**General Guidance on Developing Indicators**

**Indicators are:** A quantitative or qualitative variable that represents an approximation of the characteristic, phenomenon or change of interest.

In the case of CIMMYT project management, indicators measure the extent to which the project outputs, outcomes and goals are being or have been achieved. Indicators should be:

* **Specific:** always include target group and audience, and be specific enough to show a change in or progress towards the appropriate output/outcome/goal. For example, if you are measuring adoption of a new CIMMYT technology by farmers, you will want to add the bolded qualifications to make your indicator specific enough:

*# of farmers adopting new technology*

In the above indicator, we do not know what types of farmers are targeted, where they are, what sort of technology is the focus, and whether adoption of the technology is thanks to CIMMYT’s intervention or not. Adding the bolded specifications helps to ensure that measurement is accurate and focused enough to ensure results can be attributed to your project.

*# of* ***smallholder*** *farmers* ***in x region*** *adopting new* ***CIMMYT*** *technology* ***thanks to y intervention*.**

* **Technically feasible:**  can it be done/can you assess or measure it – some results can be difficult to measure, such as results of policy change efforts or advocacy results
* **Relevant:**  the information that will be collected from monitoring your indicators should be a useful measurement that can inform project decisions and decision-making
* **Time-bound:** the indicator must be able to represent a change within the lifetime of the project or a specified time frame following project close. For example, if your project is introducing an improved seed that eventually will increase productivity and improve farmers’ income, it will not be useful to try to measure change in income in the first year of the project. You will need to allow time for distribution of the improved seed, adoption, improved yields, and then increased income. Taking into consideration how long a change would take to be visible will help you to come up with realistic and time-bound indicators.
* **Cost effective:** data collection can become very expensive and time-consuming. Indicators should be chosen keeping in mind whether or not they are worth the money and the time that it will take to collect and analyze data gleaned and to apply the results
* **Disaggregated (where necessary):** You should disaggregate your results by demographics that will inform your decision making. For example, if you are targeting young farmers, you will want to see how your project is affecting farmers of different age categories. If you are interested in supporting female farmers, you will want to know how your projects may be impacting women and men differently. Consider categories like gender, age, social status/caste, region etc.