID

Report	Frequency	Transmission to USAID	Description of Content

## 2.7 Resources

Specify the budget allocated to monitoring, evaluation, and learning by listing the tasks, estimated costs, and proportion of the budget.

## 2.8 Change Log

The Activity MEL Plan should indicate adjustments made to the activity in response to new information and changes in context. This section includes a table to describe the changes that are made to the Activity MEL plan over time.

Date	Change by:	Change to:	Description of change:
Effective date of change	Person who made the change	Section of the Activity MEL plan changed. If an indicator has been changed, include the indicator number.	Summarize the change that was made to the Activity MEL Plan and the reason the change was made.

### 3. ANNEX: LINKS TO USAID LEARNING LAB REFERENCE MATERIALS

USAID's **ADS Chapter 201** <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201>

USAID Learning Lab, **How-To Note: Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning (MEL) Plan** [https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/cleared\\_-\\_how-to\\_note\\_-\\_activity\\_mel\\_plan\\_sep2017.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/cleared_-_how-to_note_-_activity_mel_plan_sep2017.pdf)

USAID Learning Lab, **How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model (and its Associated Theory of Change)** [https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/project\\_logic\\_model\\_how\\_to\\_note\\_final\\_sep1.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/project_logic_model_how_to_note_final_sep1.pdf)

USAID Learning Lab, **Recommended Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) and guidelines** <https://usaidlearninglab.org/monitoring-toolkit?tab=4&subtab=4>

USAID Learning Lab, **Monitoring Toolkit** <https://usaidlearninglab.org/monitoring-toolkit?tab=1>

USAID Learning Lab, **Evaluation Toolkit** <https://usaidlearninglab.org/evaluation-toolkit?tab=4&subtab=5>

USAID Learning Lab, **Learning Toolkit** <https://usaidlearninglab.org/cla-toolkit>