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| usaidhorizontalsmall |
| **[ACTIVITY TITLE]** Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning Plan |

**Approved Date:** [e.g. January 1, 2018]

**Version:** [1]

**DO Number and Name:** [Insert number & name]

**IR Number and Name:** [Insert number & name]

**Sub-IR Number and Name:** [Insert number & name; Delete if not applicable]

**Activity Start and End Dates:** [e.g. January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2023]

**Total Estimated Cost:** [$xxx,xxx]

**AOR/COR/Activity Manager Name & Office:** [Insert name, office]

**Implemented by:** [Implementing partner name]

**Partners:** [Sub-contractor/sub-awardee names]

List of Abbreviations

[Insert]

Contents

[1. Introduction 2](#_Toc498673755)

[1.1 Project Theory of Change and Logic Model [Optional] 2](#_Toc498673756)

[1.2 Activity Theory of Change and Logic Model 2](#_Toc498673757)

[2. Monitoring Plan 3](#_Toc498673758)

[2.1 Performance Monitoring 3](#_Toc498673759)

[2.2 Context Monitoring 3](#_Toc498673760)

[3. Evaluation Plan 4](#_Toc498673761)

[3.1 Internal Evaluations 4](#_Toc498673762)

[3.2 Plans for Collaborating with External Evaluators 4](#_Toc498673763)

[4. Learning Plan 5](#_Toc498673764)

[5. Data Management 5](#_Toc498673765)

[5.1 Data Collection 5](#_Toc498673766)

[5.2 Data Quality Assurance 5](#_Toc498673767)

[5.3 Data Storage 5](#_Toc498673768)

[5.4 Data Security 6](#_Toc498673769)

[5.5 Data Analysis and Use 6](#_Toc498673770)

[6. Roles, ResponsIbilities, and Schedule 6](#_Toc498673771)

[7. Resources 7](#_Toc498673772)

[8. Change Log 7](#_Toc498673773)

[9. Annex I Indicator Summary Table 8](#_Toc498673774)

[10. Annex II: Indicator Reference Sheets 9](#_Toc498673775)

[11. Annex III: Data Collection Instruments 10](#_Toc498673776)

*This template provides a suggested outline and quick guidance for the development of an Activity MEL plan by a USAID implementing partner. As noted in USAID’s* ***ADS 201****:*

Activities must have an approved Activity MEL Plan in place before major implementation actions begin. Project Managers should work with the COR/AOR/GATR/Activity Manager to ensure that the Activity MEL Plan is consistent with and meets the data collection needs of the Project MEL Plan, the Mission’s PMP, and the Mission’s annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR).

For A&A awards, implementing partners must submit a proposed Activity MEL Plan to the COR/AOR in accordance with the guidelines in their award or agreement, often within 90 days of an award. In cases of partner country government agreements, the monitoring approach, including performance indicators, should be jointly agreed upon by the Mission and the host-country government entity as part of the direct agreement with the government.

*Users of this template should feel free to adapt it – including adding, removing, or changing the order of sections based on their needs. USAID activity implementers should consult with their Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) or Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) about specific requirements or recommendations for their Activity MEL plan. For additional guidance on Activity MEL plans see the USAID* [*How-to Note: Activity Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan*](https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/how-note-activity-monitoring%2C-evaluation%2C-and-learning-plan).

# Introduction

This section introduces the Activity MEL plan and provides summary background information relevant to the MEPL plan.

Start with a brief introduction of the Activity MEL plan, its purpose and intended use. You may wish to note that this is a “living document” that will be updated periodically. Updates to this plan will be provided to the COR/AOR for review and approval on a quarterly/semi-annual/annual basis or whenever revisions to the plan are proposed.

## Project Theory of Change and Logic Model [Optional]

If this activity is part of a USAID project, provide a brief summary description of the Project theory of change and include the Project Logic Model, based on information provided by USAID (if provided). Highlight where this activity fits in the Project logic model.

## Activity Theory of Change and Logic Model

Include a summary description of the activity 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;
* 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.

# Monitoring Plan

This section provides information on how the activity will monitor the performance of the activity and contextual factors that may affect project performance. For additional information on Monitoring at USAID, visit the [USAID Monitoring Toolkit](https://usaidlearninglab.org/monitoring-toolkit?tab=1).

## Performance Monitoring

Describe the efforts that the activity will undertake to monitor performance. 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.

A summary of 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, should be listed in a summary table in Annex I. 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. Performance indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) for each performance indicator should be attached in Annex II.

## 2.2 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. Effort 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, and 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.

# Evaluation Plan

## Internal Evaluations

Internal evaluations are evaluations that are conducted by the activity implementer or sub-contracted by the activity implementer. Internal evaluations are not required, but implementing partners may choose to conduct an internal evaluation.

This section of the MEL plan identifies all evaluations that the implementing partner plans to manage over the life of the activity. 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](https://usaidlearninglab.org/evaluation?tab=1) includes an [evaluation plan template](https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/multi-year-evaluation-plan-summary-and-schedule-template-0) 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.

# Learning Plan

This section explains the activity’s approach to learning from monitoring data, evaluation findings (if applicable) and other learning activities, and how it will be adapted in response to new learning and knowledge. The plan may include:

* Learning questions, based on the activity or project’s logic model or potential gaps in the technical knowledge base, and activities to explore those questions
* Knowledge capture and sharing activities, including at activity close-out
* Reflection opportunities, including information on participants and frequency
* Plans for adaptive management, based on learning and knowledge gained during implementation
* Strategic collaboration activities

For more information on learning plans, visit the [USAID CLA toolkit](https://usaidlearninglab.org/cla-toolkit).

# 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 the partners to ensure a high quality of aggregated data.

## Data Collection

Summarize the data collection methods included in the PIRSs 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 of validity, reliability, integrity, precision, and timeliness. 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 the 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.

# Roles, ResponsIbilities, and Schedule

This section provides a schedule of internal individual and recurring MEL tasks during the activity. This may be a simple matrix outlining responsible parties and timing, or a more detailed narrative, including anticipated involvement from USAID. MEL tasks to include may include data collection efforts, data quality assurance activities, special studies, learning events, and quarterly report preparation. If multiple partners are implementing an activity (such as one prime partner with one or more sub-awardees), this section should include specific tasks and identify each partner’s role and responsibility.

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 details of 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** |
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# Resources

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

# Change Log

The activity MEL plan should be adjustments are made to 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.* |
|  |  |  |  |

# Annex I Indicator Summary Table

[Indicator summary table guidance and template](https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/template-performance-indicator-summary-table)

| **Indicator** | **Type of Indicator** | **Data Source** | **Frequency** | **Unit of Measure** | **PPR** | **Baseline** | | **Endline** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Value** | **Date** | **Target** |
| *Example…* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Result****:* Improved child birth outcomes in the southern region of East Tambou | | | | | | | | | |
| *3.4.1.(a) Neonatal mortality rate (number of deaths of infants during the first 28 days of life per 1,000 live births) in child birth facilities in the southern region of East Tambou.* | *Performance/ Custom* | *Survey of child birth facility vital registration data by the MCH-Tambou Project.* | *Quarterly* | *Number per 1,000* | *Y* | *01/2016* | *55.3* | *09/2021* | *40.0* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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# Annex II: Indicator Reference Sheets

All performance indicators require a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS).

Complete [Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS)](https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/recommended-performance-indicator-reference-sheet) for all indicators in the Activity MEL Plan.

Obtain and include PIRS from the AOR/COR/Activity Manager for the Standard Foreign Assistance Indicator (F indicator) reference data.

Context indicators are not required to have a Context Indicator Reference Sheet (CIRS), but a CIRS is recommended for each context indicator. They may be attached in this annex.

# Annex III: Data Collection Instruments

For major data collection efforts, such as household surveys or expert panel review, the data collection instruments may be attached as an annex.