



Strong Indicator	Weak Indicator
<p><b>Example:</b> Percent of energy produced that comes from clean energy sources</p>	<p><b>Example:</b> Sustainable decrease in GHG emissions and increased capacity in implementing clean energy regulations, policies and frameworks</p>
<p><b>Explanation:</b> This indicator is strong because it is easily defined and measured. It is unambiguous and useful to program implementers as well as the country government. The indicator closely measures the result it is intended to measure and the result is attributable to the program activities.</p>	<p><b>Explanation:</b> This is a weak indicator because (1) “sustainable” and “capacity” are not clearly defined and (2) the indicator is multidimensional.</p>

**Figure 25. Case Example, Strong vs Weak Indicator**




To use the OPUDATA tool, please click [here](#).



As Mary’s team developed the indicators, they used the OPUDATA Tool as seen [Table 7](#) to be sure the indicators developed are objective, practical, useful, direct, attributable, timely and achievable. Mary’s team will check each indicator and revise each to be sure they meet these standards. After the indicators are developed, the team will move on to the Indicator Reference Sheets in [Table 8](#).

**Figure 26. Case Example, Indicator Development Information**

 <b>CASE EXAMPLE: OPUDATA Tool</b>		
<b>Indicator:</b> <i>Percent of energy produced that comes from clean energy sources</i>		
Characteristic	Description	Yes or Needs Revision
<b>Objective</b>	Performance indicators should be unambiguous about what is being measured. They should be unidimensional, which means they should measure only one aspect at a time. Performance indicators should also be precisely defined in the PMP.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision
<b>Practical</b>	Program teams should select performance indicators for which data can be obtained within the cost and time confines of the program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision
<b>Useful for management</b>	Decision-making needs should be a key factor when selecting performance indicators. Bureaus, offices, and posts may want to reference the list of standard foreign assistance indicators to review whether any of these indicators are applicable and useful for measuring progress against the program's goals and objectives ( <b>MfR PPR Page</b> ); however, it will be necessary to create program specific indicators as well.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision
<b>Direct</b>	Performance indicators should closely track the results they are intended to measure. If a direct indicator cannot be used because of cost or other factors, a proxy indicator (an indirect measure of the result that is related by one or more assumptions) may be used to measure the result.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision
<b>Attributable to program efforts</b>	It is important that performance indicators measure changes that are clearly and reasonably caused by the program's efforts.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision
<b>Timely</b>	Performance indicators should be available when they are needed to make decisions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision
<b>Adequate</b>	Teams should have as many indicators in their PMP as are necessary and cost effective for results management and reporting purposes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Revision

**Table 7. Case Example, OPUDATA**

Creating an indicator reference sheet for each indicator is useful to refine indicators as they are being developed, and they also serve to document how each indicator should be used and interpreted by partners and other stakeholders. **Table 8** provides instructions for completing an indicator reference sheet and **Table 9** shows one completed for the case example.

## INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

Information	Instructions: To Be Completed
<b>Indicator</b>	<i>The indicator language should be concise and very clear about <u>what</u> exactly is being counted or measured and should spell out acronyms.</i>
<b>Definition</b>	<p><i>The definition explains how you will calculate the data collected to measure the change expected. Clarify everything the program design team needs to know to understand how to use this indicator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Define all potentially subjective terms in the indicator (e.g., what specifically counts as being “trained” or not for purposes of this indicator)</i></li> <li><i>Define all technical terms so non- subject matter experts can understand</i></li> <li><i>Clarify how frequently the subject of the indicator should be counted (e.g., count each person once even if they receive multiple interventions, or count each instance of the intervention)</i></li> <li><i>For “percent” indicators, define what should be counted toward the Numerator and what should be counted toward the denominator</i></li> <li><i>Clarify any minimum or maximum values or scales that are relevant for this indicator</i></li> <li><i>For milestone indicators, clarify who and what is expected to be entered in response to the indicator, such a completion date or a qualitative response about the milestone.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Linkage to Long-Term Outcomes</b>	<i>Briefly describe the relationship of the indicator to the desired long-term outcome or impact it supports. Answers might describe the indicator’s role in the underlying theory of change, the anticipated effect on longer-term outcomes resulting from a positive or negative shift in this indicator, and/or why the indicator represents a good proxy of progress toward desired goals.</i>
<b>Reporting Type</b>	<p><i>Specify one of the following units of reporting for this indicator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Number”</i></li> <li><i>“Percent”</i></li> <li><i>“Date” (Specify if it is a 2-digit month and/or a 4-digit year)</i></li> <li><i>“Qualitative Response” (Specify set response options if applicable, or very specific instructions for the desired response; note that these are for short qualitative responses of a few words with a maximum limit of 15 characters and not intended for capturing lengthy narratives.)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Use of Indicator</b>	<i>Briefly identify how this indicator will be used to monitor progress in achieving program goals and objectives. Also note if this indicator will be used to monitor progress in achieving bureau or office strategic objectives in the Functional Bureau Strategy (FBS) or Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) (or other such ongoing bureau meetings or progress reviews) and/or how this indicator is used to meet external reporting requirements (such as the name of the report in which it is used.)</i>
<b>Reporting Frequency</b>	<i>Frequency for reporting results and setting targets (i.e., quarterly, annually, every two/three/etc. years).</i>



INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEET INSTRUCTIONS	
Information	Instructions: To Be Completed
<b>Data Source</b>	<p>In order to track progress and to properly set baselines and targets, data will need to be collected. <i>Specify how and when data for this indicator will be generated in very practical terms. Include the specific acceptable method(s) by which data for this indicator are/will be/should be collected. There are two different types of data sources, including those that are specific to your program (primary data) and secondary data sources:</i></p> <p><i>Data collection tools should be easy to use for both the participant and the person responsible for analyzing the data. Suggested primary data collection tools include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre- and post-tests</li> <li>• Informal pre- and post- intervention surveys/questionnaires</li> <li>• Formal pre- and post- intervention surveys/questionnaires</li> <li>• Meeting minutes</li> <li>• Attendance sheets</li> <li>• Site visit checklists</li> <li>• Interviews (key informant and community)</li> <li>• Direct observation</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Program reports</li> </ul> <p><i>Examples of secondary data sources include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host country government reports/data</li> <li>• UN, World Bank, and other relevant data</li> <li>• Document review (reports, studies, evaluations of similar programs, etc.</li> <li>• Official government records</li> <li>• Official reports from implementing partner(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Bureau Owner(s)</b>	<p><b>Bureau, Office, or Post:</b> (provide as much organizational detail as possible, starting with the bureau and drilling down).</p> <p><b>POC:</b> Provide at least one point of contact and their name, phone, and email from the owner bureau(s) for consultation and records management purposes.</p>
<b>Disaggregate(s)</b>	<p>To disaggregate data means to break it down by subgroups. It is important to consider only the information that you need to know, as there are infinite ways to disaggregate information. Note that all people-level indicators must be sex-disaggregated. Bureaus, offices, and posts are encouraged to limit disaggregates to what is reasonable and feasible to obtain in the field.</p>

Table 8. Indicator Reference Sheet Instructions



### Tracking Gender Equality and Female Empowerment



Beneficiaries of development assistance have different needs based on economic, social and political roles, responsibilities, and entitlements. Gender social norms, laws, and institutional procedures affect the ability of males and females to participate in and benefit from development programs. It is important to understand how these differences improve or detract from the efficiency and overall impact of its programs. In order to track how effectively State Department assistance contributes to gender equality and female empowerment, PMPs should include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data. All people-level indicators should be sex-disaggregated. State Department jointly developed Gender indicators with USAID, available here: [Gender Indicators](#)




After reviewing the case example below, click [here](#) for the Indicator Reference Sheet Tool.

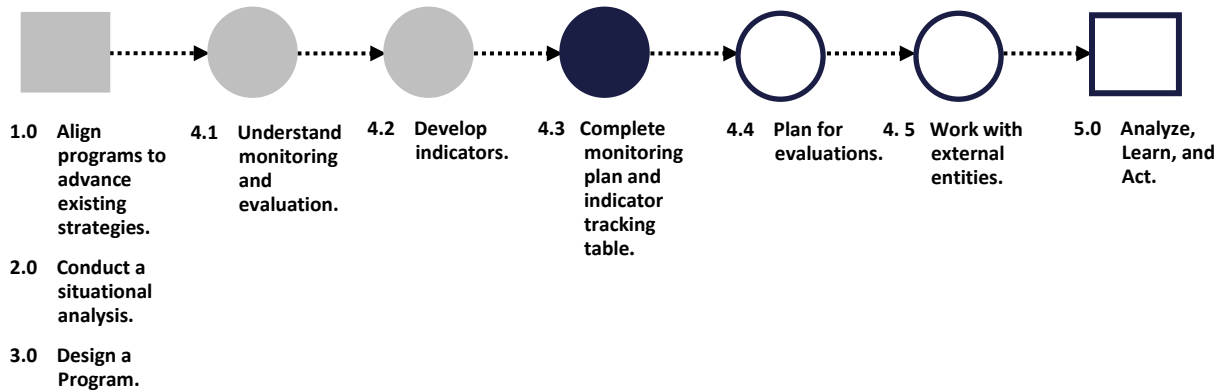


As Mary's team was developing indicators they completed Indicator Reference Sheets for each indicator they will track throughout program implementation. Indicator Reference Sheets are a critical part of the performance monitoring plan as they define the indicator, explain how data will be collected, and articulate the use of the information, and why each indicator is important. Additionally, Mary will use this information to develop her Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table.

**Figure 27. Case Example, Indicator Reference Sheet Information**

 <b>CASE EXAMPLE: Indicator Reference Sheet</b>	
Required Information	Instructions: To Be Completed
Indicator	Percent of households that obtain energy from clean sources
Definition	<p><i>This indicator measures the total number of households that obtain energy from clean sources. Clean energy options include solar, wind, biomass, and hydro.</i></p> <p><b>Numerator:</b> Number of houses that obtain energy from clean sources.  <b>Denominator:</b> Number of houses</p>
Linkage to Long-Term Outcome or Impact	<i>This links to the long-term outcomes as it indicates the success of efforts to increase supply of and demand for clean energy and will contribute to the decrease in GHG emissions as well as the overall health of the population.</i>
Reporting Type	Percentage (%)
Use of Indicator	Measure the change in clean energy usage.
Reporting Frequency	Annual
Data Source	MOI EB administrative data
Bureau Owner(s)	South Bureau
Disaggregate(s)	District, urban/rural, wealth quintiles

**Table 9. Case Example, Indicator Reference Sheet**

**STEP 4.3 COMPLETE THE MONITORING PLAN AND INDICATOR TRACKING TABLE**

The **monitoring plan and indicator tracking table** is where all of the program indicators and milestones are documented with important information about their use and their targets, as well as space for recording results. It is useful for maintaining program data and for referencing during program progress reviews.

The monitoring plan and indicator tracker has several components, some of which are drawn directly from the indicator reference sheet. The exact format of the tracker can be modified to suit your program context and needs. Each component is described below and **Table 10** shows a completed case example of the monitoring plan and indicator tracking table.

1. **Transfer Relevant Information from the Indicator Reference Sheets.** Insert the indicators, any disaggregates, and the data source information from the indicator reference sheets in **Step 4.2**.
2. **Enter Baseline Data.** A baseline value provides a basis for planning and/or assessing subsequent progress and results. This step is also vital to laying the foundation for an eventual program evaluation. The baseline value is determined from a pre-intervention assessment such as the external assessment or data collected before the start of a program, project, or process. A methodology for establishing baseline values should be developed. The baseline is frequently, but is not always zero for output indicators, and should reflect the value of the indicator prior to program activities.
3. **Set Targets.** Target values indicate how well or at what level you expect the indicator to perform for the period of performance. (No targets are set for contextual indicators.) Targets should be reasonably achievable and yet ambitious enough to meet program objectives. Consider the following when setting targets:
  - Baseline value
  - Amount of program funding
  - Number of program managers and implementers
  - Length of the program
  - Historical trends
  - Expert judgments



- Research findings
- Stakeholder expectations

4) **Determine Data Collection Frequency.** Collect data for each indicator at the frequency feasible and necessary to effectively manage and monitor progress and results, conduct internal learning, and meet external reporting or communication requirements for your program. The frequency of collection for each indicator can vary, depending on how frequently certain information is necessary or feasible to obtain.



If your project or program requires qualitative data collection this can be done using any reporting format; stories, anecdotes, photos, and quotes can be collected in the form of a report and collected on a quarterly basis or as regularly as is needed for your project or program.

#### Budgeting for Monitoring and Evaluation

Cost, time, personnel resources, and data availability are important factors to consider when determining your monitoring plan. The number of staff available for data collection and analysis, expertise required when designing and implementing data collection tools, complexity and number of indicators being collected, geography and culture, sample size, and frequency of data collection must all be taken into account when designing your program. These factors will influence what indicators you select, what data collection tools you use, and how frequently you can collect data.

When planning a program or project budget, the personnel, transportation, resources, and other costs of both monitoring and evaluation should be considered.



Click [here](#) to view the Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table.



Mary's team used the Indicator Reference Sheets to complete the Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table. They will use this table throughout the implementation of the program to track progress towards their targets. The completed Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table can be seen in [Table 10](#).

**Figure 28. Case Example, Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table Information**




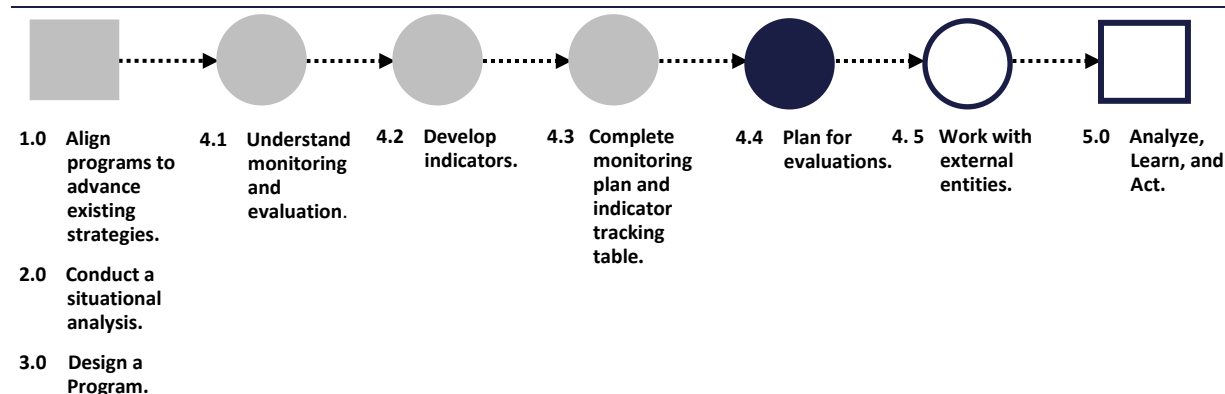
<div></div> <div>CASE EXAMPLE</div> <div>Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table</div>														
Indicator	Baseline	Data Source	Data Disaggregation	Frequency of Data Collection	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Actual (to Date)	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Target	Q12 Actual	Q3 Target	Q3 Actual	Q4 Target	Q4 Actual
Program Goal: Increase the supply of and demand for clean forms of energy as a means to decrease GHG emissions and improve health and economic outcomes.														
1.1 Percent of energy produced that comes from clean sources	TBD after baseline assessment	Government Documents	Hydro, solar, wind, biomass	Annual	TBD									
1.2 GHG emissions	TBD after baseline assessment	Government Documents	N/A	Annual	TBD									
1.3 Number of respiratory related health issues	TBD after baseline assessment	Red Cross Data	Male/Female 0-5, 6-11, 12-18, 19-35, 36+	Annual	TBD									
Objective 1: Increase capacity of the national government to create and implement regulatory frameworks and policies to promote and sustain a clean energy sector.														
1.4 Number of MOI EB personnel who complete educational exchanges	0	Program Documentation	Male/Female Position	Bi-Annual	8									
1.5 Number of MOI EB personnel who received technical assistance	0	Attendance Sheets	Male/Female Position	Quarterly	50									
1.6 Number of partnerships established	2	Signed MOUs	Civil Society, Government, Private Sector	Annual	5									
1.7 Number of policies, regulations, frameworks implemented	0	Government Documents	N/A	Annual	1									

Table 10. Case Example, Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table

**STEP 4.4: PLAN FOR EVALUATION**

Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics and outcomes of programs, projects, and processes as a basis for judgments, to improve effectiveness, and/or inform decision-makers about current and future activities. Evaluations are designed to determine relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, or impact. For a basic overview on evaluation, visit [10 Things to Know About Evaluation at the Department of State](#). **Evaluations should be planned for during the design process and considered throughout implementation.** Since they are usually conducted at mid-term and end-line, data must be collected at the beginning (baseline) of the program for comparison purposes. This section provides information on developing evaluation questions and explains the necessary information for conducting midline evaluations.

The State Department Evaluation Policy states: *All bureaus and independent offices are encouraged to conduct evaluations to improve their programs, projects, management processes, service delivery, or performance at a rate commensurate with the scale of their work, scope of their portfolio, size of their budget, etc. **At a minimum, all bureaus and independent offices should undertake at least one evaluation per fiscal year.** However, those who receive and directly manage program funds must conduct evaluations of their **large programs** once in their lifetime. Additionally, **pilot programs should be evaluated before replicating.** Bureaus and independent offices directly implementing programs should first and foremost have a program management plan in place ([Evaluation Policy](#)).*

The policy stipulates that a “large program” is one whose dollar value is equal to or exceeds the median program level for the bureau.

#### 4.4.1: Evaluation Types

There are two main types of evaluations that can be relevant to your programs, projects, or processes.<sup>6</sup>



**Performance/Process.** These evaluations focus on the performance of an intervention, diplomatic activity, management process or program, and examine its implementation, inputs, outputs, and likely outcomes. Performance evaluations focus on descriptive and normative questions:

- Did the program take off as planned?
- What problems and challenges, if any, did it face?
- Was it or is it being effectively managed?
- Did it provide planned goods and services in a timely fashion? If not, why not?
- Were the original cost estimates realistic?
- Did it meet its targets or is it likely to meet them?
- What are its expected effects and impacts?
- Is it sustainable?



**Summative/Ex- Post/Impact.** They differ from performance/process evaluations in that their focus is primarily on outcomes and impacts, and they are conducted when a program has ended or is soon to end. The essence of summative/ex-post evaluations lies in establishing that the changes have occurred as a result of the program, or at least the latter has substantially contributed to them. Summative/ex-post evaluations answer questions such as:

- What changes were observed in targeted populations, organizations or policies during and at the end of the program?
- To what extent can the observed changes be attributed to it?
- Were there unintended effects that were not anticipated at the planning stage? Were they positive or negative?
- What factors explain the intended and unintended impacts?

Sometimes impact evaluations only refer to those evaluations which use counterfactuals to measure the net impacts of a project or program. In such evaluations, two groups – treatment and control – are established either at the launch of a project or program or by using baseline data if it is available. One group receives the services and goods from the project or program (such as technical assistance, training, advice and/or financial assistance or material support) while the other does not. The overall impacts are measured by comparing the performance, conditions, or status of the two groups. Establishing control groups to generate counterfactual data must be done at the beginning with comparable groups. It is not always feasible or practical because of the advance planning required and the additional expense.

<sup>6</sup> <http://cas.state.gov/evaluation/files/2014/05/2016-Evaluation-Guidance.pdf>



Other types of evaluations include:

- **Experience Reviews, also known as Desk Reviews,** involve systematic analysis of past experience mostly based on the review of documents, reports, evaluations, and studies.
- **Meta-Evaluations** involve reviewing evaluations against a set of professional standards.
- **Organizational Assessments** document the current state and include an analysis of the bureau's business operations, policies, procedures, and personnel resources as appropriate.
- **Sector Evaluations** occur at the country, regional, or global levels. The objective of such evaluations is to examine the performance and outcomes of major projects and programs in a sector or sub-sector to draw general findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Evaluations can be conducted *internally* by someone who is in the office or bureau but who does not report to anyone in the line of management of the program under evaluation or *externally* by a hired organization outside the office, bureau or post that is not engaged in implementation of the program under evaluation. In instances where there is mutual interest, they may be undertaken collaboratively or jointly by more than one office, bureau, other USG agency, or other external entity.

For more information on types of evaluations visit the Department of State Evaluation Guidance ([Evaluation Guidance](#)). For additional evaluation training, resources, and information visit the Evaluation Page at [Resources](#) or the [Evaluation Wiki](#).

*"The most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question."*

– Peter Drucker





#### 4.4.2: Preliminarily Plan for Evaluation

Whether the evaluation is internal or external, bureaus and offices should be actively involved in evaluation planning to ensure the final product is useful. Stakeholders should be consulted to assist in prioritizing the evaluation questions. Regardless of an evaluation's scope, the planning process should involve the following steps:

- Clarify the evaluation purpose including:
  - What will be evaluated,
  - Who wants the information,
  - What they want to know, and
  - How the information will be used.
- Consider information attained from the program summary and performance management plan, such as:
  - Problem statement,
  - Goals and objectives,
  - Logic model,
  - The TOC hypotheses as a basis for identifying evaluation questions and,
  - Monitoring plan and indicator tracking table;
- Identify a small number of key questions and specific issues;
- Consider past evaluations and research that could inform project design and evaluation planning;
- Select evaluation methods that are rigorous and appropriate to the evaluation questions; they should be based on verifiable data and information that have been gathered using the standards of professional evaluation organizations;
- Plan for data collection and analysis; and
- Consider time and budgetary constraints.

#### Evaluation Questions:

Evaluation questions focus on a limited number of key points and establish the scope of an evaluation, communicating to others what the evaluation will and will not address. They guide the evaluation process and define what should be assessed. The questions the evaluation will seek to answer are aligned with clearly articulated goals and objectives of a program, project, or process and can increase the accuracy and objectivity of the evaluation by keeping it focused. Evaluation questions are answered through data collection and analysis in order to assess whether or not expected results of the program were achieved.





Generally speaking, evaluation questions are intended to address the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and/or impact of the intended program.<sup>7</sup>

- **Relevance.** To what extent are the intended outcomes of the effort still valid?
- **Effectiveness.** To what extent were the intended outcomes achieved or likely to be achieved?
- **Efficiency.** Were activities cost-efficient? Were intended outcomes achieved on time?
- **Sustainability.** To what extent are the benefits of the effort likely to continue after donor funding ceases?
- **Impact.** What happened as a result of the effort? What difference has it made in people's lives?

For more information on conducting evaluations visit the Evaluation Page at [Evaluation Questions Resource](#).

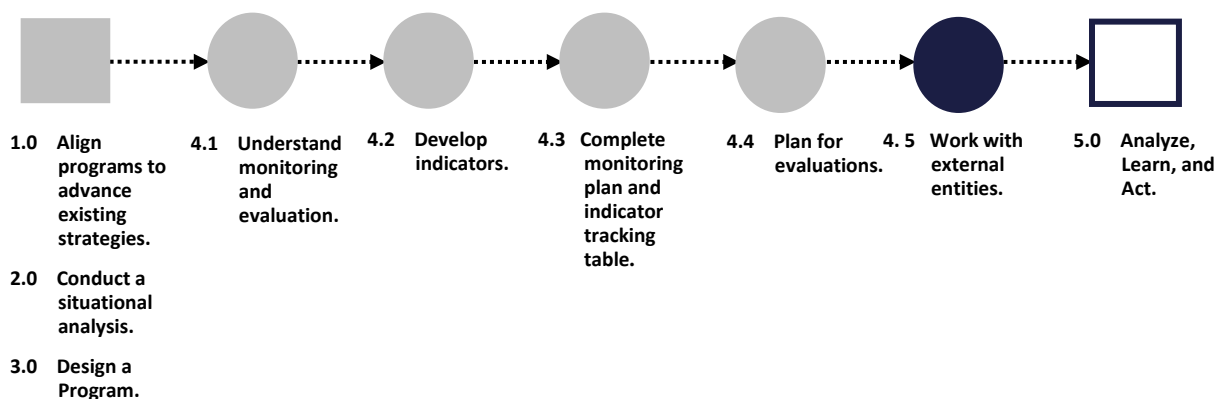
<p><b>Strong Evaluation Question</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>According to stakeholder perception, to what degree has the project contributed to the observed change in GHG emissions in Freedonia?</i></p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> This evaluation question is strong because it is researchable, it is specific to the program, and it is clearly defined.</p>	<p><b>Weak Evaluation Question</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>Are the interventions sustainable?</i></p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> This is a weak evaluation question because it is not specific. Sustainable is not clearly defined and the researcher may not know what interventions the question is referring to or what is meant by sustainable.</p>
<p><b>Strong Evaluation Question</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>To what degree do the educational exchanges contribute to the capacity of government officials to create and implement relevant policies and regulatory frameworks that promote and sustain a clean energy sector?</i></p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> This evaluation question is strong because it is researchable, it is specific to the program, and it is clearly defined.</p>	<p><b>Weak Evaluation Question</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>Are the educational exchanges worthwhile?</i></p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> This is a weak evaluation question because it is not specific.</p>

**Figure 29. Case Example, Strong vs Weak Evaluation Questions**

<sup>7</sup> <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluate-community-interventions/choose-evaluation-questions/main>



## STEP 4.5: USING THE TOOLKIT WITH EXTERNAL IMPLEMENTERS



This section explains how the Toolkit can be used to work with implementers outside of the Department and describes various mechanisms for hiring an implementer, the timelines to do so, and resources available within the Department to assist in this process. For more information on federal assistance or contract policy support, contact [A/OPE](#). For more information on executing an assistance award or contract, contact [A/LM/AQM](#). For additional evaluation contracting support visit the State Department [Evaluation Page](#).

### Using the Toolkit when Working with External Entities

You may use an external partner/vendor to conduct your project or program. The completed templates from this toolkit can be used as resources to work with these implementers/external vendors in the early stages of designing a statement of work or at the end stages of evaluating progress and achievements toward program objectives.

A solicitation is used to define project/program specific activities, deliverables, and timelines for a vendor/partner providing services or implementing a program for an office or bureau. Solicitations can come in the form of a Request for Proposal (RFP), a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), or other variants. When drafting one of these documents, information from this toolkit can be applied to create a strong document that will clearly express your expectations for proposal submissions.

If you would like additional information or clarification on capabilities of suppliers or implementing partners for contracts, you can publish a Request for Information (RFI). RFIs are used to collect information about the capabilities of various suppliers/implementing partners. Normally it follows a format that can be used for comparative purposes and is used to inform solicitations. Many times the external entities may have valuable subject matter expertise and you may want their thoughts on how to best solve a problem. It is still important to provide them with as much information as possible to get the best responses. The same tools mentioned above can help form an RFI.

Part of the solicitation process is to develop selection criteria to select a partner/vendor in a fair, unbiased, and informed manner. The tools in this toolkit are one way to supplement information provided by A/OPE to help develop selection criteria to see which candidates met the requirements stated in your funding announcement.



Finally, tools from this toolkit can be used to directly measure if the selected partner or vendor is reaching the desired outputs and outcomes. You can directly give the partner/vendor the tools to help them design and implement their own programs and projects. For instance, if they need to develop a logic model or create a monitoring plan, you can provide these tools as resources to support their program implementation and increase the likelihood of success for the program. Consider using the:

- **Situational Analysis.** Your situational analysis can inform decisions surrounding what program or project should be conducted and why. The situational analysis provides the background information necessary to write a solicitation so that you receive proposals with programs designed to appropriately meet the needs that have been identified.
- **Problem Statement.** It is acceptable to express the problem statement up front. Let those applying for funding know exactly what problem you would like to solve.
- **Theory of Change (TOC) and/or Logic Model.** Use the logic model and TOC to inform the SOW/NOFO to let the applicants know your program logic and TOC. What changes do you expect to see and why? How do you expect to get there? Why?
- **Program Goals and Objectives.** It is very common to include expected goals and objectives. You now have the resources to be clear and precise with your needs. If you do not know what you want or you do not share this information, you may receive proposals that are off topic and do not meet your expectations.
- **Performance Indicators.** It is also common to share illustrative performance indicators or illustrative activities and outcomes from the logic model. Once again, use the tools from the toolkit to be as precise as possible to get the proposals that best align with your expectations on how to solve the problem.
- **Monitoring Plan and Tracking Indicator Table.** To help implementers and external vendors track and report on their progress.



Mary is contracting a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to implement the program. In order to do this she worked closely with the Embassy in Freedonia to write and publish a solicitation informing local NGOs of the program. To write the solicitation, the team used the following information:

- The situational analysis and the problem statement to summarize why the program is being developed.
- The logic model, the theory of change (TOC), the goals and objectives to explain how the Bureau and the Embassy envision change taking place.
- Performance indicators to show exactly how the Bureau and the Embassy plan to measure success.

Mary and her team will work with AQM to issue a grant to the local NGO. They plan to use the Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table to monitor and measure progress.

**Figure 30. Case Example, Working with External Entities Information**



# Program Design and Performance Management Toolkit



## Section 5: Analyze, Learn, Act

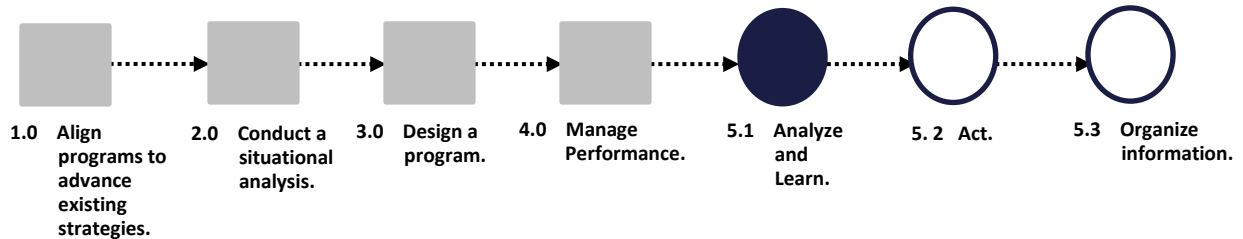
By the end of this section,  
offices, bureaus, and posts will:



- ✓ Analyze and Learn from Data
- ✓ Act upon Knowledge
- ✓ Organize Information

## SECTION 5: ANALYZE, LEARN, ACT

### STEP 5.1: ANALYZE AND LEARN FROM DATA



**Analyzing and learning from data** is the process of using statistical and/or logical techniques to clean, model, and assess data for the purposes of drawing conclusions to inform decisions about your current or future program work. Data analysis can be used on an ongoing basis to shape how a program, project, or process is being implemented, and it can also be used to determine lessons learned after program completion. Learning takes place when the program team engages in the thoughtful discussion of information with a focus on understanding how and why various aspects of the program are progressing in order to look for opportunities to make positive changes, and not as an opportunity to place blame or penalties. Learning enables better informed decisions that ultimately produce more effective and efficient activities, outputs, and outcomes. Regularly discussing available data also helps the program team determine whether the right data are being collected to inform decisions, or if ongoing monitoring and/or evaluation plans should be modified to collect information more useful to decision makers. All of these processes also contribute to the program team's ability to transparently communicate to stakeholders, including oversight bodies, about the program's progress and results.

#### 5.1.1: Analysis and Learning

Analysis of monitoring and evaluation data helps the program team gain valuable insight into ongoing progress and projected future results that could impact implementation. Intentionally incorporating regular reviews of progress provides a space for program managers, implementing partners, and other stakeholders to assess and reflect on program implementation and results. Doing so enables the program team to:

- **Improve performance** as new insights are gained that enable course correction and adaptation of activities from systematically collaborating with and learning from colleagues, partners, stakeholders, or activity participants.
- **Inform current and future programmatic decisions** to modify or eliminate what is not working and reinforce what is working. Intentionally applying knowledge from monitoring and evaluations can show which models and approaches have the largest effect, can identify good practices, and can highlight what may not be working as planned.
- **Inform future strategic documents formation and budgetary decisions** to improve office, bureau, and post operations in the future and allow future data driven decision making at all levels.



- **Test theory of change hypotheses** by filling knowledge gaps and resolving uncertainties in the hypotheses with new research or syntheses of existing analyses.
- **Identify and monitor assumptions and context** that may be conditions beyond your control, but could impede project or program implementation if not assessed.
- **Build awareness or advocate for a cause** through public diplomacy and advocacy campaigns around a particular issue or the Department's efforts to resolve a particular problem.
- **Reduce the challenges associated with staff turnover and transition** when the capture of knowledge gained by staff about the local context, past and present activities, and key relationships is done effectively and documented.
- **Advocate for support** with increased information and knowledge about the program, project, or process implementation and results to defend and support Department resource requests.
- **Facilitate coordination, collaboration, communication, and exchange** of experiential knowledge internally and with external stakeholders.
- **Maintain accountability** with implementers and key stakeholders by establishing regular reviews.
- **Measure progress towards bureau, office, and post strategic goals and objectives** by using program and project performance data as part of regular reviews of progress toward the strategic goals and objectives of the bureau, office, or post.

Assessing these questions allows program managers to learn the extent to which the program is progressing according to plan, apply accountability measures, and identify any possible adjustments to inputs, activities, or overall implementation of the program to mitigate any issues identified.

### 5.1.2: Data Accuracy and Quality Assurance

Before data analysis and learning can begin, the program team should take steps to check the data for accuracy and quality, and make adjustments as necessary. Checking for the following types of issues can tell you if there are missing or incorrect data and if data collection tools are being used accurately:

- **Data that are too perfect or consistent** – Data that are exactly the same over a period of time or perfectly match every target may indicate a problem. For example, data indicating 100 percent attendance at a training over a 5 year period may suggest that data were inaccurately recorded or falsified.<sup>8</sup>
- **Gaps in data** – Check to be certain that all data were recorded and that an explanation is provided for missing data. Certain circumstances such as floods in a region or Embassy closures could result in data not being recorded for a period of time, but teams should also look for any signs that a partner or vendor skipped required reporting without justification.<sup>9</sup>
- **Incorrect data** – Making errors while transcribing data is possible, and instituting controls over how and when data entry occurs could decrease the likelihood of human error. Team members should cross-check each other's work to be sure data are correctly entered. For example, systems should be in place to check that decimals are in the right place, that numerators and denominators are correctly reported, that information is entered into the correct columns, and

<sup>8</sup> [http://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/36-pmp\\_toolkit\\_complete\\_final\\_14\\_aug\\_2014.pdf](http://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/36-pmp_toolkit_complete_final_14_aug_2014.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [http://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/36-pmp\\_toolkit\\_complete\\_final\\_14\\_aug\\_2014.pdf](http://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/36-pmp_toolkit_complete_final_14_aug_2014.pdf)





that there are no double entries, etc.<sup>10</sup> To verify that the data are being collected accurately, teams can periodically collect the same sample more than once and compare results. Another check for accuracy is to look at the range of values reported for an indicator and whether or not all of these values are plausible.

If any accuracy or quality issues are identified, consider whether they pose a significant problem and determine if and how to deal with the problem. Data that consistently exceed established targets could be a sign that the targets were set too low, or it could be an indication of inaccurate reporting. It is important to identify these issues and discuss them with those responsible for collecting, reporting, and managing data in order to understand the reason behind any issues and identify ways to mitigate the problem. In some cases the team can decide to dismiss problematic data from the analysis, try to fill in missing data, attempt to correct data, or work with existing information and appropriately caveat their findings and conclusions for decision makers.

Periodic data quality assessments can help validate that ongoing data reporting is of high quality. **Table 11** provides an example of a data quality assessment checklist. Important concepts when assessing data quality are:

- **Validity** – Data should clearly and adequately represent the result they are intended to measure
- **Integrity** – During data collection, analysis, and reporting, mechanisms should be established to reduce the possibility that data are manipulated for political or personal reasons
- **Precision** – Data should present a fair picture of performance and enable management decision-making at the appropriate levels
- **Reliability** – Data should reflect stable, consistent data collection and analysis processes over time
- **Timeliness** – Data should be presented in time to inform management decisions

Data Quality Assessments (DQAs) are used to confirm the data reported meets the Department data quality standards. By providing input into data quality assessments, program implementers are able to flag data quality issues and limitations and maintain documentation on data quality issues. When completed, DQAs become part of the performance management plan.



After reviewing the case example below, click [here](#) for the Data Quality Assessment Checklist.



The program just completed its first quarter of implementation and Mary's team received the first quarter data from the implementing partner. Before the data were sent to Mary's bureau, the Embassy in Freedonia worked with the implementing partner to complete the DQAs to ensure that the data are valid, precise, reliable, timely, and have integrity. The implementing partner will submit the DQAs the first time data are reported and periodically throughout program implementation to ensure data collected maintains these five characteristics. An example of a completed DQA can be seen in **Table 11**.

**Figure 31. Case Example, Data Quality Assessment Checklist Information**

<sup>10</sup> [http://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/36-pmp\\_toolkit\\_complete\\_final\\_14\\_aug\\_2014.pdf](http://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/36-pmp_toolkit_complete_final_14_aug_2014.pdf)





## CASE EXAMPLE: Data Quality Assessment Checklist

Office, Bureau, or Post Name: South

Title of Performance Indicator:

Number of MOI EB personnel who received technical assistance

Result This Indicator Measures (i.e., Specify the Development Objective, Intermediate Result, or Project Purpose, etc.): Output to measure if activities are being implemented as planned

Data Source(s):

*Attendance Sheets*

Partner or Contractor Who Provided the Data:

*Implementing Partner*

Period for Which the Data Are Being Reported: First Quarter

Is This Indicator a Standard or Custom Indicator?

☐ Standard Foreign Assistance Indicator

☒ Custom (created by the program; not standard)

Data Quality Assessment methodology:

*Reviewed data collection procedures and documentation*

*Interviewed those responsible for data information*

Date(s) of Assessment: --/--/--

Assessment Team Members: John – Program Officer, Embassy Freedonia; Mike – Chief of Party (COP), Implementing Partner, Freedonia; Susan – Deputy COP, Implementing Partner, Freedonia

Verification of DQA

Team Leader Officer approval

X \_\_\_\_\_



		YES	NO	COMMENTS
VALIDITY – Data should clearly and adequately represent the intended result.				
1	Does the information collected measure what it is supposed to measure?	✓		
2	Do results collected fall within a plausible range?	✓		
3	Is there reasonable believe that the data collection methods being used do not produce systematically biased data (e.g. consistently over- or under-counting)?	✓		
4	Are sound research methods being used to collect the data?	✓		
RELIABILITY – Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods over time.				
1	When the same data collection method is used to measure/observe the same thing multiple times, is the same result produced each time? (E.g. A ruler used over and over always indicates the same length for an inch.)	✓		
2	Are data collection and analysis methods documented in writing and being used to validate the same procedures are followed each time?	✓		
TIMELINESS – Data should be available at a useful frequency, should be current, and should be timely enough to influence management decision making.				
1	Are data available frequently enough to inform program management decisions?	✓		
2	Are the data reported the most current practically available?	✓		
3	Are the data reported as soon as possible after collection?	✓		
PRECISION – Data have a sufficient level of detail to permit management decision making; e.g. the margin of error is less than the anticipated change.				
1	Is the margin of error less than the expected change being measured?			N/A
2	Has the margin of error been reported along with the data? (Only applicable to results obtained through statistical samples.)			N/A
3	Is the data collection method/tool being used to collect the data fine-tuned or exact enough to register the expected change? (E.g. A yardstick may not be a precise enough tool to measure a change of a few millimeters.)		✓	



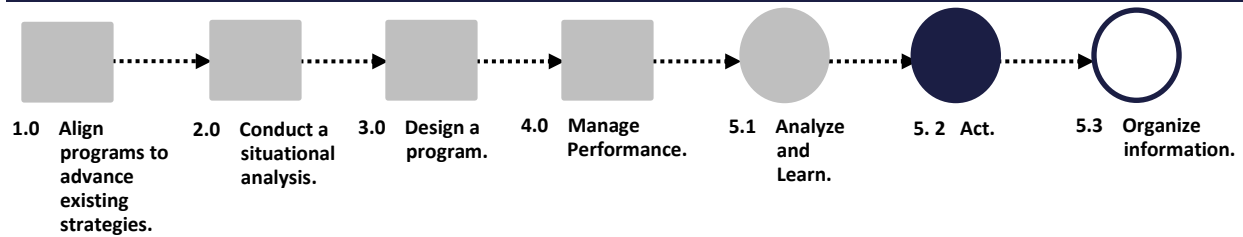
		YES	NO	COMMENTS
<b>INTEGRITY</b> – Data collected should have safeguards to minimize the risk of transcription error or data manipulation.				
1	Are procedures or safeguards in place to minimize data transcription errors?	✓		
2	Is there independence in key data collection, management, and assessment procedures?	✓		
3	Are mechanisms in place to prevent unauthorized changes to the data?	✓		
<b>SUMMARY</b>				
Based on the assessment relative to the five standards, what is the overall conclusion regarding the quality of the data?				
Significance of limitations (if any):				
Actions needed to address limitations prior to the next DQA (given level of USG control over data):				
<b>IF NO DATA ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE INDICATOR</b>		<b>COMMENTS</b>		
If no recent relevant data are available for this indicator, why not?				
What concrete actions are now being taken to collect and report these data as soon as possible?				
When will data be reported?				

**Table 11. Case Example, Data Quality Assessment Checklist<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> [https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/4-data\\_quality\\_assessment\\_checklist.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/4-data_quality_assessment_checklist.pdf)





**STEP 5.2: ACT**

**Acting** upon changes in knowledge is critical to turn the information into practical adjustments that promote successful program implementation, accountability, and improve overall results. Findings, conclusions, and any programmatic changes stemming from data analysis and learning should be **communicated** to all stakeholders so all are informed and on the same track.



**Figure 32. How Program Design and Performance Management Relate to MfR**

Findings from performance monitoring and evaluation should be presented to various stakeholders in a way that addresses the specific needs and interests of the audience, enables everyone to understand why and how any changes to the program will be implemented, and garners buy-in. Effective communication can be a means of facilitating coordination, strengthening implementation, defending resource requests, showing accountability, and sharing information on final results or interim progress.

**Table 12** and **Table 13** provide a Strategic Progress Review Framework and Action Item Tracker that can be used to plan for regular reviews of progress. In planning for the reviews, senior leaders should identify their priority review questions and discussion topics a few weeks in advance so program managers and those accountable can begin compiling the information that will be used to address each question (e.g. indicators, milestone status, relevant evaluations, and other relevant information sources). The review framework and action item tracker below can be used to document and communicate discussion topics, key findings from the review, notes about whether the right data were available or if the PMP should be modified to capture more useful or relevant information, and also note any action items or changes stemming from the review. This suggested framework can be modified to best suit the needs of your office, bureau, or post.





After reviewing the case example below, click [here](#) for the Strategic Progress Review Framework and [here](#) for the Action Item Follow-Up Tracker.



Mary and her team will analyze the data. Then her team will assemble all stakeholders to meet and assess the information collected and discuss relevant topics that are of greatest use for decision-makers at the time – such as questions of overall implementation, performance of a particular activity, etc. Her team will use the Strategic Progress Review Framework to record topics of discussion and the Action Item Follow-Up Tracker to assign a point of contact for each action item as a way to track progress of each one. An example of the Strategic Progress Review Framework can be found in [Table 12](#) and the Action Item Follow-Up Tracker can be found in [Table 13](#).

**Figure 33. Case Example, Strategic Progress Review Framework and Action Item Follow-Up Tracker Information**

*The important question is not how assessment is defined but whether assessment information is used...*

**– Palomba & Banta**



## CASE EXAMPLE: Strategic Progress Review Framework

**Attendees:** Mary – Program Manager; Steve – Assistant Manager; Alice – Climate Change Specialist; John – Program Officer, Embassy Freedonia; Mike – Chief of Party (COP), Implementing Partner, Freedonia; Susan – Deputy COP, Implementing Partner, Freedonia

**Date:** --/--/-- Completion of First Quarter

Review Question/ Discussion Topic	Data Used	Findings	Did we have the right data?	Action Items
<i>(Use the review to address questions that are of greatest use for decision-makers at the time – such as questions about the overall progress of a program objective, status of an activity, questions of interagency coordination, etc.)</i>	<i>(List the information that will be used to inform the discussion topic or question, such as indicators, milestone status, relevant evaluations, studies, key informants, etc.)</i>	<i>(Note key findings from the review such as were expected results achieved on pace, what obstacles were presented that need addressed, etc.)</i>	<i>(Note whether the data were sufficient to answer the question, or if different/more/ less data are needed. Make an action item to change your monitoring plan accordingly, if necessary.)</i>	<i>(Based on the findings, note any follow-up action items including any adjustments to your program summary components or the performance management plan.)</i>
1) Have we met the indicator targets and milestones in Year 1 of the program?	Indicator data	Results achieved on pace	Yes	Continue as planned
2) Will there be any issues coordinating with the World Bank due to timing of their program.	Program Partners	World Bank has started constructing hydro power infrastructure in Blue District, but program is not ready to begin awareness campaign and government is not prepared to manage or operate systems.	Yes	Work with World Bank to put construction on hold for six months to be sure the government is ready to support the infrastructure when the time comes and the community is ready to support the change.

**Table 12. Case Example, Strategic Progress Review Framework**





## CASE EXAMPLE: Action Item Follow-Up Tracker

Action Item	Action Item POC	Due Date	Progress Update
<i>(List any items from your review framework)</i>	<i>(List at least one POC assigned to implementing the action item)</i>	<i>(Date by when the action item should be implemented)</i>	<i>(Note any progress in implementing action item)</i>
1) Set up meeting with World Bank	Mike	Within one week	
2) Fast track awareness campaign	Susan	Scheduled to start in Third quarter, move to second quarter	
3)			
4)			
5)			

**Table 13. Case Example, Action Item Follow-Up Tracker**





When communicating about the program, consider the following factors:

- Be **cognizant** of your audience. Be sure you are not sharing confidential information externally and write with your audience in mind.
- Write **clearly** using precise words and a definitively stated the purpose.
- Be **concise** and use short, to the point sentences.
- Be **coherent** to the reader by arranging topics in a logic order and connect information with appropriate transitions.
- Remain **consistent**. Stay on topic and address the questions or subject matter.
- Be **complete** by providing all necessary information and finishing all thoughts.

In addition, photographs, anecdotes, and hyperlinks help make communications engaging and informative. Further, charts, graphs, dashboards and other graphics quickly draw attention to the key messages by presenting data visually, showing patterns that may not be readily visible in data tables. For more information about following up and communicating information, visit [Templates for Following Up on Evaluations – State](#).

### 5.2.1: Internal Communication Considerations

Internal communication among team members and stakeholders allows for an iterative process of continual improvement. Examples of incorporating internal communication as part of the program include:

- Regular in-person reviews of progress among the program team, recommended quarterly or more
- Establishing regular notifications about any changes, and posting the review framework and action items in a central location so stakeholders know when and where to get updates
- Instituting reporting structures within your office, bureau, or post to ensure the flow of information is effective and efficient, and accessible
- Preparing regular data dashboards or summary reports for the program team and relevant stakeholders within the bureau and office. A project status report is a tool to help provide project status and updates to the project team, management, and other stakeholders. For more information to create a project status report visit [Teamwork@State](#)
- Creating a communication plan that documents key stakeholders, what data will be communicated and to whom, frequency of communications, where data will be posted, etc. Visit [Teamwork@State](#) for more information on how to develop a communication plan

### 5.2.2: External Communication Considerations

External communication informs stakeholders outside of your office or bureau about important progress or changes to the program. Avenues for external communication include:

- Congressional Budget Justification
- Congressional testimony
- Reports to the public or congress



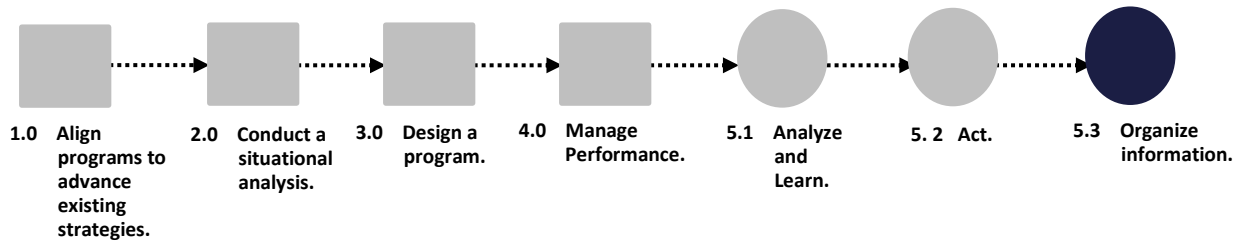


- Feedback to beneficiaries and stakeholders
- Coordination with the interagency
- Coordination with implementers or other program partners
- Forms of publicity for programs or projects:
  - Newsletters
  - Fact sheets
  - Website updates
  - Blog posts
  - Speeches
  - Cables
  - Press releases
  - Posting success stories on [cas.state.gov/managing for results](https://cas.state.gov/managingforresults)

*“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”*

– Carl Sagan

## STEP 5.3: ORGANIZE INFORMATION



If you used every section of the toolkit you will find that you have large amounts of information available to your team. Organizing this information so that it is accessible and easy to use for current and future users sets the stage for several purposes. It improves program implementation through learning from and acting upon acquired knowledge and information. It also improves transparency and facilitates communication with stakeholders including organizations like OIG and GAO.

Throughout the program design and performance management process you create information that can be grouped together in any way that is most appropriate for your team. This information can be saved as part of your program files. We recommend creating a program summary and a performance management plan:

### 5.3.1: Compile Information to Create a Program Summary

The program summary includes information from sections 1-3. As detailed in [Step 3.4](#), the program summary is a document that:

- Explains how your program aligns with higher level strategies
- Summarizes key points from your situational analysis
- Restates the problem statement
- Restates your goal and objectives
- Explains the program logic and theory of change
- Creates a preliminary list of plausible activities or projects within your program, along with their anticipated results
- Identifies stakeholders, potential partners, and beneficiaries



### 5.3.2: Compile Information to Create a Performance Management Plan

The performance management plan (PMP) includes information detailed in sections 4 and 5. The PMP may restate your program logic and TOC, but will highlight what information you will collect data on, how, and when. The PMP will include:

- Indicator Reference Sheets
- Monitoring Plan and Indicator Tracking Table
- M&E Budget Information
- Preliminary Evaluation Information
- Data Quality Assessments
- Strategic Progress Review Framework
- Action Item Follow-Up Tracker



# Program Design and Performance Management Toolkit



## Appendix



## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: DESIGN A PROJECT

A project is a set of planned and then executed interventions identified through a design process, which are together intended to achieve a defined result, generally to solving an associated problem or challenge.<sup>12</sup> A project is temporary in that it has a defined beginning and end in time, and therefore defined scope and resources. A project is unique in that it is not a routine operation, but a specific set of activities designed to accomplish a singular goal.<sup>13</sup>

Projects relate to program planning because *a set of projects make up the portfolio of a program*<sup>14</sup>. Because projects tend to be part of larger programs, many of the tools in Sections 1 and 2 would most frequently be applied for the planning of the overarching program rather than specific activities of the projects themselves. That being said, these tools can be used for designing your project as you see fit. For instance, a logic model may be a useful tool for designing and monitoring a project when the project is not part of a larger program. In these instances, your team will also determine the problem or needs statement as well as the project goals and objectives. Resources available to your project design and implantation can be found at the Teamwork@State homepage ([Teamwork@State](#)) and the Project Management Institute ([PMI](#)).

Tools that are frequently used in designing a project include, but are not limited to:

#### A.1 PICK Chart

A PICK Chart is a visual tool to help identify the most useful ideas to implement. PICK is an acronym for implementation categories: Possible, Implement, Consider, and Kill. The Teamwork@State PICK Chart template can be found here ([PICK Chart](#)).

#### A.2 RACI Matrix

A RACI Matrix is a simple matrix for clearly defining roles on a team. RACI is an acronym that defines four key roles: Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed. The Teamwork@State RACI Matrix template can be found here ([RACI Matrix](#)).

#### A.3 Project Charter

A Project Charter contains key project information, including project challenge, justification, goals, scope, team members, and milestones. The Teamwork@State Project Charter template can be found here ([Project Charter](#)).

<sup>12</sup> State Department Evaluation Policy

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.pmi.org/About-Us/About-Us-What-is-Project-Management.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> State Department Evaluation Policy



## A.4 Work Breakdown Structure

One additional tool is the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). A WBS organizes the team's work into manageable sections. The WBS visually defines the scope into manageable chunks that a project team can understand, providing additional definition and detail at each level of the WBS.<sup>15</sup>

The following guidelines should be considered when creating a work breakdown structure<sup>16</sup>:

- The top level represents the project;
- Tasks are assigned so that when all are completed it indicates the completion of the project;
- All tasks of the work breakdown structure do not need to be defined to the same level of detail;
- Tasks are unique and should not be duplicated across the work breakdown structure;
- The sub-tasks define the work, duration, and costs required to produce the task.



After reviewing the example below, click [here](#) for the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) Tool.



To develop the individual projects that will fall under clean energy program, the implementing partner will use the WBS Tool to organize the work of each project into manageable sections and assign those sections to personnel. This will help manage each project that makes up the program and the overall implementation of the program.

**Figure 34. Case Example, Work Breakdown Structure Information**

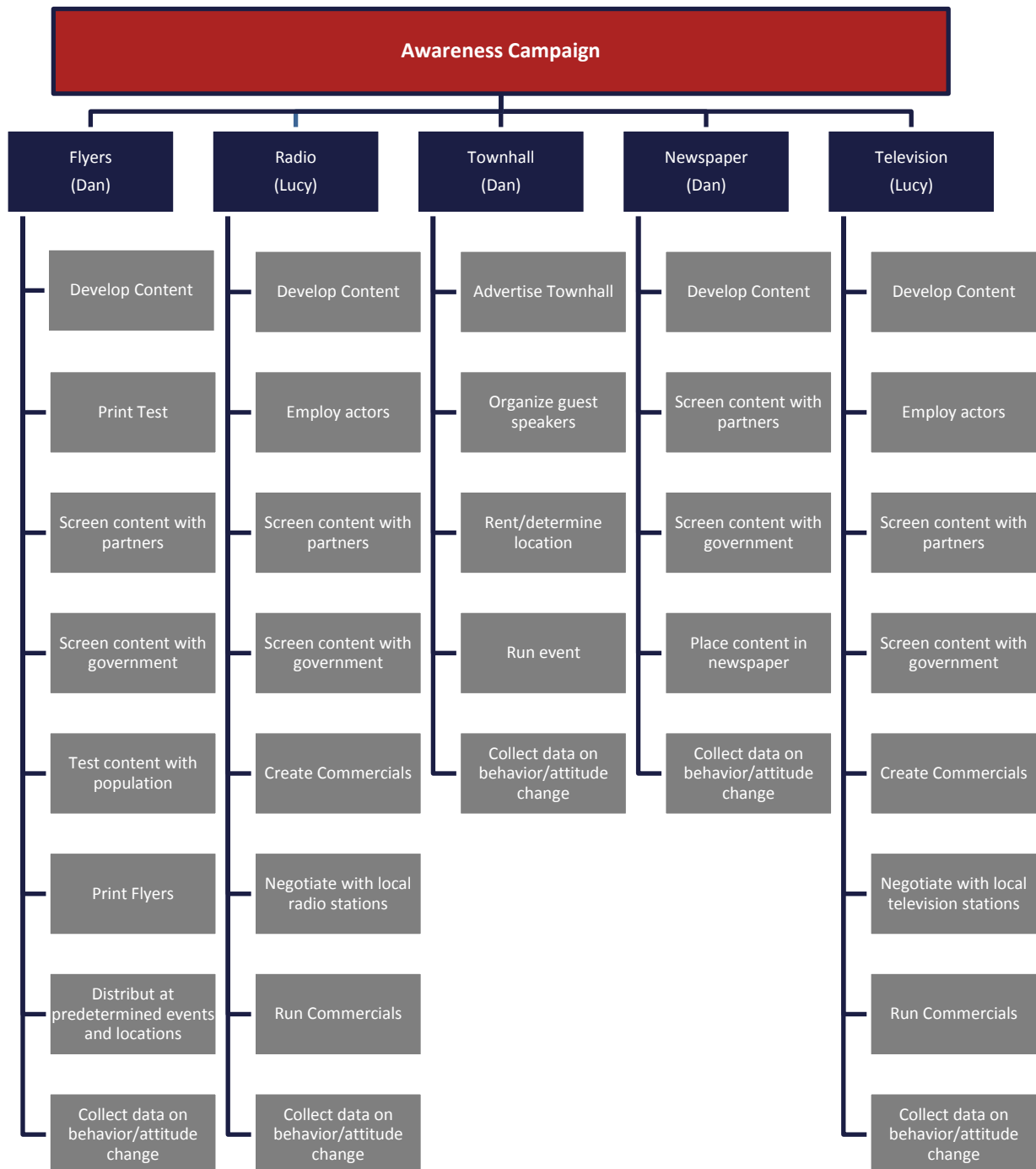
<sup>15</sup> <http://www.workbreakdownstructure.com/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.workbreakdownstructure.com/work-breakdown-structure-according-to-pmbok.php>



# CASE EXAMPLE

## Work Breakdown Structure Tool



**Figure 35. Case Example, Work Breakdown Structure**

