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ProjectStarter
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DESKTOP GUIDE TO THE PROJECTSTARTER TOOLKIT

E3 BUREAU'S TOOL FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING OF
TRADE FACILITATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

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This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Molly Hageboeck and Stephanie Monschein, Management Systems International, with Dawn Sword, Serendipity Creative LLC, under the Business Environments for Agile Markets (BEAM) Task Order, implemented by CARANA Corporation.

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Principal Author: Molly Hageboeck, Management Systems International

Chief of Party: Erin M. Endean, CARANA Corporation

Contracting Officer's Representative: Paul J. Fekete

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Preface

Trade has long been a focus of USAID programming centered on economic growth. Since the start of the Doha Development Round of global trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization in 2001, USAID and other developed countries have increased their support for trade capacity building (TCB) in developing countries; the focus of this support has been on helping host countries and their stakeholders participate more effectively in trade negotiations, implement resulting commitments, respond to new trade opportunities, and transition to a more open and competitive trade environment.

The USG has made strides in evaluating the effects of its TCB assistance. In 2005, USAID launched a USG-wide cross-cutting evaluation of TCB assistance, producing a profile of USG TCB investments as well as a subsequent in-depth evaluation of USAID's TCB portfolio, published in 2010 as: *From Aid to Trade: Delivering Results*. USAID also designed and delivered a pilot training program on monitoring and evaluation specifically for trade-related projects. Those efforts have been further refined and updated in the ProjectStarter toolkit (<http://usaidprojectstarter.org/>), a web-based monitoring, evaluation and learning resource for USAID staff and its implementing partners in developing countries introduced by USAID in 2013. ProjectStarter reflected substantial advances in USAID's overall monitoring, evaluation and learning framework as well as in USAID guidance and tools. The ProjectStarter toolkit also compiles and systematically organizes a substantial set of resources specific to trade capacity building.

ProjectStarter, was developed for USAID at the request of Paul Fekete, Senior International Trade Advisor, in USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3) and Virginia Brown, the Director of the Office of Trade and Regulatory Reform (TRR) in E3, which funded the tool's development. Without their foresight and the ongoing support and guidance of other E3 colleagues, including Lita Echiverri, E3/TRR's Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor, the vast array of resources on this site would never have been made easily accessible to development practitioners worldwide through this website. We deeply appreciate their commitment and support.

Erin Endean, CARANA Corporation directed the development of ProjectStarter under the Business Environments for Agile Markets (BEAM) project, for which she serves as Chief of Party. Molly Hageboeck and Stephanie Monschein, Management Systems International (MSI), conceptualized and developed the technical content for the toolkit and Dawn Sword, Serendipity Creative LLC, designed and developed the ProjectStarter website.

Introduction

At the start of this decade, USAID challenged itself to significantly enhance its capacity to design and deliver development results, thus increasing the likelihood of achieving the goals set forth in USAID's Policy Framework for 2011-2015. Meeting this challenge is leading USAID to adopt a more evidence-based approach to design, paired with active learning strategies that build on the systematic monitoring of program and project performance and more frequent and rigorous evaluations. This volume introduces a self-guided, web-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) toolkit known as ProjectStarter (<http://usaidprojectstarter.org/>), developed by the Office of Trade and Regulatory Reform, Bureau of Economic Growth, Education, and Environment, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help its staff and partners respond to these challenges.



USAID designs and manages foreign assistance interventions consistent with its policy framework through a program cycle that includes a three to five-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) which serves as the framework for project design and implementation. USAID embeds monitoring and evaluation considerations throughout this cycle. Key features of the toolkit include:

- Quick access to up-to-date USAID guidance on M&E in the program cycle;
- Editable templates to support the completion of M&E tasks for USAID programs, projects and supporting activities;
- Internal and external links to additional resources that support website pages;
- An intuitive book-like structure that can be used for self-training by those users who are new to USAID; and
- Quick access to any aspect of the toolkit through its detailed sitemap and resource repository.

Consistent with its user focus, the toolkit's menu structure helps you access information and resources in a several distinct ways:

USAID M&E Toolkit Menu Bar

Home	Program Cycle	M&E Pathways	Resources	Sitemap	About	Help
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- The **Home page** for this E3 M&E toolkit provides an overview of the various ways in which users can access information from the toolkit.
- USAID's web-based toolkit **Program Cycle** menu lets you access M&E guidance, examples and templates needed for the particular step in the cycle when you are developing a CDCS, or its associated Performance Management Plan. It also can be accessed if you are preparing a Project Design, or a Project M&E Plan, or if you are preparing to implement a monitoring or evaluation activity, or wish to foster learning and the utilization of M&E results. Each of these sections includes a section menu. You can go directly to menu items of interest, or you can turn pages and read a whole section.
- The **Program Cycle Roadmap** under the Program Cycle menu functions like a Table of Contents for this task-oriented section of the toolkit. Arrows on the page illustrate more than one way for readers to move between Program Cycle menu sections as they work. Throughout this one-page roadmap, titles are linked to web pages that allow you to proceed directly to pages of interest.
- The toolkit's **M&E Pathways** menu helps users who are interested in particular aspects of USAID's M&E work to focus on topics of interest to them.
 - **Monitoring pathways** focus on selecting performance indicators for a PMP that supports a CDCS or for a Project M&E Plan. In particular, it highlights setting performance baselines and targets; tools for monitoring assumptions; and processes for collecting reporting and sharing performance data and data quality assessments.
 - **Evaluation pathways** provide assistance with planning for evaluations during design and managing the evaluation process once an evaluation begins. Other evaluation pathways focus on producing high quality performance evaluations, undertaking rigorous impact evaluations, and following up of evaluations of all types.

- To support USAID’s emphasis on learning from M&E results, *learning pathways* under the this menu illustrate how USAID integrates evaluation lessons into design and helps users with planning for active learning in applying knowledge gains from M&E.
- The web-based **Resources** menu allows you to search the entire toolkit for types of material using resource category and topical tags as you would in a library. You can also quickly search for items by title or key words. In a single search, for example, you can bring forward all of the editable templates on the entire site. The graphic below illustrates the type of results a search under the Resources menu made by selecting the term “checklists” would yield.



- The **Sitemap** for the toolkit is another quick access resource. It is detailed enough to lead you directly to a topic such as baselines; help you locate a decision tree for selecting among types of impact evaluations, or find a template for creating a project Logical Framework. A copy of the Sitemap is included for your use at the back of this desktop guide.

This **Desktop Guide** is an overview of the toolkit that is meant to introduce its breadth and structure broadly to new users. You may read it on your computer screen (<http://usaidprojectstarter.org/>) or print it out for future reference. The Desktop Guide does not link electronically to specific web pages or resources in the toolkit. Still, for those readers who like having a paper copy introduction and want a complete listing of everything on site on which to make notes, this guide, including the Sitemap listing at the end, will serve an important purpose.

Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

The CDCS section of the Program Cycle menu starts with broad guidance available through links to USAID ADS 201, which outlines USAID’s strategic planning procedures under ADS 201.32 as well as procedures for developing a CDCS under ADS 201.3.3 and ADS 201.3.4. A link to USAID’s approved country CDCSs can help you understand how to apply this guidance to a range of country circumstances. This same webpage gives you quick access to foundational documents on USAID’s policy framework for 2011 to 2015, its overall economic growth strategy and its more specific strategy for building trade capacity in developing countries.

CDCS Topics in the M&E Toolkit

- Learning from Experience
- Strategy and Results Framework
- Assumptions
- Performance Monitoring Indicators
- Anticipating Evaluation Needs
- CDCS Learning Approach
- CDCS Performance Management Budget

The challenge of creating an evidence-based CDCS is examined next through a link to USAID’s webpage on evidence-based approaches in USAID as well as a link to a thoughtful paper from the U.K. Overseas Development Institute on strengthening evidence based decision-making in development agencies. This page also includes numerous links to the trade capacity building work of and evidence from other donors active in this field. Building a new CDCS strategy on evidence about past experience is an important early step in the CDCS process, and USAID guidance encourages learning from previous

USAID evaluations. Web resources in this section help you locate evaluations, meta-analyses and systematic reviews produced within and beyond USAID, covering all development assistance sectors. These pages also include links to important reviews of lessons from trade capacity building experience. For those preparing evidence reviews for a CDCS, or a project emanating from a CDCS, the

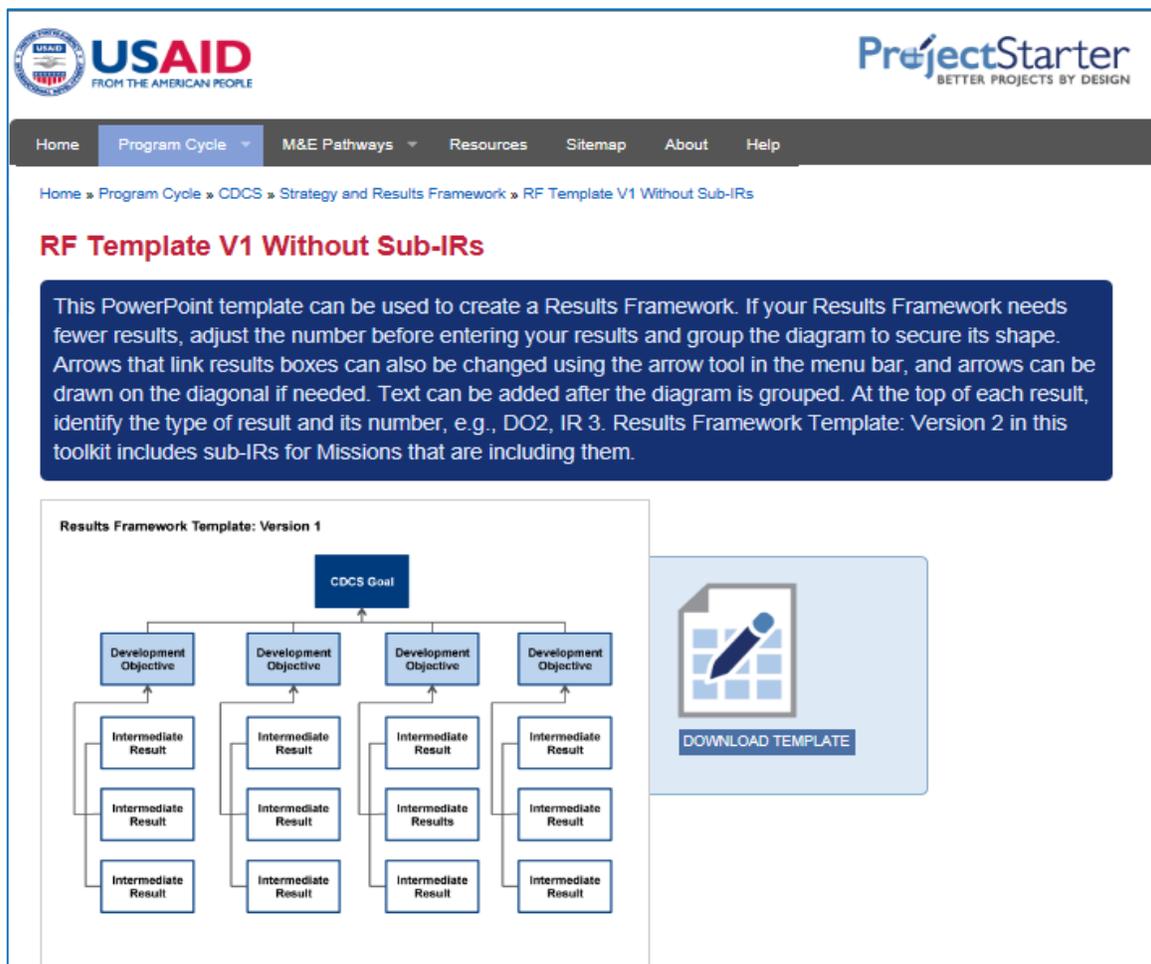
Templates

In The CDCS Section

- CDCS Evaluation Evidence Template
- Editable Trade Hierarchy of Results Template
- Blank Results Framework ,Version 1, without Sub-IRs
- Blank Results Framework ,Version 2, with Sub-IRs
- Assumptions about Non-USAID Resources Template
- Critical Assumptions Template
- Risk Analysis and Mitigation Plan Template
- CDCS Performance Indicator and Baselines Template
- CDCS Evaluation Questions Template
- Impact Evaluation Opportunities Template
- Performance Management Budget Template

website provides a template for summarizing key findings from evaluations and other studies and indicating the strength of the evidence behind those findings.

A Results Framework (RF) that summarizes a CDCS strategy is a key feature of every CDCS and the website provides online templates for developing an RF for a CDCS. Template versions exist for Results Frameworks that include Sub-IRs and for RFs that only go to the IR level. An illustrative RF indicates how various aspects of a trade strategy might be included in and contribute to broader economic growth results. Web pages in this section include examples that will help you articulate development hypotheses in a narrative form. Web resources in this section help you identify assumptions on which the success of a CDCS strategy depends. Templates are included for identifying assumptions about non-USAID resources as well as critical assumptions, as described in ADS 201. To understand and communicate the risks posed by assumptions, web pages suggest how other development agencies are weighing the risks that may affect their development strategies. We also



RF Template V1 Without Sub-IRs

This PowerPoint template can be used to create a Results Framework. If your Results Framework needs fewer results, adjust the number before entering your results and group the diagram to secure its shape. Arrows that link results boxes can also be changed using the arrow tool in the menu bar, and arrows can be drawn on the diagonal if needed. Text can be added after the diagram is grouped. At the top of each result, identify the type of result and its number, e.g., DO2, IR 3. Results Framework Template: Version 2 in this toolkit includes sub-IRs for Missions that are including them.

Results Framework Template: Version 1

The diagram illustrates a Results Framework structure. At the top is the **CDCS Goal**. Below it are four **Development Objectives**. Each Development Objective is supported by three **Intermediate Results**. Arrows indicate the flow from Intermediate Results up to Development Objectives, and from Development Objectives up to the CDCS Goal. A **DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE** button is located to the right of the diagram.

provide a template for identifying USAID's ideas about its highest risk assumptions and how they might be mitigated.

On the performance monitoring front, USAD requires that a CDCS include at least one but not more than three appropriate performance indicators, along with their baseline status, for each result included in the strategy's RF. The website responds to these demands with an explanation how standard and custom indicators can be utilized to meet this requirement. A live link to the most up-to-date list of foreign assistance standard indicators is included, as are examples of custom indicators and how to find baseline information, particularly for trade-related elements of a CDCS. To summarize this information, we provide a performance indicator and baseline data template.

A CDCS also calls for the identification of high priority evaluation questions USAID hopes to answer under every Development Objective (DO) in its RF. The website includes a template for listing these questions. In addition, USAID expects that at least one opportunity for conducting an impact evaluation under each DO in a CDCS. To facilitate this process, the toolkit includes resources that will help you understand where impact evaluations are likely to be useful and feasible. Not limited to documents, the toolkit's resources include a short video by MIT professor Esther Duflo, a founder and director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), that helps clarify what USAID's evaluation policy intends when it talks about impact evaluations of specific "interventions". The toolbox also reminds readers that opportunities a CDCS identifies for impact evaluation are not promises; rather they represent a first step towards determining the timing and nature of impact evaluations that would benefit a USAID Mission during the CDCS period. The toolkit provides a separate template for listing impact evaluation opportunities.

As USAID's program cycle guidance explains, the learning process inside USAID and with its partners fosters the utilization of M&E results as well as other relevant information. For that reason, USAID calls for the inclusion of a Learning Approach in every CDCS. This section of the website provides a range of resources to help Missions prepare their learning plans, including examples of Learning Approaches included in already approved CDCSs.

The CDCS section in the toolkit ends with resources that will help Missions estimate the costs of the monitoring, evaluation and learning activities envisioned for the CDCS period.

Performance Management Plan (PMP) for a CDCS

A PMP elaborates on the M&E intentions presented in a CDCS. During the period allocated for the PMP preparation, USAID staff identify and apply practical approaches for collecting data on performance indicators for which a CDCS did not provide baseline status information; identify approaches for monitoring critical assumptions that could

impede progress towards the achievement of CDCS; and determine when and how they might answer the evaluation questions they identified in their CDCS. A PMP elaborates on the M&E ideas presented in a CDCS. During the period allocated for the preparation of a PMP, USAID staff are expected to identify and apply practical approaches for collecting data on performance indicators for which a CDCS did not provide baseline status information. Missions are also expected to develop methods for monitoring critical assumptions that could impede progress towards the achievement of CDCS. To support PMP development, the E3 M&E toolkit prominently features the USAID guidance released in October 2013 that breaks down the process for developing a PMP, provides helpful hints for moving through these processes, and includes sample tables as well as an outline for preparing a PMP.

The E3 M&E toolkit segment on PMPs complements USAID guidance materials in this area, which are prominently featured and easy to access on the website. USAID's most up-to-date guidance on PMPs breaks down the process, provides helpful hints for working through it and includes a PMP report

PMP Topics in the M&E Toolkit

- Performance Indicator Elements
- Baselines and Targets
- Monitoring Assumptions
- PMP Evaluation Plan
- PMP Task Calendar
- PMP Budget

Templates

In The PMP Section

- PMP Performance Indicator Worksheet
- USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
- PMP Baseline and Targets Template
- Assumptions Monitoring Template
- PMP Evaluation Plan Summary Template
- PMP Evaluation Schedule – Multi-Year
- PMP Evaluation Schedule – Single Year
- PMP Task Calendar Template
- PMP Budget Template

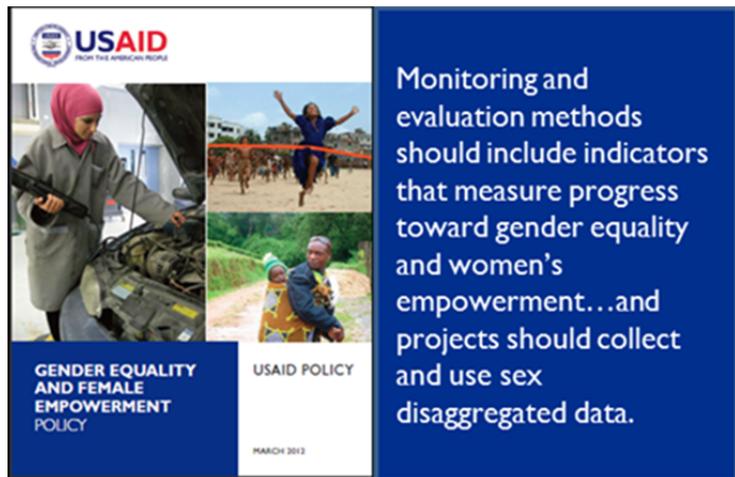
template along with sample tables that can be used. For a number of these tables, the website provides a very similar editable version that can be used. ADS 201 does not prescribe a fixed model but rather advises Missions to use approaches they find helpful for meeting PMP requirements

for a full set of performance indicators; any relevant context indicators; a set of appropriate data quality assessment procedures; and an evaluation plan.

On the monitoring side, the toolkit provides users with access to detailed guidance on selecting performance indicators, including trade-specific indicators developed by other organizations and a stand-alone handbook of trade program indicators developed by the ProjectStarter team that incorporates indicators used in existing field projects as well as indicators from other sources and organizes them by results levels commonly found in USAID trade capacity building projects. Other PMP sections of the toolkit focus on performance indicator data sources, data collection methods, baselines and targets, and gender considerations beyond sex-disaggregated data.

USAID's gender policy, for example, stresses the importance of obtaining evidence of the gender differential and gender-specific effects of USAID projects on men and women. To this end, the tool kit

page on gender includes a list of gender-sensitive indicators for economic growth projects that probe aspects of projects -- such as access, participation, benefits to individuals and overall results -- that often have a gender dimension. These sector-specific indicators complement nine mandatory gender indicators identified for Missions in USAID's most recent update of ADS 205. In addition, the sidebar on the toolkit's data disaggregation webpage



provides insights into how other donors, including the World Bank, are capturing gender-specific effects through performance monitoring and evaluation.

On the evaluation side, toolkit pages provide examples of how information required in a PMP might be displayed in tables Missions can create. For each table, we have provided an editable template that can be saved, printed or imported into a document. Sidebars provide readers with new materials such as USAID's "How To" Note on impact evaluations as well as an array of USAID TIPS, OECD guides, and other resources on evaluation designs and methods that might be helpful for addressing evaluation questions emanating from either the CDCS or identified by the Mission as it develops a PMP.



PMP Evaluation Plan Summary Template

Evaluation Focus (Whole project; project component or single intervention; special focus across projects, e.g. youth)	Project or Activity Start/End Dates (Month/Year)		Main/Priority Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Type and Projected Use (Performance, Impact)	Evaluation Timing (mid-project, final, first 18 months, etc.)	Anticipated Evaluation Start/Completion (Report Delivery) (Month/Year)		Evaluation Budget
	Start	End				Start	End	



Hide +/- ROW

Show +/- ROW

INSTRUCTIONS | PMP Evaluation Plan Summary Template

This template presents information on planned evaluations on a summary basis for a PMP. It expands on the CDCS Evaluation Questions Template provided for a CDCS and includes elements of a PMP evaluation plan described in ADS 203.3.3.1.d. The Evaluation Schedule Template for a Single Year provided in this section is useful for planning monitoring evaluations at a more detailed level.

How to Use This Template

Open the template in Adobe Reader. If you don't have Adobe Reader, you can download it free from <http://www.adobe.com>.

Enter your data into the template and save it as a PDF to your computer. You can edit the template title, row sub-headers and body cells. Use the buttons to customize the template to your needs. All of the buttons will hide when you print the PDF template directly from Adobe Reader or Acrobat, but you will need to use the picture editing crop tool to crop out the white page margins and utility buttons when you embed your template into a Microsoft Word document.

Once saved, you can edit your data in the PDF, email, print and/or embed it into a Microsoft Word document. To insert your template into a Word document, embed it as an Object or use the Windows "snip" tool to select, copy and paste the parts of the template you need. For more detailed instructions, please visit <http://projectstarter.usaid.gov/content/help>.

Hide Instructions

Show Instructions

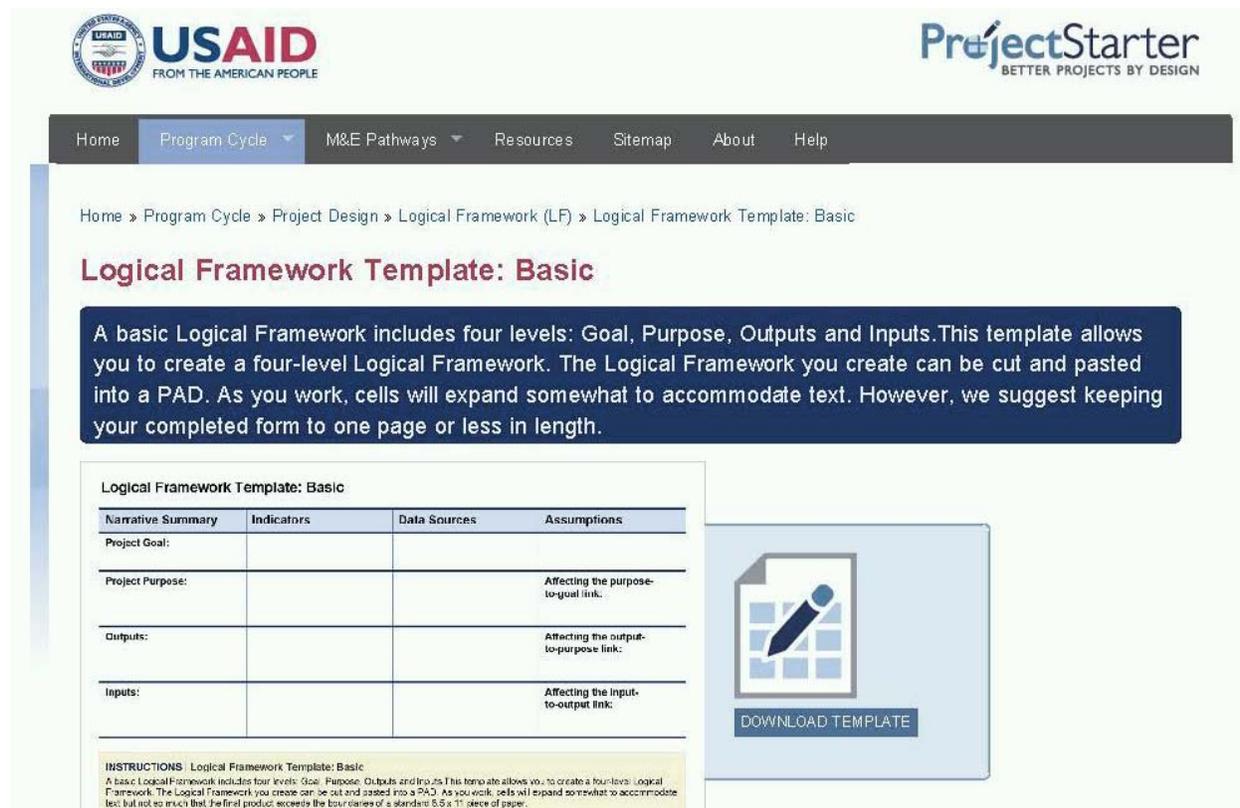


Project Design

USAID’s project design process builds on earlier steps in USAID’s program cycle. A project design extracts a subset of key objectives and associated performance indicators that support a particular Development Objective (DO) and uses them to begin populating a Logical Framework, a USAID tool that facilitates the development of a well-crafted plan for achieving those results. The E3 toolkit provides considerable support for USAID staff who are developing Logical Framework, as these hierarchy of results models serve as the foundation for project level performance monitoring and evaluation. We also provide examples of completed Logical Frameworks for several types of trade projects.

Project Design Topics in the Toolkit

- Using Evidence from Past Evaluations
- CDCS to Project Linkages
- Logical Framework (LF)
- Project Evaluation Overview
- Project Learning Approach
- M&E and Learning at the Activity Level



The screenshot shows the ProjectStarter website interface. At the top, there are logos for USAID and ProjectStarter. Below the logos is a navigation menu with options: Home, Program Cycle, M&E Pathways, Resources, Stemap, About, and Help. The main content area displays the breadcrumb path: Home » Program Cycle » Project Design » Logical Framework (LF) » Logical Framework Template: Basic. The title of the page is "Logical Framework Template: Basic". A blue callout box contains the text: "A basic Logical Framework includes four levels: Goal, Purpose, Outputs and Inputs. This template allows you to create a four-level Logical Framework. The Logical Framework you create can be cut and pasted into a PAD. As you work, cells will expand somewhat to accommodate text. However, we suggest keeping your completed form to one page or less in length." Below this is a table titled "Logical Framework Template: Basic" with four columns: Narrative Summary, Indicators, Data Sources, and Assumptions. The rows correspond to Project Goal, Project Purpose, Outputs, and Inputs. To the right of the table is a "DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE" button with a pencil icon. At the bottom, there are "INSTRUCTIONS" for the template.

Narrative Summary	Indicators	Data Sources	Assumptions
Project Goal:			
Project Purpose:			Affecting the purpose-to-goal link.
Outputs:			Affecting the output-to-purpose link.
Inputs:			Affecting the input-to-output link.

INSTRUCTIONS Logical Framework Template: Basic
A basic Logical Framework includes four levels: Goal, Purpose, Outputs and Inputs. This template allows you to create a four-level Logical Framework. The Logical Frameworks you create can be cut and pasted into a PAD. As you work, cells will expand somewhat to accommodate text but not so much that the final product exceeds the four corners of a standard 8.5x11 piece of paper.

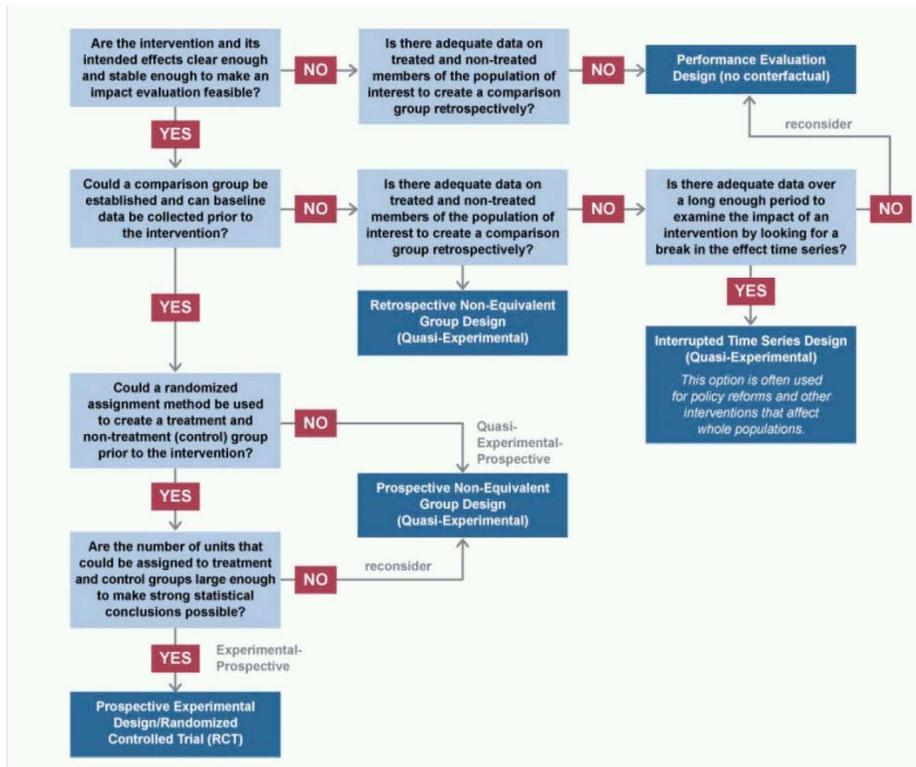
Templates in the Project Design section of the the E3 M&E Toolkit include several variations on the Logical Framework 4x4 matrix that draw on and update a set of examples USAID developed to respond to specific needs identified by its staff.

Templates

In The Project Design Section

- Project Evaluation Evidence Template
- Project Assumptions Risk Analysis Template
- Basic 4 x 4 Logical Framework Matrix Template
- Logical Framework Template – with Sub-Purposes
- Logical Framework Template – Separate Targets Column
- Logical Framework Template – Verifying Assumptions Column
- Project Evaluation Questions Template

To facilitate the further development of USAID plans for evaluations that will address priority questions at the project and DO levels, this section of the website includes a decision tree that focuses on choices among impact evaluation designs, but more broadly teaches that evaluation questions of all sorts – process, performance, impact – drive the design and methods decision process. When followed, systematic procedures for making such choices can help USAID address project requirements for a description of the type of evaluation USAID will undertake and its likely cost.



Project M&E Plan

Just as a PMP elaborates on a CDCS, an M&E Plan operationalizes USAID plans for monitoring performance and assumptions at the project level and for undertaking evaluations that foster learning and accountability at the project level. Templates included in this section customize a number of CDCS tables for the project level.

Project M&E Plan Topics in the Toolkit

- M&E Plan Monitoring Component
- M&E Plan Evaluation Component
- M&E Plan Learning Component
- M&E and Learning Plan Budget

On the monitoring side, the E3 M&E toolkit focuses heavily on Data Quality Assessment (DQA) planning as projects and activities that support them are the level at which performance data are generally collected. Since DQAs are required every three years for publicly reported indicators, scheduling is an important M&E Plan task, as a sample from the website illustrates

Project LF Level	Performance Indicator DQA Schedule	Last DQA	Next Scheduled DQA (Project Year)				
			Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Goal	Growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita – collected by E3	N/A					
Purpose	Foreign trade (X+M) as a percentage of GDP – collected by E3	N/A					
	Export sales of assisted firms		X			X	
	Domestic investment in non-traditional exports		X			X	
	FDI in non-traditional exports		X			X	
Sub-Purpose	Time to export/import (days) – from the World Bank						
	Number of documents required to export/import – from the World Bank	N/A					
	Cost of exports/imports for operators that make electronic submissions		X			X	
Outputs	Land customs border crossings fully automated		X			X	
	Number of trained customs officers at land border crossings	2011			X		
	Expedited clearance procedures operational at land customs border crossings		X			X	
	Percentages of shippers using expedited shipping, by land customs border crossing		X			X	
	Number of firms receiving USG capacity building assistance to export	2011			X		

Performance evaluations play an important role at the project level, and below it, in activities that implement activities in support of project level outcomes. For this reason, the E3 website pays special attention to the design of Performance evaluations in this

Templates

In the M&E Plan Section

- Project Indicator Template
- Project Baseline and Targets Template
- Project Indicator Reference Sheet
- Project Assumptions Monitoring Template
- Project Performance Reporting Template
- Project Evaluation Plan Summary Template
- Project M&E and Learning Budget Template

section with an emphasis on improving the quality of this type of evaluation; performance evaluations account for roughly 90% of all the evaluations USAID conducts.



The screenshot shows the USAID ProjectStarter website interface. At the top, there are logos for USAID and ProjectStarter. Below the logos is a navigation menu with options: Home, Program Cycle, M&E Pathways, Resources, Sitemap, About, and Help. The main content area is titled 'Performance Evaluation Designs' and includes a blue callout box with text about including an analysis in a Project M&E Plan. Below this, there is a paragraph about performance evaluations and a section titled 'Evaluation Questions and Timing'. On the right side, there is a 'FEATURED' section for 'RealWorld Evaluation' with a 'DOWNLOAD PDF' button and a 'CONSIDER AS WELL' section.

Implementing M&E Commitments

Once M&E planning is completed, the real work of performance monitoring and evaluation begins and the E3 M&E toolkit brings to bear tools and checklists to help USAID staff effectively manage M&E implementation within their portfolio.

On the performance monitoring side, USAID is working to install effective systems for capturing and retrieving data collected by USAID Implementing Partners. At the project and activity level, partners need guidance to ensure that the data they provide is valid and reliable. Mounted as it is on the public side of USAID's website, the E3 M&E toolkit breaks new ground in terms of the volume of support for quality M&E it provides to country partners.

On the evaluation side, this section of the E3 M&E toolkit, templates and examples as well as checklists for all stages of an evaluation are provided to help USAID staff and evaluation team comply with USAID evaluation standards promoted through the Agency's 2011 Evaluation Policy, supporting Technical and How To Notes and its one- and two-week staff training programs in evaluation.

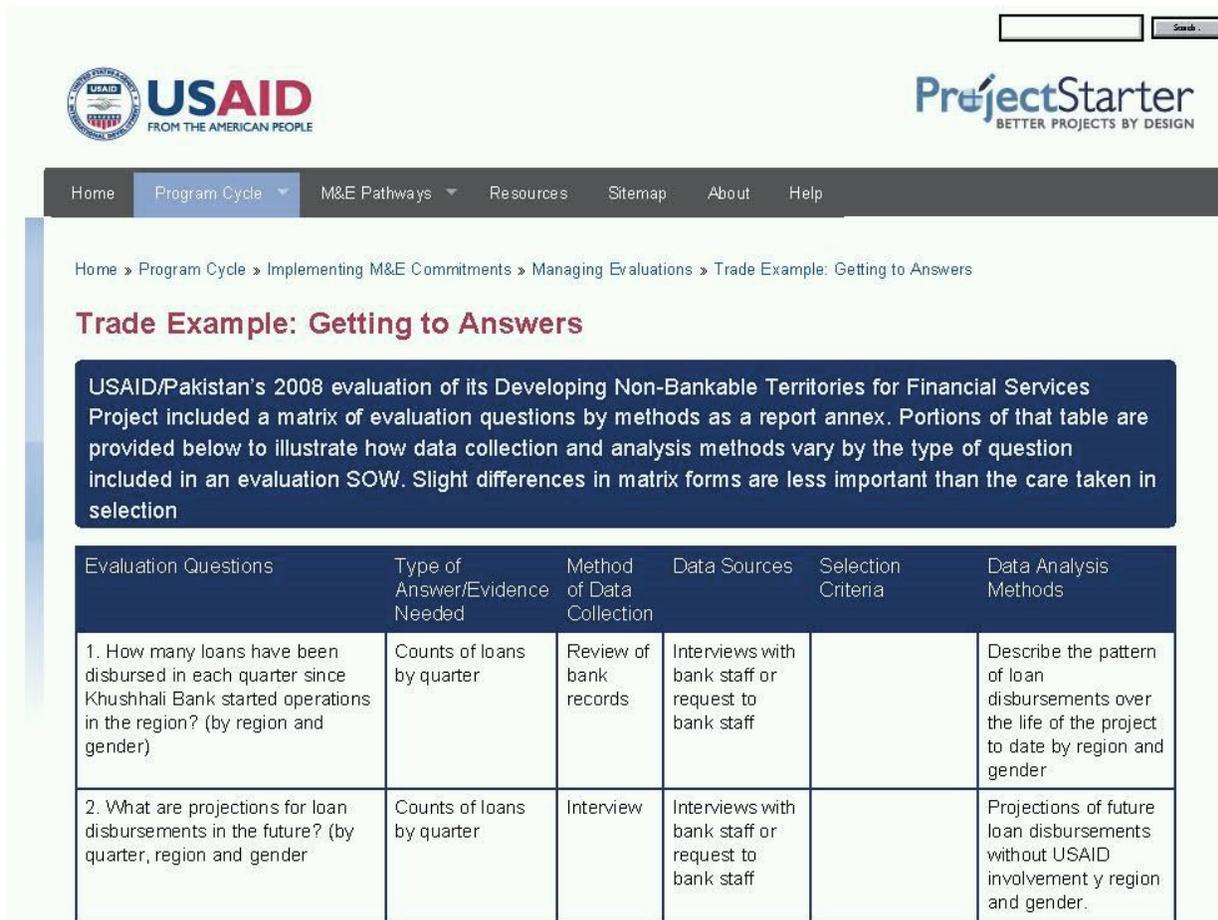
Implementing M&E Commitments Topics in the Toolkit

Monitoring Performance

- Collecting and Storing Performance Data
- Conducting DQAs
- Performance Reporting and use at the Mission level to improve on-going activities and forward planning

Managing Evaluations

- Preparing Evaluation Dissemination Plans to inform...
- Evaluation Statements of Work (SOWs)...that include ideas about design and methods in a...
- Getting to Answers matrix
- Reviewed with a SOW Checklist to produce...
- High Quality Evaluation reports...
- Tracked through an Evaluation Report Checklist used to assess both drafts and final reports



Home » Program Cycle » Implementing M&E Commitments » Managing Evaluations » Trade Example: Getting to Answers

Trade Example: Getting to Answers

USAID/Pakistan's 2008 evaluation of its Developing Non-Bankable Territories for Financial Services Project included a matrix of evaluation questions by methods as a report annex. Portions of that table are provided below to illustrate how data collection and analysis methods vary by the type of question included in an evaluation SOW. Slight differences in matrix forms are less important than the care taken in selection

Evaluation Questions	Type of Answer/Evidence Needed	Method of Data Collection	Data Sources	Selection Criteria	Data Analysis Methods
1. How many loans have been disbursed in each quarter since Khushhali Bank started operations in the region? (by region and gender)	Counts of loans by quarter	Review of bank records	Interviews with bank staff or request to bank staff		Describe the pattern of loan disbursements over the life of the project to date by region and gender
2. What are projections for loan disbursements in the future? (by quarter, region and gender)	Counts of loans by quarter	Interview	Interviews with bank staff or request to bank staff		Projections of future loan disbursements without USAID involvement y region and gender.

In this section of the E3 M&E toolkit, templates include models for preparing an evaluation SOW and an evaluation report. Guidance in the section also includes charts and graphics that help to explain how evaluations are managed in USAID. Of particular importance in this regard is the sequencing of activities involved in setting up impact evaluations for which comparison groups often need to be identified—and data needs to be collected—before an activity partner begins to deliver the intervention the impact evaluation will examine.

Templates

In The Implementing M&E Commitments Section

- Evaluation Statement of Work (SOW) Outline Template
- “Getting to Answers” Matrix Template
- USAID Evaluation Report Template

Learning from M&E to Improve Performance

The final segment of the Program Cycle menu on the website focuses on post-evaluation steps that are critical for ensuring that USAID and partners learn from their M&E investments. Periodic project reviews as well as Mission-wide portfolio reviews foster M&E utilization as do post-evaluation meetings where decisions about which recommendations to accept -- and assignments relating to their implementation -- are made. Readings and templates in this website section provide support for these kinds of follow-on activities and call to attention even broader efforts USAID is making, through Evidence Summits, to learn from experience.

Learning from M&E to Improve Performance Topics in the Toolkit

- Reflect and Act on Monitoring Feedback
- Implement Evaluation Dissemination Plans
- Hold Post-Evaluation Action Reviews
- Documenting Evaluation Use
- Meta-Analyzes, Evidence Summits and Systematic Reviews

Example of a Follow-Up Report on Post-Evaluation Action Review Decisions

Evaluation Recommendation	Responsibility for Action	Deadline for Implementation	Implementation Status
USAID and the Implementing Partner (IP) should examine and discuss with the government the idea supporting the introduction of international-standard corporate governance and corporate accounting rules and practices.	IP to develop a concept paper for discussion with the government, but limit its focus to trade-related applications.	January 2013	On schedule for delivery 1/25/13
USAID and the IP should follow up on National Assembly Members' and staff interest to expand their understanding of the working of a small open economy in the international economy and selected macroeconomic and trade management issues.	IP to organize/include quarterly seminar program for National Assembly members/staff in work plans for final phase of the activity.	FY 2013 work plan (October 2012)	Done. First quarterly seminar to be held in March 2013

M&E Pathways

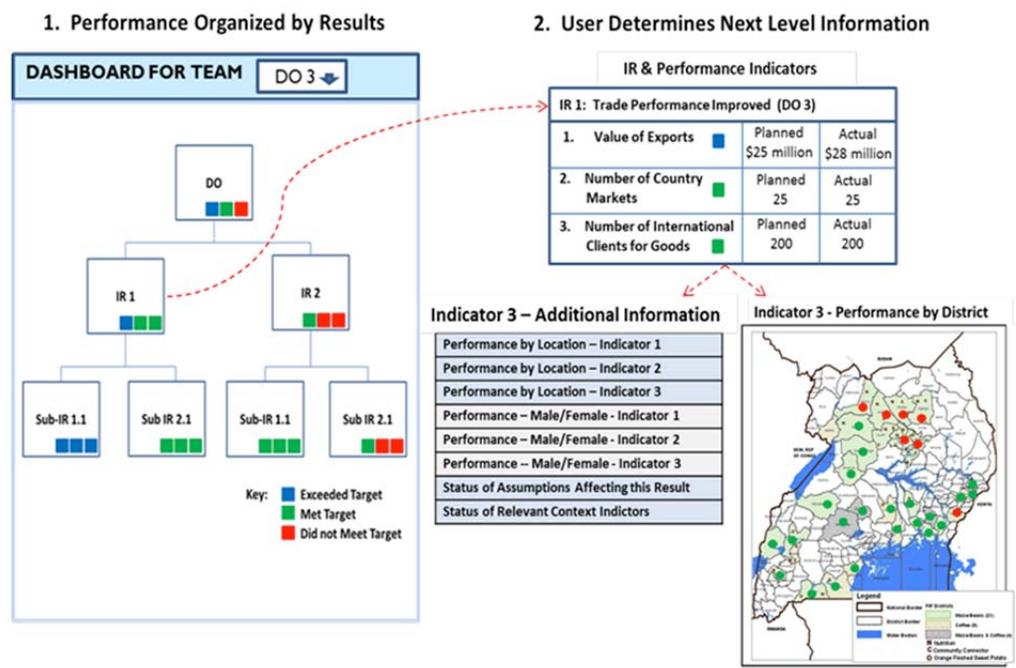
Pathways are an alternative way to access the E3 M&E toolkit resources. They are designed for users who have a particular interest in monitoring, evaluation or learning approaches (but not necessarily all three) and for users who, because they are new to USAID or are shifting their focus, view a single subject approach to the website as being useful for them. Each set of pathways is divided into topics. On each topic pathway all of the materials on the website are assembled in one place, making it easy to improve one's expertise one topic at a time.

Monitoring Pathways

There are five monitoring pathways through the E3 website, each one with a different focus. Cutting across these five pathways is the underlying question of who benefits from performance monitoring. Hopefully along these pathways you will discover new ways of using performance information and think about new audiences. As the figure below from the website suggests, technology has the potential for transforming monitoring data into an effective tool for an ever widening range of managers and stakeholders.

Monitoring Pathways

- Selecting Performance Indicators
- Performance Baselines and Targets
- Monitoring Assumptions
- Collecting Reporting and Sharing Data
- Data Quality Assessments



Evaluation Pathways

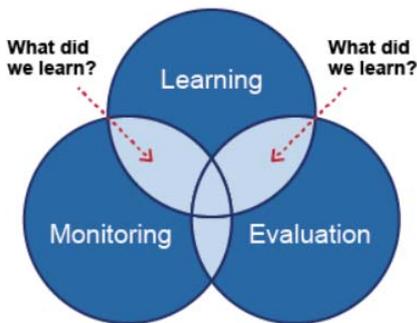
Evaluation pathways on the website are meant to help users strengthen their knowledge and skills with different stages and aspects of the evaluation process. The pathways are intended for both evaluation practitioners and managers of evaluation portfolios in a region or technical area.

Evaluation Pathways

- Planning for Evaluation During Design
- Managing the Evaluation Process
- High Quality Performance Evaluations
- Rigorous Impact Evaluations
- Following Up on Evaluations

USAID policy says that the value of evaluations should be measured by their use. Influential evaluations can improve the effectiveness of our development

Gateway to Decisions that Enhance Aid Effectiveness



interventions. Understanding and utilizing the resources available in the evaluation pathways in the website will not only build specific skills, it will also demonstrate how interrelated the stages of the evaluation process are. Report quality depends on decisions made about evaluation designs and methods. Utilization is heavily influenced by the evaluation questions that are asked; and without follow-up, the technically best evaluations will fail to influence future programming decisions to inform priorities and approaches.

Learning Pathways

Learning as an explicit responsibility of project and DO teams in USAID was introduced with the roll out of USAID’s program cycle approach to development management. A focus on learning permeates program cycle planning from the CDCS to project M&E plans. At all levels, more active and deliberate approaches are being conceptualized and tested. USAID/Uganda and several other Missions are evolving a model learning process called CLA (Collaborating, Learning and Adapting) and in Washington, USAID has invested in a Learning

Learning Pathways

- Integrating Evaluation Lessons into Design
- Planning for Active Learning in Programs and Projects
- Applying Knowledge Gains from M&E

Laboratory. This is teaching skills as well as fostering knowledge sharing. Learning pathways through the E3 M&E toolkit will familiarize users with advances in this area in USAID

Templates

In the Learning from M&E to Improve Performance Section

- Post-Evaluation Action Review Template
- Post-Evaluation Action Follow-Up Report



The screenshot shows the ProjectStarter website interface. At the top, there are logos for USAID and ProjectStarter. A navigation bar includes links for Home, Program Cycle, M&E Pathways, Resources, Sitemap, About, and Help. The main content area is titled "Learning Pathways" and features a blue box with introductory text: "Learning is integrally linked with monitoring and evaluation in the USAID Program Cycle. Learning pathways that can be accessed through this page illustrate these linkages, as they draw on M&E products to support learning agendas." Below this, three learning pathways are listed in light blue boxes: "Integrating Evaluation Lessons into Design", "Planning for Active Learning in Programs and Projects", and "Applying Knowledge Gains from M&E". To the right, a "FEATURED" section highlights a video titled "Introduction to the USAID Learning Guide" by Stacey Young. A red text box instructs users: "To choose whichever learning pathway you would like to follow, click the pathway to the left to get started." Below this, a note states: "Website pages you access through these learning pathways include subsets of website pages that can also be accessed under the Program Cycle menu, where they are organized by program cycle task. Some information included on these learning pathways is also included on monitoring and evaluation pathways under this menu. If you open a pathway that includes topics with which you are already familiar, skip over them and go on to pages that you haven't seen before. Some redundancy in pathways through the website is natural, as each path has been organized independently with the users of those particular pathways in mind. It is expected that users will select what is of interest to them, and not all users will make the same choices. All pathways are available to you. Choose what you wish, when you wish."

Sitemap

- Home
- Program Cycle
 - Program Cycle Road Map
 - CDCS
 - Learning from Experience
 - Locating Evaluations
 - Summarizing Evaluation Evidence
 - CDCS Evaluation Evidence Template (Optional)
 - Strategy and Results Framework
 - Development Hypotheses
 - Results Framework
 - Trade in CDCS Strategies
 - Illustrative Hierarchy of Trade Results
 - Trade Hierarchy of Results Template
 - RF Template V1 Without Sub-IRs
 - RF Template V2 With Sub-IRs
 - Assumptions
 - CDCS Assumptions About Non-USAID Resources Template
 - CDCS Critical Assumptions Template
 - Identifying Risky Assumptions
 - CDCS Assumptions: Risk Analysis and Mitigation Plan Template (Optional)
 - Performance Monitoring Indicators
 - Standard Indicators
 - Custom Indicators
 - Including Existing Baselines
 - CDCS Performance Indicator and Baseline Template (Optional)
 - Anticipating Evaluation Needs
 - CDCS Evaluation Questions Template
 - Opportunities for Impact Evaluation

- Impact Evaluation Opportunities Template
- CDCS Learning Approach
- CDCS Performance Management Budget
 - Performance Management Budget Template
- PMP
 - Performance Indicator Elements
 - Indicator Definition and Unit of Analysis
 - Data Disaggregation
 - Data Sources and Collection Methods
 - Data Analysis
 - Frequency, Schedule and Responsibilities
 - Data Quality and Limitations
 - PMP Performance Indicator Worksheet (Optional)
 - Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
 - Baselines and Targets
 - Baseline Values
 - Performance Targets
 - PMP Baseline and Targets Template
 - Monitoring Assumptions
 - Assumptions Monitoring Template (Optional)
 - PMP Evaluation Plan
 - Summarizing a PMP Evaluation Plan
 - PMP Evaluation Plan Summary Template
 - PMP Evaluation Schedule Multi-Year (Optional)
 - PMP Evaluation Schedule Single-Year (Optional)
 - PMP Task Calendar
 - PMP Task Calendar Template
 - PMP Budget
 - PMP Budget Template
- Project Design
 - Using Evidence from Past Evaluations
 - Project Evaluation Evidence Template

- CDCS to Project Linkages
 - Problem Trees and Objective Trees
- Logical Framework (LF)
 - LF Narrative Summary
 - LF Assumptions
 - Project Assumptions Risk Analysis Template (Optional)
 - LF Indicators
 - LF Data Sources
 - LF Trade Facilitation Example
 - Logical Framework Template: Basic
 - LF Review Checklist
 - Logical Framework Variations
 - Logical Framework Template: With Sub-Purpose
 - Logical Framework Template: Separate Targets Column
 - Logical Framework Template: Verifying Assumptions Column
 - Logical Framework Companion Tools
- Project Evaluation Overview
 - Project Evaluation Questions Template
 - Impact Evaluation Decision
 - Impact Evaluation Decision Tree
- Project Learning Approach
- M&E and Learning at the Activity Level
- Project M&E Plan
 - M&E Plan Monitoring Component
 - Project Indicator Template (Optional)
 - Project Baselines and Targets Template
 - Project Indicator Reference Sheet
 - Project Assumptions Monitoring Template (Optional)
 - Data Quality Assessment Plan
 - Reporting Project Performance
 - Project Performance Reporting Template
 - M&E Plan Evaluation Component

- Evaluation Quality Standards
- Performance Evaluation Designs
- Impact Evaluation Designs
- Impact Evaluation Start-up Plan
- Project Evaluation Plan Summary Template
- M&E Plan Learning Component
- M&E and Learning Plan Budget
 - Project M&E and Learning Budget Template
- Implementing M&E Commitments
 - Monitoring Performance
 - Collecting and Storing Performance Data
 - Conducting Data Quality Assessments
 - Data Quality Assessment Checklist
 - Inclusive Performance Reporting
 - Managing Evaluations
 - Evaluation Dissemination Plans
 - Evaluation Statement of Work (SOW)
 - Evaluation SOW Outline Template
 - Getting to Answers Matrix
 - Trade Example: Getting to Answers
 - Evaluation SOW Review Checklist
 - High Quality Evaluation Reports
 - USAID Evaluation Report Template
 - Evaluation Report Review Checklist
 - Monitoring Evaluation Quality Over Time
- Learning from M&E to Improve Performance
 - Reflect and Act on Monitoring Feedback
 - Hold Post Evaluation Action Reviews
 - Post-Evaluation Action Review Template
 - Post-Evaluation Action Follow-Up Report
 - Documenting Evaluation Use
 - Meta-Analyses, Evidence Summits and Systematic Reviews

- M&E Pathways
 - Monitoring Pathways
 - Monitoring Pathway 1: Selecting Performance Indicators
 - Monitoring Pathway 2: Performance Baselines and Targets
 - Monitoring Pathway 3: Monitoring Assumptions
 - Monitoring Pathway 4: Collecting, Reporting and Sharing Performance Data
 - Monitoring Pathway 5: Data Quality Assessments
 - Evaluation Pathways
 - Evaluation Pathway 1: Planning for Evaluation During Design
 - Evaluation Pathway 2: Managing the Evaluation Process
 - Evaluation Pathway 3: High Quality Performance Evaluations
 - Evaluation Pathway 4: Rigorous Impact Evaluations
 - Evaluation Pathway 5: Following Up on Evaluations
 - Learning Pathways
 - Learning Pathway 1: Integrating Evaluation Lessons into Design
 - Learning Pathway 2: Planning for Active Learning in Programs and Projects
 - Learning Pathway 3: Applying Knowledge Gains from M&E
- Resources
- Sitemap
- About
- Help