

NEW PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE

QUICK REFERENCE MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Follow these steps to develop a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system that clearly demonstrates to USAID how you are implementing and improving your activity.

1 UNDERSTAND EXPECTATIONS.

Review your award's MEL requirements. Work with your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) to determine what information will best meet both USAID's expectations and your organization's needs.

2 PREPARE YOUR MEL PLAN.

In your MEL plan, explain your activity and its overall objectives and results. Describe how you will collect and maintain data, analyze that information, and integrate what you learn into activity improvements. When developing your plan, follow such standard practices as developing indicator baselines, preparing performance indicator reference sheets, and planning for data quality assessments.

3 MEET YOUR DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION.

Submit your MEL plan for approval within 90 days of your USAID award. Once the plan is approved, update it regularly.

4 BUILD A SKILLED MEL TEAM.

You will need technical staff with the skills to develop and manage the overall MEL system and ensure the accuracy and security of data.

5 MONITOR RELEVANT INDICATORS.

Focus on the information that needs to be collected to track progress toward your activity's objectives.

- **Output indicators** measure the immediate products of your work, such as the number of households reached.
- **Outcome indicators** track longer-term changes that result from your work.

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6

GATHER THE EVIDENCE.

Use two main types of data from your MEL system for progress reports:

- **Quantitative data** is information presented as numbers to show amounts, such as workshop participation rates or number of households reached.
- **Qualitative data** includes information presented as words, images, and graphics to convey contextual details about selected approaches, as well as feedback such as stakeholder interviews and staff insights about activities.

7

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS.

Use the information in your MEL system to review what is working well and what you need to adjust. As you adapt your approach, review earlier decisions about activity planning and data collection to ensure that they continue to be effective.

8

ADAPT TO IMPROVE.

Incorporate collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) practices to strengthen the way your team learns from experiences. These practices motivate staff to seek feedback from each other and from participants to improve.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[How-To Note: Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning \(MEL\) Plan \(PDF\)](#)

[USAID Learning Lab's Monitoring Toolkit](#)

[USAID Learning Lab's Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[USAID Learning Lab's CLA Toolkit](#)

["Preparing Progress Reports" module](#)