



MONITORING AND EVALUATION SECTOR UPDATE

October 2011

SECTOR OVERVIEW

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)—a key component of program improvement and reporting—encompasses a range of data collection, assessment, and evaluation activities, as well as information required for capacity building, data analysis, and reporting on USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) program activities and policies. USAID/OFDA partners continue to build upon existing M&E methods and practices to improve disaster response and mitigation programs.

The monitoring component of M&E is critical for effective program and grant management and also provides information to measure programs against objectives and benchmarks. The evaluation component of M&E includes information on the outcome and impact of programs, sector assessments, documentation of lessons learned, and focused research or field study projects. Although reporting is an important way to tell USAID/OFDA’s story, rigorous studies that evaluate humanitarian programs’ impact on beneficiary populations are becoming increasingly essential. These evaluations provide valuable data for strategy development and accountability by helping determine whether USAID/OFDA-funded activities result in the anticipated or intended outcome.

GLOBAL INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE PROGRAM LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The U.S. Government and USAID have demonstrated an increased interest in accountability and program reporting; accordingly, USAID/OFDA and its partners are increasingly expected to display good funding stewardship to ensure that program achievements continue to fulfill USAID/OFDA’s mandate to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the social and economic impact of disasters, while “doing no harm” to vulnerable populations. USAID has launched numerous initiatives to support the continued development of effective M&E, including improved reporting, accountability, and program learning activities. USAID/OFDA’s Evaluation and Reporting Coordinator participates in the USAID-wide Evaluation Interest Group, as well as in initiatives introduced through the Office of Learning Evaluation and Research within USAID’s Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning.

USAID/OFDA PRIORITIES AND REPORTING GUIDANCE

To fulfill its priority to provide direction on improved monitoring for reporting purposes, USAID/OFDA has developed revised guidance for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting that will be included in the next update of the USAID/OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting. USAID/OFDA has also produced indicator reference sheets and compiled additional M&E resources for dissemination with subsequent revisions of the USAID/OFDA’s Unsolicited Grant Proposal Guidelines. In addition to improving and standardizing reporting, USAID/OFDA will continue to develop reliable indicators to effectively measure and communicate achievements in meeting critical humanitarian needs worldwide.

A key priority for USAID/OFDA in Fiscal Year 2012 is the identification of achievable learning opportunities through focused evaluation, assessment, and applied research activities related to vulnerable populations and disaster risk reduction.

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