MULTI-SECTORAL MONITORING & EVALUATION

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR FIELDWORKERS

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

ACF INTERNATIONAL

OVERVIEW & CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREAMBLE

The Monitoring & Evaluation Guidelines are part of a broader initiative within Action Against Hunger to provide tools and standards in support of nutrition security programming. Action Against Hunger works across several sectors that contribute individually and collectively to nutrition security, including malnutrition treatment and prevention, health systems strengthening, mental health and care practices, WASH, and disaster risk management.

The M&E Guidelines are designed to be used by either **sector-specific projects or by multi-sector (integrated) programs**, and in either humanitarian or development contexts. A strong M&E system based on the guidance detailed in this book will strengthen Action Against Hunger's impact and help us understand our level of contribution to nutrition security based on its determinants, as shown in the model below.

This guide to M&E is not exhaustive, but provides a cross-cutting and multi-sector approach to planning for and implementing M&E throughout a project lifecycle. Project teams should use this guide alongside relevant technical guidance for specific types of interventions, as well as to complement other resources on project management, assessments, and evaluations.
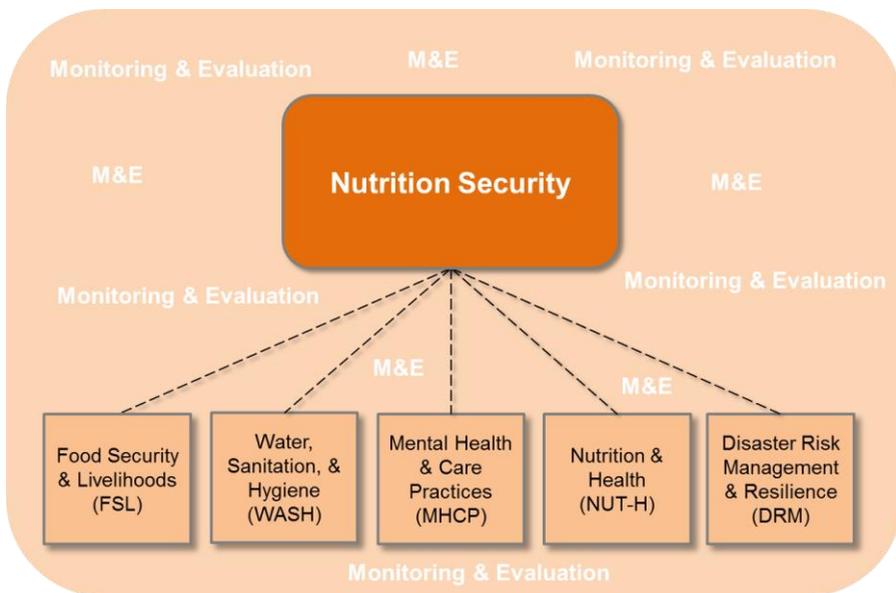
INTRODUCTION TO THE MUTLTI-SECTOR MONITORING & EVALUATION GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The impetus for the development of these Multi-Sector Monitoring & Evaluation Guidelines, which build upon the M&E Guidelines for Food Security & Livelihoods published by Action Against Hunger in 2011, was based on a number of factors, with the ultimate aim of improving project and program quality, performance, and learning across the organization. Considerations included:

- Growing internal and external accountability requirements regarding project and program performance;
- Providing a clear framework and system to assess the extent to which Action Against Hunger's projects and programs on the ground are contributing to the organization's overall objective to contribute to the treatment and prevention of undernutrition; and
- As program integration and the need to demonstrate results and impact grow, M&E processes become more complex. To ensure a common understanding of what best M&E practices look like throughout the project cycle, standard common guidelines for all Action Against Hunger sectors are required.

These guidelines have therefore been developed to:

1. Put in place a comprehensive though not exhaustive set of M&E guidelines, associated core and thematic indicators, and annexes and toolkits that encourage best practices in M&E for Action Against Hunger;
2. Introduce a common harmonized approach to and understanding of the purpose of M&E activities across different Action Against Hunger country programs, in order to:
   o Assess project progress against plans and define any corrective measures required;
   o Improve effectiveness by feeding M&E lessons learned back into program planning;
   o Improve data collection and analysis to better understand and measure the results of Action Against Hunger programs, and how this can be improved;
   o Ensure M&E activities throughout the project cycle are in line with the Action Against Hunger Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach;
   o Be accountable to Action Against Hunger stakeholders (beneficiaries, donors, partners etc.), through more effective and participatory M&E, and reporting;
   o Complement Action Against Hunger's existing thematic guidance (e.g. program intervention guidelines, Evaluation Policy, Gender Policy etc.).

HOW TO USE AND UNDERSTAND THE GUIDELINES

The M&E Guidelines are not designed to be read cover-to-cover. Instead, they are meant to be a comprehensive reference for staff working on M&E throughout the project cycle. It remains the responsibility of individual programs to develop a M&E system that meets their needs and resources. For the most part, **the Guidelines do not proscribe a precise set of tools, templates, technologies, or methodologies for field programs to undertake M&E.** Rather, they provide general guidelines, considerations, and steps for creating M&E systems at the project level, and minimum standards of good practice.

The following recommendations are promoted throughout the guidelines:

- Projects are strongly encouraged to incorporate **key indicators** in their projects for each sector (see *Chapter 2* and *MSTK 2 – Key Indicators for all Sectors*). To the extent

possible, these should become standard across projects and country programs as Action Against Hunger seeks a more uniform framework to understand the results and achievements of our programs.

- Projects must measure **key indicators using the guidance notes provided** in the sector-specific toolkits to ensure uniformity of definitions and measurements. The tools provided for measuring other indicators and aspects of project performance are provided for application.
- Projects are encouraged to **build strong M&E systems** by incorporating good M&E practices into the project cycle, e.g. development M&E plans, capacity building of M&E skills, collection and management of quality data, and frequent analysis of data for reporting and project utilization.
- Projects should **prioritize utilization of M&E findings** by incorporating learning into project management and planning processes.
- Field programs are encouraged to **utilize available technologies**, as well as electronic systems (particularly ODK) for data collection and management, whenever possible.
- Action Against Hunger **standard reporting documents** (such as the Activity Progress Report) and other requirements for **donor reporting** will continue to be prioritized.
- Other cross-cutting requirements for Action Against Hunger M&E regarding **ethics, accountability, and gender mainstreaming** – among others – are unchanged and should be emphasized in the development of M&E systems.

These Guidelines are the result of an immense undertaking to collect both existing Action Against Hunger M&E tools as well as best practices across the industry. However, these Guidelines are by no means exhaustive, and M&E tools and techniques will surely evolve over time. The Guidelines should be understood as the first iteration, or Version 1.0. While few requirements if any are expected to change in the future, new tools may emerge and be added to the toolkits. Additional guidance for operationalization and examples from field programs will also be added to the Guidelines based on feedback from the roll-out of Version 1.0 of the Guidelines and the ongoing collection of tools and good practices.

A NOTE ON PROJECTS VS. PROGRAMS

This guideline and its references are focused on M&E for projects, bearing in mind that projects will usually be contributing to a larger program.

The terms project and program are often, and incorrectly, used interchangeably. To ensure a clear division of how each contributes to meeting organizational goals, these can be defined as:

- **A project is a set of coordinated activities undertaken to meet a specific goal and purpose in a set time period and budget**. Multiple projects with a common goal form a program, which can be thematic or geographic**.**
- **A program is therefore broader in scope and contains a coordinated set of projects**. Program goals can be thematic or geographic, such as an emergency or a country program. Programs work to meet organizational objectives.

With projects as subsets of a program, M&E activities are more intense and involved at project level as more regular decisions are required to keep a project on track against its objectives. Some project monitoring data can be accumulated (e.g. number of beneficiaries, contribution of different activities to changes in malnutrition levels, etc.) to a program and organisational level to inform longer-term strategic decision making. A country strategy is implemented through programs supported by projects which are funded through contracts. Information gathered through the monitoring of projects and programs will therefore contribute to monitoring of the progress of a strategy.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Overall these Guidelines are intended as a reference and guide for all Action Against Hunger staff and partners engaged in Action Against Hunger programming at any level, with the contents and structure shaped accordingly. In general the following people and groups are expected to be the core audience:

- **Project Managers and Coordinators** responsible for designing and managing projects and programs, to ensure those implementing adhere;
- **Field staff implementing projects** who are responsible for undertaking M&E activities, so they have a common understanding to best practices in M&E at Action Against Hunger;
- **Technical Advisors** who support programs, so they can provide common advice on M&E;
- **Consultants undertaking assessments, evaluations** or any other activity which will contribute to and inform program and project planning and learning;
- **Partners and other stakeholders**, to ensure understanding of and coordination with Action Against Hunger's approach to M&E.

STRUCTURE OF THE M&E GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are comprised of four core narrative chapters, annexes, and toolkits. The Guidelines have been designed so that the narrative chapters provide practical guidance that should be used in tandem with the relevant annexes and tools:

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING MONITORING & EVALUATION
Provides an introduction to the key M&E definitions, principles, types, methods and the structuring of an M&E system at Action Against Hunger, to support staff when considering the issues that need to be addressed when planning a project and preparing its M&E system.

CHAPTER 2: STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO MONITORING & EVALUATION
Adopts a step-by-step approach to setting up and implementing a project's M&E system and the associated tools proposed to facilitate this, including the utilization of key and thematic indicators.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION
Provides a step-by-step guide to planning and managing an evaluation.

CHAPTER 4: ACCOUNTABILITY
Provides guidance on how to design and manage stakeholder feedback mechanisms.

ANNEXES
The annexes provide important additional information and guidance on many of the key issues and considerations for the M&E system. References are made throughout the main narrative chapters to relevant annexes, and users of the Guidelines are encouraged to consult them as appropriate to gain a better understanding of the different topics covered.

TOOLKITS
The toolkits include a Multi-Sectoral Toolkit, and a number of sectoral (e.g. FSL) and topic (e.g. Evaluation) specific toolkits. These toolkits contain the essential tools required for designing and implementing an M&E system, along with further useful tools and guidance for general and sector-specific use. The toolkits are as follows:

- MULTI-SECTORAL M&E TOOLKIT (MSTK)
- FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS TOOLKIT (FSL)
- WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE TOOLKIT (WASH)
- MENTAL HEALTH & CARE PRACTICES TOOLKIT (MHCP)
- NUTRITION & HEALTH TOOLKIT (NUT-H)
- DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT (DRM)
- EVALUATION TOOLKIT (EVAL)
- ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLKIT (ACC)
- ADVANCED M&E TOOLKIT (ADV)

Where tools and documents from the toolkits are referenced within the core chapters' narrative, the relevant abbreviated coding as shown in the brackets above will be used (e.g. MSTK 1 = Multi-Sectoral M&E Toolkit – Tool 1)

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Core Chapters

ABBREVIATIONS

AAH / ACF	Action Against Hunger | ACF International
ACC	Accountability Toolkit
ADV	Advanced Toolkit
APR	Activity Progress Report
CSI/rCSI	Coping Strategy Index/reduced Coping Strategy Index
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ELA	Evaluation, Learning, and Accountability Unit
EVAL	Evaluation Toolkit
FM	Feedback Mechanism
GAM/MAM/SAM	Global Acute Malnutrition/Moderate Acute Malnutrition/Severe Acute Malnutrition
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity
ICT	Information Communication Technology
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDD-W	Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women
MHCP	Mental Health and Care Practices
MSTK	Multi-Sectoral Toolkit
NEAP	Nutritional Effects Assessment Project (NEAP)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODK	Open Data Kit
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
RBM	Results-Based Management
RTE	Real-Time Evaluations
TOR	Terms of Reference
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

CHAPTER *1*

UNDERSTANDING
MONITORING & EVALUATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES & CONTENTS

The aim of Chapter 1 is to provide a broad overview of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in Action Against Hunger, including key concepts, terminology, considerations and processes, to help users think about M&E related issues when planning and implementing a project at Action Against Hunger. This chapter is ideal for both technical and general staff who are new to M&E, as well as experienced M&E staff who would like to review key M&E considerations at Action Against Hunger. Those staff members in charge of designing and implementing M&E systems should as well read *Chapter 2 – Step-by-Step Approach to M&E.*

1.1 MONITORING & EVALUATION IN ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

1.1.1 What is Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)?

Monitoring & evaluation (M&E) is a key component of the project management cycle that encompasses the routine collection and assessment of data. The aim of M&E is to provide information needed to assess the project against specified performance criteria and project objectives, which can be used to facilitate improvements. A **project M&E system** is comprised of the combination of processes, tools, templates, staff, equipment, and activities required to collect, manage, analyze, report, disseminate and utilize M&E information for this purpose.

1.1.2 Why do we need M&E, and What is a Good M&E System?

Action Against Hunger carries out life- and livelihood-saving work around the world. To do so, we are entrusted by donors, partners, and local communities to implement programs of the highest possible quality and efficiency. A well-designed and implemented M&E system should serve as the backbone of our programs, enabling Action Against Hunger to improve projects in real time; identify unintended or negative consequences; learn from best practices; and understand and communicate our results.

WHY DO WE NEED MONITORING & EVALUATION SYSTEMS?

- It is a management tool to **assist decision making;**
- It provides the basis for **organizational learning** and allows to continuously improve interventions;
- It helps identify Action Against Hunger **results;**
- It provides information to raise the visibility of Action Against Hunger's contribution to improving nutrition;
- It is a tool for **accountability** to the Action Against Hunger beneficiaries, donors, individual givers, partners and Boards.

> ### M&E IN HUMANITARIAN AID
>
> *The need for high-quality M&E is increasingly understood and prioritized across the humanitarian sector. In 2014, more than* ***$24.5 billion dollars*** *was spent on official humanitarian assistance (see Development Initiatives' "Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2015"), up from $15.1 billion in 2008.*
>
> *The sheer amount of aid delivered - along with criticism over particular aid responses - has led stakeholders to increasingly ask: What do the funds accomplish? How can programs be delivered more effectively and efficiently? Today, <u>nearly all major humanitarian organizations</u> have dedicated M&E staff working to answer these questions, and to improve the quality and reach of their programs.*

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A POOR M&E SYSTEM?

- **Difficult to assess achievements** of a projects (no solid evidence to determine results);
- **Lack of strategic orientation**, focus on the delivery of activities rather than results;
- Higher likelihood that projects will not achieve the objectives due to absence of an effective feedback loop;
- **Higher risk of lack of ownership** by key stakeholders and limited or no sustainability of results due to the lack of dialogue with stakeholders on strategic orientation and results of the projects.

WHAT SHOULD A GOOD M&E SYSTEM DO, OR BE?

- **Collect, analyze, and use information in a systematic and timely way** to ensure staff, beneficiaries, and donors have a continuously updated understanding of progress against objectives (effectiveness), to shape field staff **decision-making**;
- Determine whether the **inputs** (e.g., money, time, staff, volunteers, materials, equipment) are **sufficient to achieve the planned outputs** (efficiency);
- Capture and communicate **unintended or unexpected changes** with the project or its context, enabling projects to adjust implementation as needed;
- Be a **shared priority** of all Action Against Hunger staff, adequately supported and managed at all levels;
- **Facilitate participation** from those the project seeks to benefit as well as wider affected populations that do not directly benefit. Affected communities should actively participate in defining a project's objectives, measurements, and decisions; similarly they should have ongoing access to the M&E system during implementation e.g. feedback mechanisms;
- Focus on **specific audiences and users**, honing in on only what is sufficient and necessary to avoid data collection overload or the collection of unnecessary or unused data;
- Be clearly **owned and understood by key stakeholders** from the planning phase, building on the needs assessment and project design;
- Meet internal and external **accountability (reporting) requirements**, transparently sharing key achievements and setbacks;
- Build on existing **M&E capacities and practices**, expanding skills of key staff when needed;
- Facilitate **lessons learned,** drawing out information that can inform programming;
- Be appropriately resourced (e.g. budget, staff, training, time);
- **Be realistic** in consideration of various project constraints (e.g. operational context, timeframe, budget, human resources);
- **Incorporate new technologies** when and where they add value and are feasible (see section 1.8, and *Annex 10 - Inventory of ICT Innovations & Applications*)

1.1.3 The Basics of an M&E System: Results-Based Management, Logical Frameworks & Results Chains

M&E at Action Against Hunger is grounded in **Results-Based Management (RBM)**, which is a management strategy focusing on the performance and achievement of results in terms of outputs, outcomes and impacts. A key function of M&E is therefore to test and determine whether or not the project's objectives and causal analysis (i.e. the sequence of results expected based on certain inputs and activities) articulated in the project design holds true; and if not, why not, and what should be done to address this and learn lessons?

M&E systems at Action Against Hunger are formulated based upon the **project logical framework (logframe)**, which is one type of **program logic model**. A logframe is an important tool in project design and management, mapping the multiple levels of objectives and associated results (measured through indicators) in the short, medium, and long term. **Indicators** are units of measure that determine whether the objectives formulated in the logframe have been achieved.

The table below summarizes standard logframe objectives and results, and the types of indicators used to measure them, which form the basis of a project M&E system and plan:

TABLE 1.1: LEVELS OF LOGFRAME OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

Logframe <u>Objectives</u> Definitions		Objectively Verifiable <u>Indicators</u> (OVI) that measure logframe objectives	
Impact [Goal/ Overall Objective]	Higher level project objectives in terms of longer-term benefits to beneficiaries and the wider benefits to society. The goal will not be achieved by the project alone; the project aims to contribute to its goal	**Impact Indicator**	Impact indicators measure this long term change in conditions of the community (e.g. % change in malnutrition rates or mortality rates due to malnutrition)
Outcomes [Purpose/ Specific Objective]	The short-term and medium-term objectives in terms of benefits to the project beneficiaries due to the intervention's outputs; the project can only indirectly control achievement of outcomes; behaviour change is often a key component	**Outcome Indicator**	Outcome Indicators describe the medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. (e.g.% change in the population with access to adequate food, rate of adoption of improved farming practices, % of beneficiaries using latrines, % practicing hand washing)
Outputs [Results]	The outputs produced by undertaking a series of activities. This is what will be delivered to the intended beneficiaries or target group, and it should be possible for project management to be held accountable for this delivery	**Output Indicator**	Output Indicators describe the immediate effects of an activity; tangible products, goods and services, and other immediate changes that lead to the achievement of outcomes (e.g. number of people trained).
Activities	The tangible goods and services delivered by the project. (e.g. distribution of inputs)	**Process Indicator**	Process Indicators describe the activities undertaken (e.g.quantity and quality of inputs distributed)
Inputs	The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention	**Input**	Indicators used to measure the utilization of inputs

The logical relationship of inputs leading to activities that produce outputs, which result in medium term change (or outcomes), which result in longer term change (or impact), can be mapped out as a Results Chain, as in **Figure 1** below:

Figure 1.1: M&E and the Results Chain
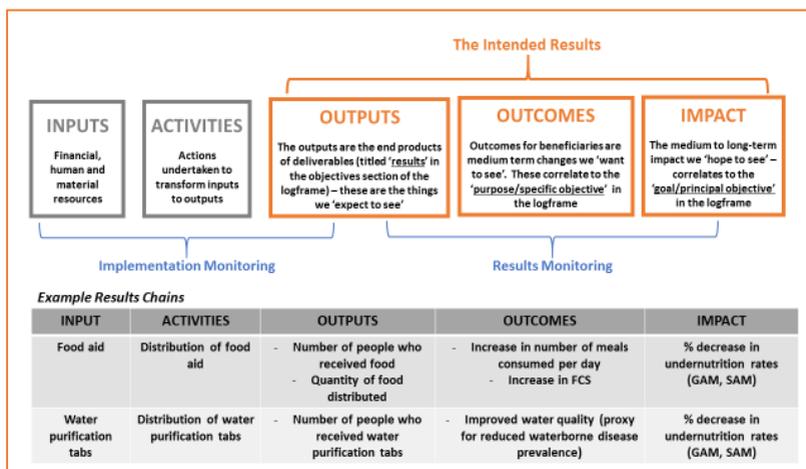
Inputs are used to carry out activities, → Activities produce specific outputs, → Outputs produce outcomes, → Outcomes contribute to the impact (overall objective) of a project.

Most monitoring activities tend to focus on short to medium-term tangible results in the form of activities, outputs, and outcomes, rather than long-term change (impact – see box below). When considering logframes and M&E, it is also essential to pay attention to and include the project's risks and assumptions within the M&E system. See *Annex 1 – Designing a Logframe & Indicators,* for more information.

CHALLENGES OF MEASURING IMPACT

Measuring impact can be challenging, costly, and tends to involve long-term changes which may take years to become evident, while Action Against Hunger's projects generally have relatively short timeframes. In addition, confirming that a specific higher level change is attributable to a particular project can be difficult or even impossible. Given these challenges, **all Action Against Hunger projects should focus on measuring outcome (medium-term), output, and process level changes for all interventions***.*

1.1.4 The Importance of Indicators, Baselines & Endlines

An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement. Indicators are usually linked directly to the project's logframe, as they are measures used to assess whether the changes planned in the logframe have occurred in connection to an intervention. They are called indicators because they are generally only indicative ("proxies") of whether an objective has been achieved rather than wholly demonstrating it. Indicators are central to any M&E system.

- Indicators need to be **measurable**, through clear means of verification, and should each have a clear target, baseline and milestones against which to measure progress.
- Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI) as they are often expressed in logframes (e.g. "Percentage of targeted beneficiaries who report exclusive breastfeeding of children under 6

months by the end of the project") are essentially a combination of elements - indicator, baseline, target (and milestones):

- o **Baseline**: The situation prior to the intervention (e.g. 40% of the target population report exclusive breastfeeding of children under 6 months).
- o **Target:** That which will be achieved (e.g. number, percent change) by the end of the project (usually expressed in terms of timeframe e.g. year). Targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART); e.g. Percentage of target beneficiaries who report exclusive breastfeeding of children under 6 months by the end of the project. Targets are often set according to **benchmarks**, which may come from baseline indicators, national indicators, or secondary data for similar populations.
- o **Milestones:** Milestones should be set at appropriate intervals during the implementation period, based on the specific timeframe and sequencing of the project, to help regular monitoring of progress towards the target (e.g. Milestone 1 = 50%; Milestone 2 = 70%).

Projects should aim, as far as possible, to have **both quantitative and qualitative indicators.** Choosing whether a quantitative or qualitative indicator is required to measure different objectives will depend on what you need to know, and what are the appropriate and feasible ways of doing this. The difference between quantitative and qualitative indicators, as well as data collection considerations, is discussed in detail in **Section 1.2.4.**

In general, indicators should be selected on the following basis (additional guidance about the selection of indicators is provided in *Chapter 2*):

- **Key indicators recommended by Action Against Hunger.** All projects are strongly encouraged to measure key indicators for the specific sector. Integrated projects should collect data on the key indicators for each sector in which it runs activities. See **MSTK 2 – Key Indicators.**

- **Project logframe.** The project's individual logframe should provide the basis for selection of thematic and custom indicators. Given the chain of results that the project team expects to achieve, they should select indicators that best measure the results. For more on the process of selecting and prioritizing indicators, see **Annex 1 - Designing a Logframe and Indicators** and **Section 2.2.1.**

> ### KEY & THEMATIC INDICATORS
>
> *For Action Against Hunger's projects, a selection of* **key indicators** *and* **optional thematic indicators** *by project area have been defined to inform logframe formulation. See* **Chapter 2.1, MSTK 2 - Key Indicators** *and* **MSTK 4 - Thematic Indicators**.

BASELINE & ENDLINE SURVEYS

Baseline and endline surveys are an essential part of any M&E system, and can be seen as a start and end to monitoring. Data from these surveys provide a **measurement of each indicator** before and after the implementation of the project.

A baseline survey[1] gives information about the situation of the target population before project intervention begins. This provides benchmark measurements for indicators so that M&E data collected during implementation can assess progress against the baseline, i.e. the extent to which

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[1] A baseline survey differs from a needs assessment, which is traditionally conducted early during the design phase of the project cycle and aims to increase understanding of communities' needs, priorities, capacities, resources, and problems. Given the different purposes of a baseline survey and a needs assessment, it is not recommended that one replaces the other.

targets have been met. It is difficult, if not impossible, to measure the results and achievements of a project without having assessed the starting situation.

An endline survey measures the same **indicators** as the baseline survey, though at the end of a project, after completion of the activities, and therefore allows a comparison with the baseline data to assess progress and achievement of project results. Some longer term projects also include a mid-line survey conducted at a suitable point during the project which often uses the same methodology as a baseline or endline.

TIMING OF BASELINE/ENDLINE SURVEYS - AVOID SEASONAL BIAS!

Ideally, baseline and endline surveys should be conducted during the same time of year to avoid seasonal bias. Given that projects may be more or less than a year in duration, project teams should track contextual trends throughout the project lifecycle in order to understand and interpret monitoring results within the context of seasonality on project results.

1.1.5 M&E in the Project Cycle

Project teams must consider and address M&E at every stage of the project life cycle:

- **Project Design Stage:** The process for determining indicators of measurement should start at the project design stage – early planning for M&E is important. As discussions evolve on what data can be collected this will form the basis for monitoring and evaluation. Indicators for monitoring will be shaped further during consultation with beneficiaries, ensuring participatory decisions on desired results.
- **Formulation/Planning Stage:** When project ideas become project plans, a full M&E Plan (section 2.2 and MSTK 1a/1b) is developed alongside the project logframe. Resources for the M&E Plan including budget, human resources, and equipment should be agreed on and included in the project budget (section 2.3).
- **Financing Stage:** When a project proposal is submitted to the donor, resourcing plans for M&E activities should also be negotiated. In terms of budgeting for M&E, international standards recommend between 3 to 5% of the total project budget should be allocated for M&E activities (not including internal human resource costs).
- **Implementation Stage:** A baseline survey should be conducted at the beginning of any project activities. End-of-project evaluations should be planned at the start of implementation to ensure collection of required data in the baseline survey. Once implementation begins, regular monitoring in line with plans should occur in consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders, to assess actual progress against planned targets. An end-line survey is carried out after project activities have concluded.
- **Evaluation Stage:** A project evaluation assesses the performance of the intervention and identifies lessons learned and good practices. Evaluations might also be undertaken during implementation, e.g., mid-term or real-time evaluations, or after action reviews, to assess progress and make any necessary changes in activities.
- **Learning Stage:** Evaluation findings are used to improve the design of ongoing and future projects or programs, through the identification and documentation of learning and good practices.
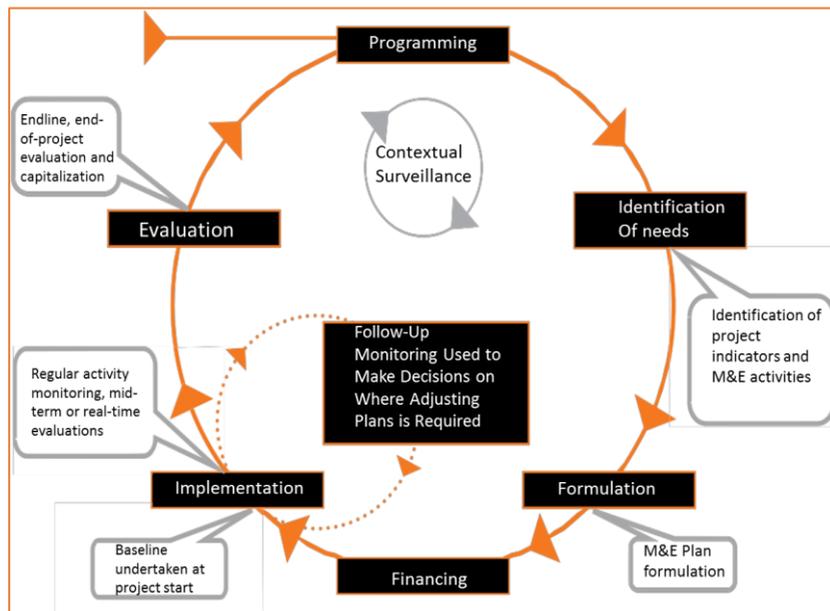
1.1.6 Core Tools & Requirements of an M&E System

The following core tools and requirements of an M&E system are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. The tools themselves can be found in the Multi-Sector Toolkit, and the various sector toolkits, and should be made available to project stakeholders:

- **Logical Framework:** Summarizes the project plan and ways of measuring achievements (see *MSTK 1a/1b – M&E Plan & Calendar*);
- **Indicators:** Variables used to measure changes in results from the logical framework (see MSTK 1 and MSTK 2 for Action Against Hunger's key and thematic indicators);
- **M&E Plan**: Summarizes data collection processes including what, how, how often, and by whom. For M&E to be meaningful and effective, it is important to have clear plans against which to assess progress and results. To be effective, each project should have an M&E plan that details methodologies (e.g. sampling), procedures, tools, responsibilities, budget, and resources for the systematic, timely, and effective collection, analysis, and use of project information (see **MSTK 1a/1b – *M&E Plan & Calendar***);
- **Activity Progress Report (APR):** Tool for reporting the evolution of activities on a project, as well as tracking project indicators and the number of beneficiaries by project type and activity (see Section 1.2.5 Counting Beneficiaries and *MSTK 3 – Activity Progress Report*);
- **Budget**: Summarizes project costs including M&E budget resources;
- **Reporting Templates**: Details what needs to be reported on, the frequency, and to whom;
- **Monitoring Tools**: (e.g. questionnaires) Provide detailed questions and formats by which to measure indicators and collect other information using quantitative and qualitative data;
- **Qualified Staff:** Collect, analyze, and report project information with as much efficiency and accuracy as possible; and
- **Technologies:** Enhance and or contribute to more effective or easier M&E.

1.1.7 Responsibility and Support for Monitoring & Evaluation

M&E requires commitment at all levels of Action Against Hunger and steps should be taken by all to institutionalize M&E good practices. Every staff member has a role to play, which may vary depending on the size, structure, and resources of each project and Action Against Hunger country programme. Responsibilities can vary but may be allocated at the field as follows:

- **M&E and Project Officers/Assistants** focused on project implementation are likely to undertake monitoring activities (e.g. data collection and analysis);
- **Project Managers, Coordinators, and Country Directors** are likely to compile monitoring reports based on the data they are given, including supporting analysis and spot checks where necessary. Project managers and technical teams are the primary users of monitoring information to undertake adaptive management of projects;
- **Coordinators and Country Directors** are ultimately responsible for overseeing that M&E activities are in line with project requirements and coordinated between projects and partner organizations. In addition, they help to build buy-in to the M&E system by taking every opportunity to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of M&E.

Dedicated M&E resources are not always made available to all projects and country programs. To improve this, it is recommended that:

- **Dedicated people are available to oversee M&E activities** and clear M&E roles and responsibilities spelled out in M&E plans (see step 2.2). Ideally these people would have strong M&E technical knowledge;
- Where capacity is a constraint, an **M&E capacity-strengthening plan,** similar to other mission capacity-strengthening plans**,** be put in place to build up necessary team and staff skills. In addition to technical M&E skills, field staff should be encouraged and trained to ensure understanding of why M&E activities are being undertaken;
- M&E activities should be **integrated into Action Against Hunger technical departments** to facilitate the establishment of a more comprehensive, robust, and compliant system.

1.2   INTRODUCTION TO MONITORING

1.2.1   Defining Monitoring and its Purpose

Monitoring is the systematic, periodic and continuous collection, analysis, and utilization of information on project processes, outputs, and outcomes throughout the project life cycle. It builds upon solid problem analysis and the project logical framework.

Monitoring is critical in order to effectively:

- **Assess the progress of a project** in addressing the needs and improving the lives and livelihoods of beneficiaries (beyond who received what);
- **Know if a project is on track** against its objectives and targets, and determine what still needs to be done to meet objectives;
- **Collect data to enable the review of risks to a project** as well as identifying potential solutions to address these in a timely manner, which can be used to make adjustments to improve effectiveness and avoid possible waste caused by unresolved issues;
- **Continuously assess the relevance and quality** of a project through stakeholder feedback on satisfaction;
- Establish mechanisms to **identify successes, challenges and lessons learned** from a project on an ongoing basis;
- Provide data that will **contribute to evaluations;** and

- Be able to **communicate** with stakeholders and others regarding the results, sustainability and accountability of a project.

1.2.2 Types of Monitoring

There are two different types of monitoring that need to be incorporated into a M&E system:

- **MONITORING OF RESULTS (performance/outcome monitoring)**:

This focuses on the delivery of outcomes, and the likelihood of impact and sustainability – essentially what the project has achieved in terms of the higher end of the results chain on which the project log frame is based. Monitoring of results assesses changes (intended and unintended) brought about by the project, in terms of outputs and outcomes. To determine these results, a baseline and endline must be

> ### A NOTE ON RESULTS MONITORING
>
> *In general the effective monitoring of results has proved more challenging for project staff, with much of the data collected referring to the delivery of activities (i.e. implementation monitoring) and outputs (i.e. number of beneficiaries). As such, improving the monitoring of results should be a key aim when developing your M&E system.*

established. Assessing the extent of progress against results allows for any necessary adjustments to be made; it is also essential for providing information for project evaluations. The approach to results monitoring based on a logframe and indicators is discussed at length in **Chapter 2 – Step-by-Step Approach to M&E.** An abundance of tools regularly used to monitor results is provided in the **Multi-Sector and Sector-Specific Toolkits**.

- **MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION (process monitoring):** This focuses on expenditure, activities and output delivery – essentially the lower end of the results chain. It assesses if resources or inputs (e.g. funds, goods in kind, human resources) are being used at the planned rate or period, and activities are happening in line with activity plans (addressing the correct needs of the right people) to deliver outputs. This is particularly important for determining resource allocation and providing information for progress reports. The information provided through process monitoring will be particularly useful for staff in charge of overall management of finances and work plans.

  Examples of process monitoring components include:

  o **Beneficiary feedback.** Feedback mechanisms provide a direct means of communication with project participants regarding both successes and problems/challenges arising during implementation. They help track the perceptions and experience of beneficiaries and other stakeholders. See *Chapter 4: Accountability* for more detailed guidance.
  o **Financial monitoring**. This tracks whether project expenditure is in line with planned budgets, as well as assessing the actual cost for inputs and activities against those in the budget. This is done through budget follow up in liaison with the Finance and Admin team.
  o **Program quality management.** This helps programs understand whether they are meeting standards established for the creation of management systems. See ADV M&E Toolkit 9 – Project Management Quality Tool for an example audit checklist and more detailed guidance.
  o **Assumptions and risks assessment.** This helps determine whether there have been changes in the assumptions and risks identified at the start of the project. Assumptions are about the external operating environment. Risks pertain to

situations were assumptions about the external operating environment do not hold. Risks can also be internal.

1.2.3   Frequency of Monitoring

The frequency of monitoring depends on the indicators being monitored and the operational context of the project. It can, for example, be daily (e.g. relief programming processes), weekly (e.g. distributions), monthly (e.g. prices, population assisted), quarterly (e.g. training), etc. Monitoring happens throughout the project implementation phase.

Decisions on what monitoring data should be collected will be taken at the project design stage and log frame formulation. During baseline and endline surveys and prior to the execution of each data collection round, information to be collected can be reviewed and adjusted according to project evolution. Monitoring can evolve over the course of a project, with types of data or tools being added, amended or removed based on identified requirements. Note, that **data collection for indicators from the project documents, i.e. log frame and other indicator frameworks, need to be ensured throughout all project monitoring exercises**.

1.2.4   Methodologies for Data Collection

There are a number of different methodologies to carry out data collection for monitoring and evaluation purposes. These are outlined in more detail in section 2.4 and ***Annex 5 - Data Collection Methods, Tools & Approaches***, which includes an extensive matrix of different methods and tools. In general, the method employed will depend on the **type of information** and the **level of measurement** (e.g. community vs. individual) required by the indicator.

In order to determine which information to collect for monitoring and how, an essential criteria is that it is feasible to reliably collect the information (not too time consuming or costly) and analyse it, and that it can facilitate the measurement of the project indicators and other relevant changes. The type of information collected can be broadly categorized as quantitative or qualitative:

- **Quantitative information** is expressed numerically and often highlights what is happening or answers questions related to how much or how many. It is typically collected using methods and tools including structured, closed-ended survey questions, distribution records, treatment records, and project databases collating ongoing measurements of relevant indicators. Examples include: 200 people in the sample are food insecure, 50% of the water points are functional, and 20% of the mothers in the sample have exclusively breastfed their children.
- **Qualitative information** is expressed alphabetically (in words) and is often used to explain quantitative data, including why or how changes are or are not observed. Qualitative information can highlight how people feel about a situation, their attitudes, and behaviour. It is typically collected using non-structured, open-ended methods and modes of inquiry during interviews, focus group discussions, or observation. For example: during community meetings, women explained that they spend a considerable amount of their day collecting drinking water, and so have limited water available for personal and household hygiene or less time to take care of young children.

As noted in section 1.1.3, **projects should aim to have both quantitative and qualitative indicators** where possible. As would be expected, different types of indicators may require different data collection methods. However it is useful to note that effective analysis of a quantitative indicator can benefit from collecting both quantitative and qualitative information in terms of understanding and learning. For example, a food security project may use Household

Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) as a quantitative indicator, and collects this quantitative data from beneficiaries using a survey. This would be enough to measure the HDDS itself as per the indicator, but the HDDS (the numeric score) would not be able to explain why certain patterns of scoring were occurring, or gain a sense of the extent to which changes were attributable to an intervention. However, the collection of additional qualitative data (e.g. through focus group discussions) provides the opportunity to explore and track these questions and issues.

Overall a strong M&E system will combine a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators and information. This improves the coherence and reliability of information and findings, as compared to a single-method approach collecting only quantitative or qualitative data.

FIGURE 1.2: ADVANTAGES OF COLLECTING BOTH QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

- **Facilitates triangulation**. Quantitative and qualitative data can be compared to determine how each one confirms, challenges, or explains the other.
- **Flexibility**. It adapts to changing circumstances through rapid feedback techniques.
- **Analysis**. It provides more detailed contextual analysis, which can produce significant differences in the outcomes of projects in different locations.
- **Communication**. It supports the use of different communication styles for presenting findings to different audiences

Both quantitative and qualitative methods for information collection are scientifically valid ways of assessing progress against indicators. The choice of which type of data to collect should be based on the question that needs to be answered. Quantitative and qualitative data and methods are complementary, hence each is more valuable when used in combination. Advantages and disadvantages of both are presented in the table below.

TABLE 1.3: COMPARING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS AND INFORMATION

	QUALITATIVE METHODS	QUANTITATIVE METHODS
PROS	- Validate interesting findings or explore inconsistencies in data - Identify social and institutional drivers that are hard to quantify - Promote rapport between researchers and research subjects resulting in more candid responses and the opportunity to explore topics in more depth - Explain statistical indicators - Generate hypotheses and inform survey design that can be tested by quantitative methods	- Provide uniform measures of project outputs and outcomes - Representative sizes ensure that findings are generalizable among a wider population - Enable inferences of causality and relationships between outcomes and explanatory variables via statistical analysis - If done well, can provide robust and statistically representative data to be utilized in evidence-based decision-making, and influencing external stakeholders (e.g. donors)

CONS	• Used alone, findings are rarely representative of the population or statistically significant due to smaller sample sizes • Susceptible to bias given open-ended structure and desire to please the researcher with whom rapport has been built • Susceptible to bias based on the framing of questions, quality of enumeration, and approach to selecting respondents • More subjective: describes a problem or condition from the point of view of those experiencing it	• Inability to explain results, particularly when issues are hard to quantify (e.g. beliefs and perceptions, social relationships, administrative bottlenecks, or institutional dynamics); data may provide incomplete information without contextual analysis and understanding • Can generate a substantial amount of information – potentially time-consuming in terms of input and analysis • Susceptible to bias based on the framing of questions, quality of enumeration, and type of sampling / respondents selected (selection bias) • Requires a systematic approach to sampling for uniform data (see ***Annex 11 – Sampling***)

1.2.5 Counting Beneficiaries

The number of beneficiaries is the primary indicator used by Action Against Hunger to assess and communicate our overall performance in delivering humanitarian assistance. Thus, it is essential for projects to count beneficiaries in a uniform way. All projects should track and document the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries as a required output indicator, using the guidelines on counting beneficiaries that are included in the Action Against Hunger Activity Progress Report (APR) package (see ***MSTK 3 – Activity Progress Report***). Keeping an ongoing and accurate count of project beneficiaries is a core indicator for all Action Against Hunger projects and sectors (see ***MSTK 2: Key Indicators***).

Direct beneficiaries are people who receive an input from a project implemented by Action Against Hunger and/or an implementing partner. These verifiable individuals benefit from qualitative and quantitative changes produced directly by activities (transfers, training, assets, care, and services) that are directly related to the aims of the project and clearly defined in project documentation.

CALCULATING TOTAL DIRECT BENEFICIARIES (D)

D per sector = Da + Dp without double counting in the same sector, where
Da = Direct Beneficiaries
Dp = Implementing partners' direct beneficiaries

In other words, the total direct beneficiaries are the **number of (unique) people who receive 1 type of assistance in 1 sector.**

When counting direct beneficiaries:
• **Disaggregate data by sex and age for all sectors**;
• **The same beneficiary should <u>not</u> be double counted** when benefiting from several activities within the *same* project in the *same* sector (e.g. water point, latrines, hygiene kit)

- **The same beneficiary <u>should</u> double counted** when benefiting from several activities within the *same* project (1 contract/LGA) in *different* sectors (e.g. a formally integrated FSL and nutrition project)
- **The same beneficiary <u>should</u> be double counted** when benefitting from *different* projects (2+ contracts/LGAs) in *different* sectors (e.g. informally integrated FSL and nutrition projects in the same community).

Indirect beneficiaries are people who benefit from an indirect result or effect of Action Against Hunger's interventions on their environment. This number should be estimated as a catchment population, without double counting the same beneficiaries of various Action Against Hunger projects in a given area and for a given period.

For more information, review *MSTK 3e - APR Guidelines for Counting Beneficiaries*.

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION

This section should be read in conjunction with Action Against Hunger International's Evaluation Policy, and **Chapter 3 (Evaluation)** of this document, which provides a step-by-step guide to soliciting external evaluations.

1.3.1 Defining Evaluation and its Purpose

An evaluation can be defined as the systematic review of the operations and/or outcomes of an intervention, compared to a set of implicit or explicit standards, as a means of contributing to the intervention's improvement (Weiss, 1998). More simply, it refers to the systematic determination of the quality or value of an intervention or project (Scriven, 1991). In practice, an evaluation could have a range of objectives, but in nearly all cases they relate to improvement, learning, and/or accountability.[2].

Different types of evaluations may be conducted depending on the phase of the project cycle, topics under review, timeframe available, and level of participation sought, among other factors (see *Annex 3 – Types of Evaluations* for more information). Nonetheless, evaluations should always be formulated with a primary purpose of improving our interventions, learning from interventions and/or accountability. Evaluation content needs to be developed based on the needs of intended audiences/users to maximize the utilization of results. Evaluations seek to:
- **Assess performance against higher-level results** and the resources required to achieve these;
- **Improve performance** and contribute to learning through assessment of successes and failures, analysis of what caused these, and recommendations for improvement;
- **Uphold accountability and transparency** to stakeholders by demonstrating whether or not work carried out was in line with plans and in compliance with established standards;
- **Provide information that can be used to facilitate decision-making**, adjust project management, mobilize resources, advocate and influence, and recognize and acknowledge accomplishments (both to internal and external audiences).

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[2] See, for example, *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action, ALNAP (2010)* www.**alnap**.org/pool/files/2010-training.pdf

1.3.2 The Difference between Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring is a continuous process and often focuses on what has been achieved against lower level results (i.e., activities, outputs, and to some degree outcomes). **Performance Evaluations are undertaken at key points in a project cycle** and assesses the extent to which higher level results (outcome and likelihood of impact - intended and unintended, positive and negative) have been achieved. For example, monitoring data may tell us the quantity of food distributed, frequency of distribution, to how many people, or how it was utilized; while an evaluation may look at long-term change, such as changes in food insecurity and undernutrition prevalence, sustainability and other changes over time.

Monitoring provides information on whether activities and the achievement of results are on track for beneficiaries, staff and managers. **Evaluations** tend to have a broader scope, including lesson learning and identifying good practices that can feed back into current or future projects and policy development, as well as inform senior management and donors. Both monitoring and evaluations have important roles to play for accountability and to facilitate learning. Monitoring is central to providing a key source of data for evaluations.

1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING & EVALUATION SYSTEMS

1.4.1 Defining a Participatory M&E System

Effective participatory development means that key stakeholders should be involved in the assessment, planning, implementing, and monitoring & evaluation of a project to ensure it will achieve the intended results. **A participatory M&E system is therefore one in which all key stakeholders are involved in project monitoring and evaluation**, including donors, local government officials, local community, local staff, partners, and other NGOs.

Project planning and decision-making are often pre-determined by relief agencies' staff, rather than engaging those they are designed to assist. This is often due to the need to act quickly. However, basic accountability to beneficiaries should be adhered to. Communities in which a project is implemented should have a sizeable say in shaping and undertaking M&E activities and in decision-making related to M&E findings. **That requires local participation in all stages of the project cycle,** particularly:

- Providing space for open, two-way, **ongoing communication and consultation** with beneficiaries and other key stakeholders about Action Against Hunger, and its activities, to enable stakeholder input on: identifying what results they want to see and how success of results will be measured; supporting monitoring of activities; judging the results the project is achieving; and participating in decision-making around the direction of the project; and
- **Establishing systematic feedback mechanisms** (see Chapter 4 and the Accountability Toolkit).

The extent of key stakeholder engagement will be influenced by the context, feasibility, timeframe and other factors, including the commitment to ensuring participation. It's important that project teams understand their responsibilities in terms of encouraging and facilitating participation; they should also however have a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of participatory M&E to judge what approaches are feasible and appropriate in a given project or circumstance. See *Annex 4 - Participation in Monitoring & Evaluation Systems* for more on the advantages and disadvantages and steps for ensuring stakeholder participation. The extent to which a project encourages beneficiary participation and accountability should also be monitored.

Potential Barriers to Participation: When seeking community participation in a project, it is important to be aware of potential barriers (lack of time, interest, or availability; psychosocial trauma; or discrimination of marginalized groups) to the participation of the entire community or specific target groups. Ways of addressing these barriers should be discussed with the community. These could include undertaking a time analysis to determine what time of day (season of the year) people can participate or creating conditions that fit particular groups' needs.

1.4.2 Community Participatory Methods

It is important **to agree with communities on how communication and participation will occur**, so that the most vulnerable (particularly women, children, and the elderly) are not excluded from communication and opportunities to participate, and that communication is undertaken consistently. See further details on **Gender** (Section 1.6.3) and **Ethical considerations** (Section 1.7.1).

A number of different approaches and tools can be used to encourage participation (see *MSTK 9: Participatory Data Collection Tools & Techniques* for more guidance and examples of tools). In addition to these standardized methods, locally available formal and informal communication channels can be used to provide information to communities including notice boards, town criers, community meetings and ceremonies, newspapers, and radio broadcasts in local languages. Staff overseeing communications should be well briefed about the role and mandate of Action Against Hunger as well as the project.

1.5 DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN M&E, SURVEILLANCE & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

1.5.1 The Difference between Project Monitoring and Context Surveillance

Context Surveillance is the ongoing analysis of changes to a project's broader operating environment beyond a given project's implementation, which helps enable more strategic decision-making. Surveillance is undertaken as a stand-alone project in each country and should produce regular reports focusing on relevant contextual trends, seasonal dynamics, admission and health trends, or market prices. These reports support decision-making around early warning and risks, disaster management, appropriate interventions, and advocacy for access and resource allocations. Since surveillance activities are themselves a project, the monitoring of surveillance activities is also required but focuses rather on process and output monitoring.

TABLE 1.3 DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN CONTEXT SURVEILLANCE & PROJECT MONITORING		
	CONTEXT SURVEILLANCE	**PROJECT MONITORING**
Objective	To provide information on specific/multi-sector (FSL, NUT/H, MHCP, WASH, DRM) context indicators, to inform strategies and decide what interventions are required depending on the situation.	To provide progress updates against project indicators, highlighting achievements and challenges, and any variance between targets and achievements, for project improvement.

Methodology	Qualitative and quantitative information on changes in _context_ indicators	Qualitative and quantitative information on changes in _project_ indicators
Timing	Aligned to local policy context and seasonality. Can happen at any point before, during or after a specific project	Aligned to project implementation and management cycles
Results	Trends and alerts on changes in the context and contribution to early warning systems	Continuous updates on project performance and effects on beneficiaries
Audience	Decision makers on local and national level, local authorities and humanitarian community on field and HQ level.	Field project personnel, beneficiaries, communities, project partners, decision makers in field, HQ, and donors

1.5.2 The Difference between Evaluation and Knowledge Management

Learning and knowledge management (sometimes referred to internally as 'capitalization') is a process to make knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned accessible and useful for Action Against Hunger staff members and other stakeholders. It is designed to ensure that every individual's experience is not confined to him or herself alone, but serves the entire community. New projects or actions benefit by the preservation and transmission of acquired experience and knowledge.

Learning and knowledge management differs from evaluation in that it seeks to facilitate internal learning around what was done and how and why the project did or did not achieve objectives, with recommendations focused on approach and best practices. Therefore, it tends to involve internal staff or those who have lived the experience.

TABLE 1.4 EVALUATION VS. LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT		
	EVALUATION	**LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**
Objective	To assess whether results were achieved effectively, efficiently, and sustainably. Most evaluations are done for impact measurement, learning and accountability	To learn lessons of implementation for future application through the accumulation and sharing of practices or knowledge within and between organizations
Methodology	Internally or externally facilitated, including desk reviews, primary data collection, and field observation.	Internally facilitated desk and workshop-based reviews of lessons around what was done, how, and why
Timing	Project mid-point, end, real-time, or after conclusion of project activities (as per the Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy)	Mainly at project end or when comparing different approaches for implementation

Results	Findings (positive/negative) on achievements and recommendations, good practices.	Lessons learned (neutral) around how approaches were used, defined good practices
Audience	Field/HQ staff, donors, beneficiaries	Field/HQ staff and partner organizations, donors, national line ministries

1.6 CORE CONSIDERATIONS & MAINSTREAMING IN M&E

This section provides an introduction to and summary of the core cross-cutting issues and considerations that should be factored into all project M&E systems: **nutrition security, resilience, gender, and equity.** This includes guidance on how teams can design M&E systems that strengthen Action Against Hunger's capacity to assess impact against its overall objectives (e.g. addressing undernutrition) in the longer-term, and how to better mainstream the concerns of vulnerable populations in our programs and corresponding M&E.

1.6.1 Action Against Hunger's Nutrition Security Policy & Impact on Undernutrition

Action Against Hunger's core organizational objectives aim for a long term, sustainable impact on undernutrition through the achievement of nutrition security.[3] In this framework, our Nutrition Security Policy (2014) calls for adopting a multi-sectoral approach and acting in an integrated, simultaneous way on the causal context-specific factors contributing to undernutrition.

Our project teams must work to ensure that M&E systems support our commitment to holistically respond to undernutrition in a coherent, evidence-based manner. Project Managers and Coordinators should look for opportunities to integrate the policy and its guiding principles into project's M&E systems (***Annex 6 – Action Against Hunger Nutrition Security Policy Summary and Possible M&E System Considerations***).

As Action Against Hunger aims to contribute to the treatment and prevention of undernutrition, **it is important and appropriate to measure an intervention's medium-term effect on undernutrition, at both household and community levels**. As such, projects should consider measuring anthropometric indicators (e.g. mid-upper arm circumference, weight-for-height, etc.) during baseline and endline surveys. In addition the **key indicators** (see Chapter section 2.2.1 and ***MSTK 2 – Key Indicators for All Sectors***) have an important role to play in this regard: with an increasing recognition that undernutrition is caused by a combination of factors, the key indicators chosen aim to encourage a more holistic approach to programming while addressing the underlying causes of undernutrition.

FIGURE 1.4: NUTRITIONAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT PROJECT (NEAP)

The Nutritional Effects Assessment Project (NEAP) aims to develop, pilot, and systematize a nutritional impact assessment method, which would be used routinely in all Action Against Hunger interventions aimed at influencing nutritional status. It is expected that NEAP will contribute to

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[3] In line with the interconnected factors and pathways leading to undernutrition, nutrition security has been defined by the World Bank as ongoing access to the basic elements of good nutrition (i.e. balanced diet, safe environment, clean water, and adequate health care—preventive and curative) for all people, and the knowledge needed to care for and ensure a healthy and active life for all household members. The World Bank, 2013, Improving nutrition through multi-sectoral approaches.

reduce some of the challenges with impact measurement. Scheduled for completion in 2017, this project will follow three main steps:

1. Identify and develop a robust, low-resource framework/methodology for systematic nutritional impact assessment and analysis within project M&E systems;

2. Develop guidance and capacity building materials and systemize the use of interventions to affect nutritional status;

3. Meta-analyze and identify what works best for preventing under-nutrition.

Source: Action Against Hunger NEAP Project Concept Note (2014)

1.6.2 Measuring Resilience & Considering Impact

Action Against Hunger's nutrition security interventions contribute to the improvement of the level of resilience of the target population. Indeed a well-nourished individual and communities will be more productive and will have more capacity to face shocks and stresses. In a context where shocks, driven by demographic pressure or climate change, are becoming more frequent and more intense, measuring resilience will also give Action Against Hunger an indication of the level of risk of becoming undernourished, a population is exposed to when disaster strikes.

Measuring long term trends in assets and life losses represents the most relevant resilience indicator as it take into account the actual occurrence of disaster over time and its effects. This level of measurement is usually beyond a projects' life-span and done by UN and government actors. An alternative is to integrate these indicators in independent surveillance systems or to **focus on the main elements constituting the risk management system in a particular context.** For example, our current disaster risk management indicators at output and outcome levels are constituted by three different groups of activity: preparedness, mitigation and institutional capacity building (*MSTK 4 - Thematic Indicators*). These building blocks correspond to the main objectives of the Sendai Framework for Action.

Pragmatically, consideration should be given to collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data that reflects the extent to which shocks and stresses are being addressed, as mapped out in Action Against Hunger's Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change Guidelines and Policy and the Sendai Framework. This could include instances such as collecting data on activities that improve utilization of scarce resources (e.g., fuel efficient stoves to reduce firewood consumption), activities that promote disaster risk management (e.g., reforestation), optimize land-use (e.g., planting and cultivation practices), and enhance communities' level of understanding of climate change adaptation.

1.6.3 Mainstreaming Gender into M&E Systems

Action Against Hunger adheres to the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) gender guidelines and strives to mainstream gender across our programs.[4] M&E systems should be designed to help measure progress against this objective. All data collected, analyzed, and reported on should be broken down (disaggregated) by sex and age (men, women, boys, girls) to look at and address the impact of any unequal power distribution, as well as the benefits and challenges between men and women. **Sex disaggregated data** and monitoring can help detect any negative results of a project, or issues with targeting in terms of gender.

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[4] As per the IASC Gender Marker, a project is considered to have mainstreamed gender when the following conditions apply: A gender and age analysis is included in the project's needs assessment and is reflected in one or more of the project's activities and one or more of the project's outcomes. See: http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/topics/gender/page/iasc-gender-marker

Similarly, positive influences and outcomes from the **activities supporting gender equality** and aspects shall be documented and learned from to improve and optimize interventions. Women may, for example, have less access to or control over resources for themselves and their children, or might be easier able to help define and use NFIs and utensils, which should be monitored and considered by the project.[5]

Other ways to mainstream gender into the M&E system by:

- Reviewing M&E tools and methods to ensure they document gender differences;
- Ensuring that terms of reference for reviews and evaluations include gender-related results;
- Ensuring that M&E teams (e.g. data collectors, evaluators) include men and women as diversity can help in accessing different groups within a community;
- Reviewing existing data to identify gender roles prior to a crisis to help set a baseline;
- Holding separate interviews and FGDs with women and men in different age/wealth groups;
- Including verifiable indicators focused on the benefits of the project for women and men;
- Using gender-sensitive indicators to point out gender-related changes over time.

Additional consideration on how to ensure gender sensitivity in proposals and programs are presented in the Action Against Hunger Gender Policy and Toolkit (also see ***Annex 7 – Integrating the ACF Gender Policy into M&E***).

1.6.4 Mainstreaming Equity into M&E Systems

Mainstreaming equity into M&E aims to assess the extent to which projects are designed and implemented to ensure fair and impartial treatment of the target populations, particularly looking at vulnerable and marginalized groups.

To enable the mainstreaming of equity in M&E systems**, the collection, analysis, and reporting of data should include a breakdown of the most vulnerable socio-demographic groups of the population**, e.g. sex, age, ethnicity, disability, pregnant and lactating women, internally displaced people, or orphans and other vulnerable children, ethnic or marginalized minorities.

In addition to disaggregating M&E data by socio-demographic groups, project teams can also identify the worst-off groups intended to benefit from the intervention (defined geographically or by the nature of the inequity such as gender or ethnicity) and use the M&E system to **assess their level of access to assistance or services. Specific indicators** (e.g. proportion of each worst-off group which utilizes the service) can be incorporated into data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure sufficient support is being provided to these group and to ensure that these groups are not discriminated against.

> **FIGURE 1.5: MAINSTREAMING HIV INTO M&E SYSTEMS**
>
> Another group for which socio-demographic data can be disaggregated is **People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs).** In some projects they may be a specific target group. Similar to other distinctive or marginalized groups, disaggregated data should be collected to determine whether sufficient support is being provided to cater for the needs of this group and to ensure that this group is not discriminated against (see pages 44-56 of the IASC Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings). Consideration of groups marginalized should be incorporated by reviewing relevant frameworks, like WHO and UNAIDS Inter Agency Task Team guides.

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[5] While actively pursuing gender equality, negative outcomes should be avoided and do no harm principles applied. Activities focusing solely on women, such as livelihoods opportunities, may result in a backlash if men feel their role in the home or society is being undermined. Therefore an approach using households' complementary capacities, rather than individual capacities, for program approach and definition will be beneficial.

When a group speaks on behalf of another and makes assumptions about its access to services, triangulate this information with either the involved group or, when this is not possible (e.g. for infants), make sure the most knowledgeable informants are identified. When undertaking evaluations, project teams can also incorporate equity as a specific aspect for assessment.

1.7 ETHICS, CODES & STANDARDS IN M&E

Action Against Hunger project M&E systems must adhere to ethical and legal principles and considerations, along with the relevant codes and standards that underpin M&E in the humanitarian sphere. This section provides a brief overview of these issues and should be read in conjunction with *Annex 8 – M&E Principals and Ethical Considerations* and *Annex 9 – Codes and Standards*.

1.7.1 Ethical M&E Principles & Practices

The quality, reliability, and credibility of M&E findings and subsequent decision-making can be compromised if ethical principles and considerations are not taken into account. M&E processes should therefore **abide by international professional ethics, standards, and regulations** to minimize any negative ramifications or risks to stakeholders, particularly local stakeholders, and ensure **credibility and accountability**. A full checklist of relevant principles and considerations can be found in *Annex 8;* however it is worth highlighting some of the key issues and principles:

- **Informed Consent:** Potential respondents should be informed of the purpose of the data collection, how the interview will be conducted, how information will be used, and whether it will be published.
- **Anonymity/Confidentiality:** A person's right to provide information in confidence and anonymously should be built into data collection, with potential respondents asked about their preference for anonymity.
- **Data Storage and Security of Personal Information:** The collection and storage of individuals' personal information poses additional ethical obligations for project teams. Any personal data collected from individuals/households should be securely maintained and be available only to those with access rights.
- **Do No Harm:** As with any humanitarian or development activity, the principle of "do no harm" should be upheld in M&E activities. Data collectors and those disseminating M&E findings/reports should take into account where information might endanger or embarrass respondents or those non-community members involved in conducting the M&E.
- **Integrity:** Wilful misrepresentation or misuse of data and results should be avoided and any wrongdoing should be reported. This includes situations where internal or external stakeholders (e.g. donors, governments, community leaders, etc.) seek to influence, misuse or misrepresent the accurate collection, analysis, presentation and communication of data or results.
- **Code of Conduct, Transparency & Corruption:** Action Against Hunger organizational procedures, standards and code of conduct should be adhered to as part of any M&E system and any real or potential conflict of interest, including offers of incentives or payments, should be raised to the relevant people. Monitoring of potential or actual corruption in projects and communities should also continuously be reviewed and checked**.**

1.7.2 M&E Codes, Standards & Guidelines

M&E should be conducted in line with recognized codes and standards appropriate and relevant to Action Against Hunger and the project being undertaken; adherence should be built into the M&E system. This **includes adherence to the mandatory codes and standards that would apply to any humanitarian or development project or activity** (e.g. SPHERE, ICRC & NGO Code of Conduct), including to the principles contained in the Action Against Hunger Charter (independence, neutrality, non-discrimination, free and direct access to victims, professionalism, and transparency).

M&E systems and activities should also accord with **relevant organizational policies** e.g. Evaluation Policy, Gender Policy, Nutrition Security Policy, etc., along with the **policies and requirements of the donor(s) funding the project**. Country-specific government laws, regulations, and sector-specific requirements can be included in agreements and contracts where necessary. Staff should aim where possible to ensure that codes and standards are built into logframes and M&E plans as specific indicators whose progress can be assessed. See also *Annex 9 - Codes & Standards.*

FIGURE 1.6: SPHERE M&E INDICATORS

Key Monitoring Indicators:
1. Monitoring information is collected on a timely and useful basis, is recorded and analyzed in an accurate, logical, consistent, regular, and transparent manner and informs ongoing programs.
2. Systems are in place to ensure regular collection of information in each technical sector and identify whether the indicators for each Sphere standard are being met.
3. Women, men, and boys and girls from all affected groups are regularly consulted and involved in monitoring.
4. Systems are in place enabling a flow of information between the program, sectors, affected groups, relevant local authorities, donors, and other actors as needed.

Key Evaluation Indicators:
5. The program is evaluated against stated objectives and agreed minimum standards to measure overall appropriateness, efficiency, coverage, coherence, and impact on the affected population.
6. Evaluations take account of views and opinions of affected population, and host community if different.
7. The collection of information for evaluations is independent and impartial.
8. The results of each evaluation are used to improve future practice.

1.8 Information Communication Technology in M&E Systems

The availability and advancement of information communication technology (ICT) to support M&E activities has improved the efficiency and way in which information is collected, stored, analyzed, and shared, thereby enhancing the accountability, responsiveness, and effectiveness of interventions. ICT in M&E can be used for a range of purposes, including digitalized data collection, for feedback communication with beneficiaries, for mapping of intervention areas and coverage, and for documentation of an intervention's progress or results.

ICT for **electronic data collection**, in particular, has been widely utilized by humanitarian and development organizations. Action Against Hunger's preferred platform for electronic data collection is **Open Data Kit (ODK) -** a free, open-source collection of tools for mobile surveys and mapping. Project teams are strongly encouraged to utilize ODK or compatible platforms where possible. For more information on ODK, please see *Annex 5 – Data Collection*. Training materials for electronic data collection in ODK are provided in *MSTK 23 – ODK Training.* Example surveys in ODK format can be found in *MSTK 24 – ODK Tools*.

ICTs for M&E have many potential benefits including: (1) continuous, real-time feedback and information, yielding faster, more informed decision-making; (2) direct communication channels with beneficiaries, thereby reducing bias and increasing credibility and use of findings; (3) improved accuracy and availability of information; (4) identification of more complex trends or patterns; (5) potentially lower costs once established compared to paper-based data collection and analysis; and (6) potential for increased private sector engagement.

> *PLAN EARLY FOR ICT FOR M&E*
>
> *ICT for M&E is most likely to be successful if it is considered and planned during the design phase of a project. Discussing ICT for M&E with local partners and donors while planning a new project can help to ensure adequate budgetary allocation and time for adoption, guarantee involvement of key local stakeholders, and enlist donors as supporters from the beginning.*

1.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

1. A **logframe** is a key tool in the M&E system, summarizing the project plan, and mapping the multiple levels of objectives and associated results and indicators in the short, medium, and long-term. It also documents risks and assumptions related to the project.

2. **Measuring impact** can be challenging, costly, and involves long-term changes which may take months or years to become evident, while our projects generally have relatively short timeframes. In addition, confirming that a specific higher level change is attributable to a particular project can be difficult or even impossible. Given these challenges, **all our projects should focus on measuring outcome (medium-term), output, and process level changes** for all interventions.

3. **An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable** that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, and/or to reflect the changes connected to an intervention. They are central to any M&E system. Projects should aim to have both quantitative and qualitative indicators where possible.

4. **Baseline and endline surveys** are an essential part of any M&E system, and can be seen as a start and end to monitoring. Data from these surveys provide a measurement of each indicator before and after the implementation of the project.

5. **M&E features throughout the project cycle**. Consideration of M&E activities should begin as early as possible in the project assessment and design stage, to ensure appropriate means of measuring progress, results, and quality are built into the project structure and resources are allocated (budget, HR etc.).

6. A project M&E system is constituted of the combination of processes, tools, templates, staff,

equipment, and activities required to collect, manage, analyze, report, disseminate and utilize M&E information.

7. **An M&E system is required to:** assist decision making; provide the basis for organizational learning; to be accountable to stakeholders; to identify results and achievements; and to support stakeholder ownership.

8. **M&E requires commitment at all levels of Action Against Hunger** and steps should be taken by all to institutionalize M&E good practices. Every staff member has a role to play, which may vary depending on the size, structure, and resources of each project and country programme.

9. **Monitoring** is the systematic, periodic and continuous collection, analysis, and utilization of information on project processes, outputs, and outcomes throughout the project life cycle. It builds upon solid problem analysis and the project logical framework. There are essentially two different types of monitoring that need to be incorporated into an M&E system: monitoring or results, and monitoring of implementation.

10. **Project monitoring should not be confused with context surveillance**, which is the ongoing analysis of changes to a project's broader operating environment beyond a given project's implementation, which helps enable more strategic decision-making.

11. **Evaluation** is the systematic review of the operations and/or outcomes of an intervention, compared to a set of implicit or explicit standards, as a means of contributing to the intervention's improvement.

12. A **participatory M&E system** is one in which all key stakeholders are involved in project monitoring and evaluation, including donors, local government officials, local community, local staff, partners, and other NGOs.

13. Our project teams must work to ensure that M&E systems support Actin Against Hunger's commitment to holistically respond to undernutrition in a coherent, evidence-based manner. Staff should look for opportunities to integrate the **Nutrition Security Policy** and its guiding principles into project's M&E systems.

14. Action Against Hunger aims to contribute to the treatment and prevention of undernutrition; **it is important and appropriate to measure an intervention's medium-term effect on undernutrition, at both household and community levels.**

15. **Resilience measurement** will give an indication of the capacity of a population to deal with future shocks and stresses while maintaining its nutrition status. Consideration should be given to collecting, analyzing, and reporting on **data that reflects the extent to which shocks and stresses are being addressed**, as mapped out in our Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change Guidelines and Policy and the Hyogo Framework.

16. **Gender should be mainstreamed in all project M&E systems**. All data should be broken down by sex and age (men, women, boys, girls) to facilitate gender analysis of implementation and results.

17. To enable the **mainstreaming of equity in M&E systems**, the collection, analysis, and

reporting of data should include a breakdown of the most vulnerable socio-demographic groups of the population.

18. The quality, reliability, and credibility of M&E findings can be compromised if ethical principles and considerations are not taken into account. M&E processes should therefore **abide by international professional ethics, standards, and regulations** to minimize any negative ramifications or risks to stakeholders, and ensure credibility and accountability.

19. The availability and advancement of **information communication technology (ICT) to support M&E activities** has improved the way in which information is collected, stored, analyzed, and shared, thereby contributing to the accountability, responsiveness, and effectiveness of interventions.
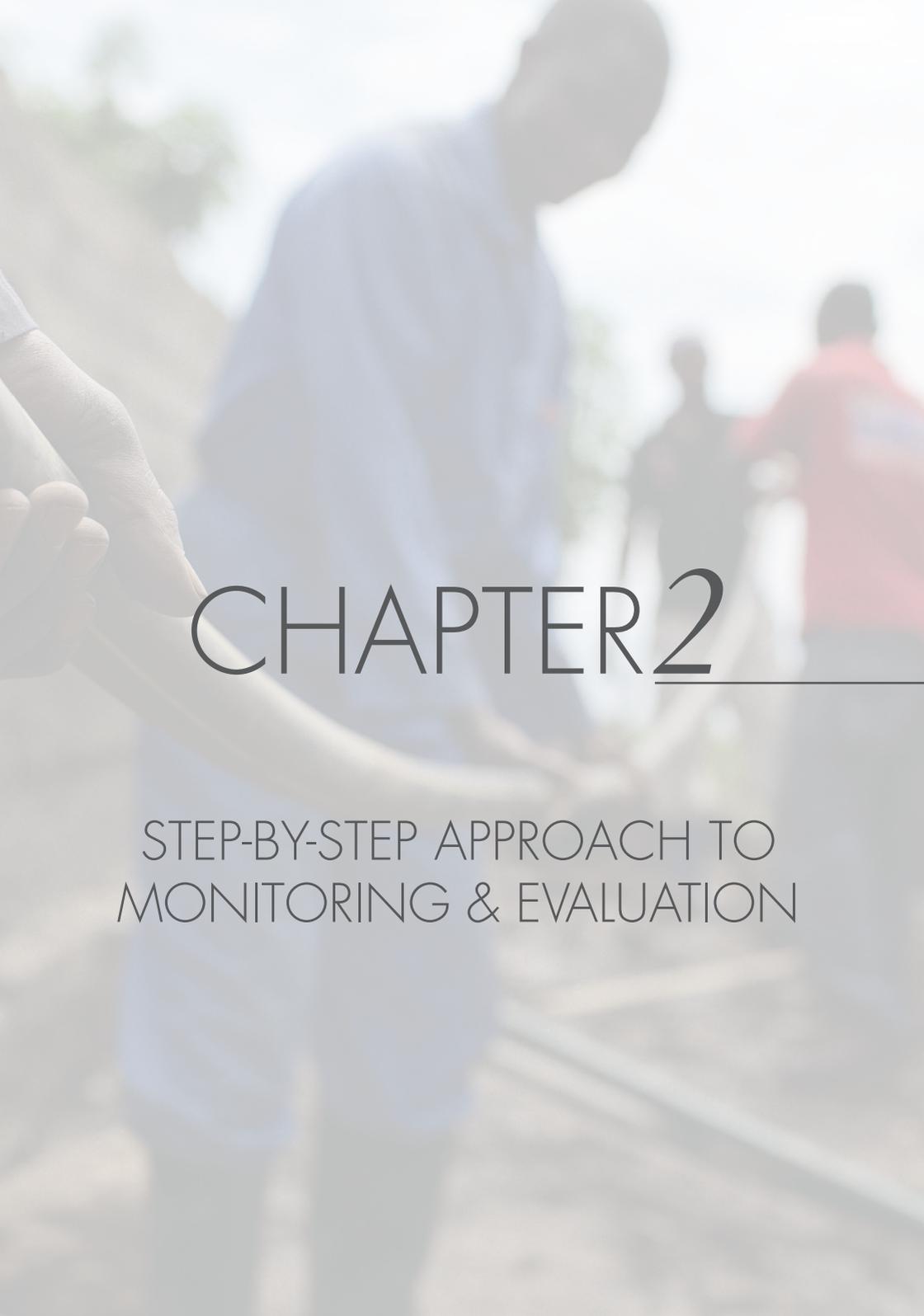
CHAPTER2

STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO MONITORING & EVALUATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES & CONTENTS

The aim of Chapter 2 is to introduce a step-by-step approach to establishing a project M&E system. Action Against Hunger staff should first understand the concepts introduced in Chapter 1, as Chapter 2 builds on these concepts in more depth.

Note that M&E should be incorporated throughout all stages of the project lifecycle. Steps 1-3 (see contents below) should be put in place before implementation starts, during the project design phase**. If project implementation begins without an established M&E system, it is difficult to go back and set one up**. The project, beneficiaries and team will not receive its full benefit and may instead see it as a burden.

All of the steps are applicable in all contexts – emergency, recovery, and long-term development contexts. For projects in emergency contexts (see **Figure 2.3**), steps will necessarily have to be completed within a shorter timeframe for implementation. For recovery projects, those in chronic crises or developmental projects, more time is available for planning and carrying out all the steps.

MULTI-SECTORAL & SECTOR SPECIFIC TOOLKITS: These Guidelines have been designed for the narrative chapters to provide practical guidance that should be used in tandem with the relevant M&E tools. These tools are placed within the accompanying toolkits, and include a central **Multi-Sectoral Toolkit (MSTK)**, which contains the essential M&E tools that form the basis of the M&E system, along with **sector and topic-specific toolkits**, as follows:

- MULTI-SECTORAL M&E TOOLKIT (MSTK)
- FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS TOOLKIT (FSL)
- WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE TOOLKIT (WASH)
- MENTAL HEALTH & CARE PRACTICES TOOLKIT (MHCP)
- NUTRITION & HEALTH TOOLKIT (NUT-H)
- DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT (DRM)
- EVALUATION TOOLKIT (EVAL)
- ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLKIT (ACC)
- ADVANCED M&E TOOLKIT (ADV)

References will be made to various tools and toolkits throughout the narrative. In addition readers will also be referred to various annexes which contain important supporting guidance. In order to get the best use of the Guidelines overall, readers are encouraged to explore and utilize the supporting annexes, toolkits and guidance. You can also check the Table of Contents of the Guidelines, which includes a list of all annexes and toolkit contents.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

Project teams should incorporate a **multi-sectoral approach to M&E** when appropriate and feasible (i.e. when projects of different sectors operate in the same location, or when one project incorporates activities from different sectors, or a project has a multi-sector/ nutrition security objective). Some concrete ways that sectors can harmonize M&E include:

- Work collaboratively to develop the M&E plan;
- Discussions between sectors on the choice of indicators;
- Exchanges of practice on measurement methods;
- Identification and management of overlaps in monitoring exercises;
- Joint data collection (e.g. development of integrated data collection tools)
- Joint analysis of monitoring results and identification of common concerns;
- Joint reporting and communication of monitoring results
- Collaborative decision-making on how to react to monitoring information; and,
- Joint inputs to the design of the independent evaluation exercises.

A multi-sectoral approach to M&E has several advantages:

- **Saved Resources:** For example, sending one staff to collect data for two sectors from the same group of beneficiaries, as opposed to sending two different data collectors (one from each sector) at separate times, saves financial, human, and logistical resources.
- **Improved Representation & Relationships:** Beneficiaries receiving assistance across several sectors appreciate when monitoring activities are coordinated as it saves them time and effort. For instance, beneficiaries only have to participate in one focus group discussion instead of several and their feedback can reflect their entire experience. And

beneficiaries can understand that it is one and the same organisation implementing the various activities.

- **Improved Information Sharing:** Undertaking monitoring and evaluation activities collectively enables better sharing of information between staff in different sectors, including recognition, discussion and development of possible solutions for shared concerns or identification of complementary activities (e.g. cross-sectoral activities addressing water access for agricultural production, nutrition education and food access and utilization)
- **Better overall understanding:** Monitoring together provides an opportunity to better understand and follow the complexity of the contexts we work in, and the influencing of one intervention outcome on the other.
- **Better Utilization of Findings:** Analyzing M&E findings across sectors presents a more comprehensive picture of the effects of project intervention which results in improved decision-making.
- **Stronger Reporting:** Coordinated M&E enables clearer, more harmonized reporting to project stakeholders who learn more from consolidated reports than segmented ones.

2.1 STEP 1: INITIATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT'S M&E SYSTEM

Step 1: Initiate Development of the Project's M&E System
Objective: Purpose and basic principles of the project M&E system to be further developed incorporating stakeholder's requirements
Timing: During project proposal design, before starting to plan for monitoring
Activities:
1.1   Agree on the purpose of the project's M&E system
1.2   Confirm stakeholder information requirements
1.3   Agree on the extent of stakeholder participation
1.4   Determine M&E milestones

2.1.1   Agree on the Purpose of the Project's M&E System

An M&E system should facilitate both **learning** from the project and **accountability** on performance to key **stakeholders**. Other purposes of the M&E system may be to assess:

- The extent of **project coverage** and the effect on people excluded from activities;
- The extent to which **project benefits** can be sustained after activities cease; and
- The extent to which the project is in **compliance** with standards, codes, agreements and contracts signed, and government regulations and laws

Defining the purpose of the project M&E system will contribute to determine the information it needs to collect, the methodologies for data collection and analysis, and the human, technical, and financial resources required.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E
*A **multi-sectoral meeting** should be held to identify shared purposes and decide how to integrate purposes that are unique to specific sectors. The meeting should be comprised - according to the context and structure of the program - of technical coordinators, support coordinators, program managers, and M&E staff.*

2.1.2 Confirm Stakeholder Information Requirements and Participation

An M&E system will meet the information needs of multiple stakeholders. **M&E is *not* set up and done to solely meet donor and HQ accountability requirements**. Other key stakeholders include the project team and management, as well as implementation partners who can use the information to define evidence-based project decisions and adaptive measures. The information needs and feedback of project participants, including beneficiaries should also be built into the M&E system. Input from a range of local stakeholders will increase the likelihood of relevant information shaping the project (see 1.4).

A stakeholder analysis (see *MSTK 9f - Stakeholder Analysis Guidance Note*), done during project planning, will clarify stakeholder information needs. However, it is recommended that a fuller analysis of their information requirements be done when planning the M&E system. These can be captured in a **Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix (see *MSTK 19*)**

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

*When developing the Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix, multi-sectoral teams should **identify common stakeholders and shared information requirements**. Even if sectors have different stakeholders, they may still share common information needs, which may enable joint data collection and analysis.*

Action Against Hunger encourages active stakeholder participation in project formulation, implementation, and M&E activities to ensure relevant programming and accountability (see section 1.4). There are however degrees of participation (***Annex 4 - Participation in M&E Systems***), with associated resource implications that will have to be factored into the M&E plan. Greater participation will require more resources in terms of staff time and budget to carry out such activities. However, greater participation is likely to reduce the cost of project corrections that may be necessary if beneficiaries have not been significantly involved. At a minimum, projects should include beneficiaries in the development of project indicators as well as the feedback mechanisms (see Chapter 4 (Accountability)).

2.1.3 Determine Major M&E Activities and Milestones

Milestones constitute what a project is intended to achieve by a particular stage or time, in this case during the project cycle and implementation of a project's M&E system. For monitoring, key minimum milestones or requirements for all projects include:

- An **M&E Plan** put in place before project implementation begins;
- A **baseline survey** undertaken before project implementation begins;
- The **use of post-activity surveys (distributions, trainings, etc.)** whenever possible;
- An **endline survey** undertaken upon completion of project implementation; and
- An **evaluation** planned from the project outset and undertaken upon completion of project.

In addition to monitoring milestones, project teams should also include evaluation milestones into the M&E plan and calendar prior to implementation (see Chapter 3 (Evaluation)). It is also recommended that after action reviews should be undertaken after each intervention to learn lessons and document good practice (***MSTK 15 - After Action Review Guidance Note***).

2.2 STEP 2: DESIGN KEY DOCUMENTS TO SET UP M&E SYSTEM

STEP 2: DESIGN KEY DOCUMENTS TO SET UP AN M&E SYSTEM

Objective: Ensure key M&E documents are in place to establish an M&E system
Timing: During the project design and proposal writing stage
Activities:
2.1 Select project indicators and agree on a process to assess progress against them
2.2 Create a M&E plan
2.3 Allocate resources for M&E based on the M&E plan

2.2.1 Select Indicators and Agree on a Process to Assess Progress

An M&E system is built to align with the project logframe. Logframe indicators, agreed during project development, help measure progress against the objectives specified in the logframe (see Chapter 1 section 1.1, *and **Annex 1 - Designing a Logframe and Indicators***). As noted in Chapter 1, projects should aim as far as possible to have both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Good quality logframes and indicators are essential to effectively monitor project progress and provide a solid basis for evidence-based evaluations. As such, indicators should be selected by:

- **Engaging beneficiaries** to understand their perspective on desired change(s) (see section 1.5);
- Utilizing the sector-specific **key indicators** (*MSTK 2 - Key Indicators for all Sectors*) including additional relevant **thematic indicators** (*MSTK 4 - Thematic Indicators*); and
- Considering commonly used **evaluation criteria** (see Chapter 3)

NOTE: The key indicators can, but don't have to be in the logframe submitted to the donor, but should be reflected in the monitoring data collection tools (including the APR)

Key Indicators: Action Against Hunger's core organizational aim is to ensure nutrition security and prevent undernutrition, and where required, treat it. With an increasing recognition that undernutrition is caused by a combination of factors, the key indicators chosen aim to encourage a more holistic approach to programming while addressing the underlying causes of undernutrition, aiming to achieve nutrition security for all. As such, any projects implemented should aim for nutrition security. Therefore, **the purpose of the key indicators is to**:

- Ensure that all programs work towards **common objectives**;
- Serve as the **standard indicators** against which all programs in a given sector can report

and thus, facilitate comparison of cross-sectional data across program sites; and

- Encourage **greater focus on the medium-term change(s)** being brought about by programming, as opposed to focusing solely on activities and outputs.

Each project should include the relevant key indicators for its sector(s).

FIGURE 2.1: KEY INDICATORS FOR ACTION AGAINST HUNGER SECTORS	
Sector	**Key Indicators**
FSL	o Minimum Dietary Diversity – Women (MDD-W) o Coping Strategy Index (CSI) o Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)
WASH	o Change in diarrhea prevalence among project beneficiaries o Change in presence of hand-washing enablers o Change in individual knowledge of key times for hand-washing o Change of access to improved water o Change in use of latrine/toilet o Change in hygienic disposal of child feces o Change in availability of WASH enablers at community facilities, such as schools, health centers, nutrition centers, etc.
NUT-H	o Coverage of key interventions Coverage of program: Coverage refers to those that need treatment against those actually receiving treatment. o Proportion of discharges as Cured/Recovered (SAM and/or targeted MAM) o Proportion of discharges as Died (SAM and/or targeted MAM) o Proportion of discharges who defaulted (SAM and/or targeted MAM) o Proportion of the target population receiving and taking supplements with the correct dosage and frequency
MHCP	o Changes in optimal breastfeeding practices by lactating mothers (age-appropriate breastfeeding) o Changes in quality interactions between caregivers and their children o Changes in adults' level of well-being
DRM	o Change in resilience score

> *KEY INDICATOR TIPS*
>
> *At a minimum, measure all relevant key indicators during baseline and endline surveys to determine progress and enable comparisons. Teams should also measure some key indicators periodically during implementation to learn how data fluctuates throughout the year and along the project implementation. Use the Key Indicator Tracking Tool to organize and bring to light any measurement issues with indicators (**MSTK 5 - Key Indicator Tracking Tool**).*

Thematic Indicators: A list of optional thematic indicators has been created to enable project staff to select the indicators most appropriate for their objectives, activities, and context. Selecting from a predetermined list of indicators facilitates standardization and harmonization across projects, while also allowing flexibility to adapt them to specific contexts.

Rules of thumb for selecting thematic indicators are as follows:
- **A project logframe should be the primary basis for selecting thematic indicators.**

Thematic indicators should be able to measure a project's unique inputs, activities, outputs, and expected outcomes, as depicted in the logframe. For more information on linking indicators to the logframe, see ***Annex 1 - Designing a Logframe and Indicators***.

- **Ensure that a broad range of process, output, and outcome indicators are included.** This will enable teams to assess the quality of program performance in addition to outcomes.
- **If an evaluation is planned from the outset, thematic indicators should be selected that correspond to particular evaluation criteria or evaluation questions.** If these indicators are not included from the beginning, they generally cannot become part of the information considered for endline evaluations.
- **Select only the thematic indicators that are most relevant for your program and information needs.** While there is no set number of indicators that must be included, thematic indicators should be prioritized and limited to only those necessary to understand program performance and progress along the theory of change. This will avoid over-burdensome data collection and collecting of too much information that cannot be properly analyzed.

The list of thematic indicators is by no means comprehensive but it is intended to support and inspire the creation of contextually appropriate and harmonized indicators for project monitoring. See ***MSTK 4 - Thematic Indicators for All Sectors***.

SELECTING THEMATIC INDICATORS USING A MULTI-SECTORAL LENS

While key indicators are divided by sector, project teams should review, and when appropriate, include key and thematic indicators from other sectors. When a project includes two sectors or more, staff from all sectors should meet to jointly build the logframe. This ensures that objectives, intended results, and indicators are in sync.

Further points to consider when developing and **selecting indicators** include:

- In addition to incorporating key and thematic indicators, project teams should also review the Action Against Hunger criteria commonly used for evaluations to ensure that selected indicators can be used to assess progress against these criteria (see Chapter 3).
- For each indicator, teams need to agree on the variables, methods, and frequency of data collection, and any additional considerations to ensure appropriate use of the given indicators (***MSTK 1 - M&E Plan and Calendar Template***).
- A thorough review of available secondary data (online, from local and international stakeholders and partners, and from experts) should be undertaken to see what may be of use to the project and where it may reduce the need for primary data collection

INDICATOR TRAPS TO AVOID

- *Indicator Overload: Indicators do not need to capture everything in a project, only what is necessary to measure progress and results, enable decision-making and remain accountable.*
- *Output Fixation: Counting myriad activities or outputs is useful for project management but does not show the project's results. It is better to select a few key output indicators and focus on outcome indicators*
- *Indicator Imprecision: Indicators need to be specific so that they can be readily measured.*
- *Excessive Complexity: Complex information can be time-consuming, expensive, and difficult to understand, analyze, and work with. Keep it simple, clear, and concise*

2.2.2   Create a M&E Plan

A M&E plan is based on a project logframe and details the following:
- The M&E **data** to be collected and analyzed for each **indicator**;
- The **methodologies** to be used for data collection and analysis; The **frequency** of data collection and analysis;
- The **responsibilities** to collect, analyze, and report on the data; and
- The **usage** of the data, and in what format it will be distributed and by whom.

A M&E plan facilitates the: preparation and execution of monitoring activities in a timely manner to inform management decisions on implementation; allocation of appropriate resources to M&E; and agreeing and sharing of key M&E milestones with stakeholders for coordination purposes.

The M&E plan provides the project team and stakeholders with a number of benefits:
- Increases efficiency of data collection, analysis, and reporting when thinking has gone into what data should be collected and how it will be used;
- Helps project managers plan the use of resources to avoid staff overstretch;
- Avoids over-promising on data and then under-delivering;
- Allows a cross-checking of logframe content to ensure it is realistic; and
- Can help new staff get quickly up to speed on project M&E requirements.

Since it requires more time and money to correct poor quality data, project teams are advised to develop a basic M&E plan during project formulation to ensure appropriate resources can be requested through the project proposal. The plan should be finalized when funding is agreed on and before a baseline survey is undertaken and project activities begin.

A basic M&E Plan template and an example can be found in *MSTK 1 - M&E Plan and Calendar*. A more comprehensive M&E Plan template is also provided in the Advanced Toolkit – *ADV 10 – Detailed M&E Plan Template*. This can be used in planning holistically a project's M&E approach, resources, and structure of responsibilities.

> ## MONITORING ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS
>
> *Assumptions and risks are a key part of the logframe and can have significant implications for the success, or otherwise, of a project. Assumptions are about the external operating environment of a project i.e. the situation you expect to apply during implementation (e.g. the region will remain politically stable, or local markets will remain functional). Risks pertain to situations were assumptions about the external operating environment do not hold, although risks can also be internal.* **It's important that assumptions and risks are monitored on a continuing basis,** *but in reality they are often overlooked. To address this* **assumptions should be treated like indicators and integrated into the M&E Plan** *so that the assumptions (and associated risks) are systematically monitored.*

The M&E Plan is linked to an **M&E calendar (***MSTK 1***),** which outlines when different monitoring and evaluation activities will be undertaken, helping the project team plan their resources throughout the project's duration.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

Multi-sectoral project teams should meet to **jointly develop the M&E plan and calendar** *as these are the primary tools for harmonizing M&E activities.*
Multi-sectoral teams should:
- *Determine which data collection methodologies can be carried out jointly;*

- *Determine frequency of joint data collection, incorporating sector specific exercises to avoid overextending project resources and beneficiaries' time;*
- *Identify who will be responsible for specific M&E activities within each sector; and*
- *Decide how M&E information will be shared and used amongst sectors.*

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FIGURE 2.2: ONE M&E PLAN, ONE ACTIVITY PROGRESS REPORT (APR)

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The APR is a standard internal reporting tool (***MSTK 3 - APR Package***) at Action Against Hunger. It is updated monthly to allow for early detection of discrepancies between targets and results and for rapid action to be taken. Having a detailed M&E plan in place will facilitate monthly compiling of the APR during project implementation. Both the narrative and the quantitative APRs must be based on the contractual Logframe. When one project corresponds to one Logframe, one sector, one donor, and one M&E Plan, one APR will be established.

<u>One Project = One Logical Framework = One M&E Plan = One APR</u>

Please see ***MSTK 3 - APR Guidelines*** for further information on this

2.2.3   Allocate Resources for M&E based on the M&E Plan

M&E activities are often not fully undertaken because they have not been properly resourced in terms of funds, human resources, or capacity. While writing the project proposal, project teams should estimate the overall resource requirements to fully execute the M&E plan and ensure this is included in the budget. Donors are generally willing to fund M&E costs, including necessary human resources, where the outline, rationale and objectives of the M&E plan have been properly presented. The M&E plan will be finalized once project funding is agreed on and prior to the beginning of activities. *As a rule of thumb, projects should allocate between 3 to 5% (and some donors recommend as much as 10%) of the total project budget for M&E. This will vary based on the project structure and type of monitoring requirements.*

2.3 STEP 3: ESTABLISH A PROJECT M&E SYSTEM

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STEP 3: ESTABLISH A PROJECT M&E SYSTEM

</div>

Objective: Ensure the appropriate plans, processes, and capacity are in place for the M&E system to function effectively

Timing: After funding has been agreed, but before project implementation commences

Activities:
  3.1 Finalize M&E plan, agreeing on cross-cutting variables
  3.2 Assess M&E capacity and build M&E skills
  3.3 Finalize and allocate the M&E budget

2.3.1   Finalize M&E Plan, Agreeing on Cross-Cutting Variables

The M&E plan that was initially drafted during the project design stage should be finalized once funding is agreed and prior to the start of project activities in a participatory way **involving key project stakeholders**. This entails:

- **Reviewing the indicators** and associated means of verification to ensure they remain

relevant and feasible with resources available;

- Agreeing on key considerations and **crosscutting themes** that need to be mainstreamed, monitored and evaluated as part of the project (e.g. nutrition security, resilience, gender, equity – see section 1.6) ;
- Agreeing on the **technologies** to be utilized on the project, e.g. tablets, mobile phones, and platforms for electronic data collection. Based on this plan, the field team should procure the necessary tools in advance and implement any necessary trainings.
- Agreeing on **the balance between primary and secondary data**. Primary data are data collected directly by the project team, while secondary data are data collected by others. Primary data can be expensive to collect and at times may duplicate data being collected by others. Secondary data may be cheaper and may meet project needs; however, these data are not always relevant (e.g. it may cover a different area to that of the project) or reliable. Examples of secondary data that could be used are: assessments, surveys and monitoring (e.g. market price, health) undertaken by NGOs, the UN, or Government agencies, or demographic statistics available from the local or national authorities. Dialogue with partners working in the same thematic and geographic areas can help to determine what is already available and can be shared.
- Agreeing on **the balance of quantitative and qualitative data** required. When finalizing the M&E plan, it is important to reflect on the value added by collecting different data and whether the right balance of quantitative and qualitative data has been included.

Figure 2.3 : Some Contextual & Security Considerations when Setting up an M&E System

Certain contexts and types of project can have significant implications for how the M&E system is set-up and implemented, including in terms of what is prioritized, how and when information is collected, and by whom, and how data is stored and safeguarded. The following provides a summary of some of the scenarios that projects may be operating in and how this can affect M&E systems, along with recommendations on how to navigate these circumstances and maintain effective M&E.

M&E During Emergencies

During emergencies, implementation is usually faster, more dynamic, and complex. There are also sometimes greater demands by donors and the media to improve accountability. Unfortunately, M&E capacity throughout the steps outlined in Chapter 2 is often reduced; therefore M&E systems must become simpler, while still providing regular and timely information. Compromises that are often necessary in emergencies include:

- Constrained time frame for training enumerators and piloting M&E tools;
- Greater reliance on non-probability sampling methods;
- Using paper-based systems rather than electronic systems, which require more capacity building (also for security purposes);
- Not collecting lists of beneficiaries when doing so would compromise the safety of program participants and/or program staff;
- Relatively more emphasis on assessing needs and on outputs rather than outcome monitoring;
- Remote monitoring/supervision (for example, pictures) rather than in-person monitoring/supervision.

M&E systems during emergencies must help determine priorities, identify emerging problems and trends, and enable decision-making for project adjustments to meet needs. The priority should be, similar to the remote monitoring, on key indicators to measure outcomes. Additional

advanced indicators can be added during a later stage. As the emergency situation stabilizes, the M&E system should become more formal and structured. If the logframe was developed during the early stages of the response, it should be revisited and revised to reflect the normalized situation as well as long-term objectives.

While the steps to establish an M&E system remain the same (only simpler) during an emergency, some M&E methods are particularly useful in these settings. For instance, a **Real-Time Evaluation** is a fast and easy way to do an early check once implementation is well under way and systems are generally in place. Six to eight weeks after an emergency response has begun, the project team collects data for these evaluations using interviews and discussions (see *MSTK 12 – Individual & Group Interview Guide*) which allow the community to provide feedback on the response to date. Findings can be incorporated into the current and later phases of the response.

Remote Management and M&E

A remote approach to project implementation occurs when some or all of the Management team (whether national or expatriate) is unable to access the field. A remote approach can be adopted for various reasons ranging from security risks to administrative constraints. When a project is implemented remotely there must be closer follow-up of the project; however, given the reduced access and potential security risks involved with data collection, the M&E system should be simplified. The following M&E practices should be considered:

- Separate the M&E team from the project implementation team to ensure an unbiased assessment of the project's progress and effects;
- Triangulate data with key informants to avoid rumors and the spreading of incorrect or biased information;
- Reduce the amount of information collected by prioritizing the most important data to measure outcomes;
- Utilize standardized monitoring formats;
- Take pictures to share information between the field, advisors, coordinators, and HQ to validate the quality of work and clarify technical questions the remote control team may have in the field;
- Review monitoring procedures to limit overall volume of information collected but ensure minimum standards of quality control;
- Where and when possible, senior management should visit the field to validate the quality of the project and offer recommendations, for example flash visits, and regardless of the specific field of expertise of the visitor;
- Increase internal reporting frequency - field staff should report each week on progress of activities, problems, and solutions; the management team should provide regular feedback on these reports;
- Set up reciprocal monitoring between Action Against Hunger and a partner with presence in the area, where the other NGO, local authority or external actor without stakes in our project can indecently monitor our activities, and we can monitor their projects

Remote management using local partnerships (non-Action Against Hunger staff) require additional considerations. For case studies of remote management using local partnerships, as well as accompanying best practices, see: "Breaking the Hourglass: Partnerships in Remote Management Settings – The Cases of Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan".
http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/Breaking-the-Hourglass_Syria_Iraqi-Kurdistan.pdf

Hazard-Proofing the M&E System

As Action Against Hunger intervenes in zones with high levels of natural or man-made hazards, as part of the establishment of an M&E system, project teams should assess the

functionality and suitability of the system should a hazard strike. As part of the internal risk assessment, usually incorporated within a security assessment, our needs to pay attention to the effect of hazards on data collection, treatment and storage.

To assess the adaptability and sustainability of the M&E system, teams should consider if: a) M&E data and reports have been backed-up elsewhere and if data can be accessed remotely if needed; b) the M&E system could continue if electricity or specific technologies fail, and what changes would be needed if this occurred; and c) data collection protocols and questionnaires (particularly those needed during an emergency) are available in hard copy.

2.3.2 Assess M&E Capacity and Build M&E Skills

Project Managers must **determine the available M&E experience within the project team** and other potential participants in the M&E system (e.g. the communities). Gaps between the project's M&E needs and available qualified personnel should be identified, which will determine if capacity building or outside expertise is needed.

Types of skills that may have to be developed around M&E include:

- Basic M&E concepts, purposes, and requirements;
- Survey design and adaptation;
- Sampling methodologies and good practices;
- Enumeration and facilitation techniques;
- Use of ICT innovations and systems for electronic data collection, e.g. ODK;
- Ethical issues and data management considerations;
- Data analysis and interpretation;
- Data and result reporting.

MAKE TIME FOR LEARNING

As regular, large-scale trainings are not feasible and missions are faced with frequent turnover of staff, every opportunity to review, update, discuss, or practice skills should be seized:

- *Organize recurrent mini-workshops;*
- *Address M&E topics at other prearranged gatherings such as strategy meetings;*
- *Host ad-hoc trainings when Technical Advisors carry out field visits; and*
- *Encourage coordinators to take the time to coach program managers.*

External support should be used for specific technical and punctual expertise, for objectivity, to save time, or as a donor requirement. External expertise may be relevant for data collection system set up, data entry and statistical analysis, to undertake specific monitoring activities, or for independent evaluations.

Internal M&E capacity should be considered – and capacity building plans included - in the final M&E plan when determining M&E roles, responsibilities, methods to use, and training needs. An **M&E focal point** for every project should also be defined.

ASK FOR HELP!

M&E may seem intimidating at times. Instead of excluding valuable measures or unsystematically using M&E tools, don't hesitate to ask for help! Coordinators and HQ Technical Advisers are ready to offer assistance by

2.3.3 Finalize and Allocate the M&E Budget

While the M&E budget was estimated during project formulation, once funding has been received a detailed budget and allocations should be further developed and agreed upon. Project teams should determine the costs associated with all M&E tasks and include the following budget items:

- **Human resources,** including permanent international and national staff, local temporary staff supporting monitoring, external consultants, etc.;
- **Capacity building**/training and any **tool development**; and
- **Implementation expenditures and running costs**, such as facility costs, office equipment and supplies, data collection tools, any travel and lodging, computer hardware and software, other costs associated with new technologies, printing, publishing, and disseminating M&E documents, etc.

Budgets should be exhaustive to avoid lack of funding and delays in M&E. Project teams should also break down any big items into their component parts e.g. for a baseline survey, separate costs for translation of tools, data entry, etc. Past practices by Action Against Hunger or other NGOs in the area can be researched to determine local costs. Estimations of evaluation costs can be found in the annual Action Against Hunger Learning Review and with the Evaluation, Learning, and Accountability unit at Action Against Hunger-UK.

MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

*For multi-sectoral projects, teams should **discuss how the M&E budget will be shared and allocated among sector teams**, keeping in mind that harmonized M&E activities will save financial resources.*

2.4 STEP 4: COLLECT AND MANAGE MONITORING DATA

STEP 4: COLLECT AND MANAGE MONITORING DATA

Objective: Collect the most relevant and accurate data, using the most appropriate source, data collection method, timing and frequency of collection, and people responsible. Manage how data will be systematically and reliably stored and accessed.

Timing: During project implementation
Activities:

4.1 Agree on and document data collection methods and tools
4.2 Determine beneficiary counting method and agree on sampling requirements
4.3 Develop data collection tools
4.4 Minimize error and bias in data collection and analysis
4.5 Recruit and train data collectors
4.6 Conduct a baseline (and endline) survey
4.7 Set-up the stakeholder feedback mechanism(s)
4.8 Collect monitoring data
4.9 Define data entry and management processes

2.4.1 Agree on and Document Data Collection Methods and Tools

Project staff should agree on the data collection methods and tools that will be used well in advance of the data collection itself to ensure that resources are available. Projects must plan to invest in the cost to identify, acquire, store, disseminate, and use the information. **Please reference *Annex 5 - Data Collection Matrix; MSTK 8 - Data Collection Guidance*; and *MSTK 9 - Participatory Data Collection Tools & Techniques*** for more detailed information on data collection methods and tools, and the MSTK and other toolkits for a wide range of tool templates and examples.

NOTE ON DATA COLLECTION

*Data collection is often the most expensive step in M&E. **If saving costs is needed** the following approaches might be applied (bearing in mind it's important not to compromise the quality of the M&E system and avoid not collecting critical data):*

- *Limit data collected to objectives, indicators, and assumptions in the logframe;*
- *Use relevant, useful, significant, accurate, and credible secondary sources of data;*
- *Use only the sample size necessary to detect change(s) – see section 4.3 and **Annex 11 - Sampling Guidance Note for** more information;*
- *Avoid collecting unnecessary information;*
- *Use participatory and group methods, including self-administered questionnaires where feasible (see **Annex 5 – Data Collection Matrix of Methods** and toolkits for further guidance)*

Once data collection methods are agreed upon they should be summarized in the M&E plan. For more detailed or complex methodologies, a comprehensive outline of steps should be documented. This documentation will help future data collectors duplicate the methodology (e.g. during the endline) so data can be easily compared.

Project teams should use the data collection preparation checklist during planning to ensure all steps have been completed (***MSTK 8b - Data Collection Preparation Checklist***).

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

*Multi-sectoral teams should meet to **determine which methods and tools for data collection would best meet shared information requirements**. Some methods and tools may need to be adjusted to incorporate the needs of all sectors involved.*

Teams should **collect both quantitative and qualitative data using a variety of methods** (***Annex 5 - Data Collection Matrix***). By adopting an approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative data and methods, information is validated, more credible, and thus more likely to be used for decision-making (see Chapter 1 Section 1.2.4 for more on this approach).

To decide which data collection method is most appropriate, project teams should consider the following questions:

- **What kind of data is required**? What type of indicators does the project have?
- Does the team have the required level of **expertise**? How technically difficult and adaptable is the data collection method?
- Is the data collection method **culturally appropriate**? Will it make people feel comfortable communicating personal information?

- Does the method **facilitate learning**?
- Are there adequate **levels of literacy** for participants to contribute?
- Do both data collectors and participants have satisfactory command of the **language** to be used during data collection?
- Are there any **social barriers** that may prevent data from being collected?
- Does the data collection method enable **participation** from stakeholders of different ages, with physical challenges, or with limited time availability?
- Does the data collection method target individuals and/or groups, and which is likely to be the most effective and appropriate given the context and requirements (often a mixture of group and individual methods will be used)?

In addition to these questions, project teams should also weigh the relative advantages and disadvantages of the methods under consideration (see *Annex 5 – Data Collection Matrix of Methods* and toolkits for further guidance and reference).

2.4.2 Determine Beneficiary Counting Method and Agree on Sampling Requirements

Each project should keep a confidential database of direct beneficiaries. As highlighted in Chapter 1 (section 1.6), beneficiary data should be disaggregated in accordance with gender and equity mainstreaming, entailing disaggregation of data on the basis of sex, age, and relevant factors relating to vulnerability and status (e.g. disability, displacement, PLW etc.). To avoid double counting, and provide an accurate measure of a project's achievements, projects must precisely define those they are going to count and how they are going to count them. Action Against Hunger's APR Guidelines provide specific direction on how to calculate direct and indirect beneficiaries (see Chapter 1 section 1.2.5 and *MSTK 3e - Counting Beneficiaries - Guidelines*).

Beyond beneficiary counting, it is not practical or necessary for projects to measure most indicators across a whole population[6] (e.g. a census). Rather, projects should collect data from a statistically representative subgroup of the population and make generalizations (within a specified margin of error with a known probability) about the larger population; this is known as **sampling**. Project teams must determine the appropriate sample size and sampling methodology to best fit their needs and to avoid wasting resources. See *Annex 11 - Sampling Guidance Note* for information on key sampling terminology, methods and a basic step-by-step guide.

Ideally, sampling should be **representative** so that analysis about this part of a population can be used to make conclusions about the whole. In designing your sampling methods it is essential **to minimize potential bias** (see section 2.4.5) and try to accurately represent the whole population.

A key question to always keep in mind is: "Who is being included and who is potentially being excluded in light of our sampling methodology?" Choices therefore have to be made about:
- The appropriate **method** for sample selection;
- The appropriate **sample size** is (e.g., number of individuals or households), and;
- Who should be included so that the sample is **representative** of the whole population?

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[6] Here "population" may be understood as either the Action Against Hunger beneficiary population (e.g. those directly receiving services) alone or as the whole population of a community.

2.4.3   Develop Data Collection Tools

As noted previously, project teams should **collect both quantitative and qualitative data**. Specific tools, based on the agreed data collection methods, will be developed for each project based on the particular information requirements and contextual factors. Note however that significant numbers of examples of prepared tools (e.g. questionnaires) are already in existence, and staff can save themselves a lot of time and avoid 'reinventing the wheel' by drawing on these; in addition to the examples and templates provided in the M&E Guidelines toolkits, technical coordinators, advisors and other senior staff can support in accessing further examples of tools when necessary. Clearly tools from other projects, contexts and programs may not always be suitable to be used in their entirety, but where relevant they can be carefully edited and adapted to purpose.

FOCUS ON "NEED TO KNOW"

Ask these questions prior to including any question in a data collection tool:

Relevance: *Why is this information needed? How does it relate to the project objectives?*

Purpose*: How will this question help the project? How will this information be used?*

Accuracy*: How accurate does the data need to be? What level of accuracy can be accepted?*

Types of Data Collection Tools: Please see *Annex 5 - Data Collection Matrix of Methods*, and the toolkits for reference, guidance and examples. In addition to the multi-sectoral tools, each technical sector has specific tools available that are aligned with their respective key and thematic indicators.

Standardized questionnaires are generally required for quantitative data collection in a number of monitoring types, such as baseline and endline surveys, post-distribution surveys, and post-test surveys. Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys are specific types of questionnaires used to measure results of interventions promoting behavior change, and are common in all sectors influencing behaviours, i.e. Nutrition, WASH, DRM, etc.(see **Section 2.4.9,** *MSTK 7 – KAP Survey Examples and Guidance*, and *MSTK 18 – Behavior Change M&E Guidance Note*). Interview guides are useful when collecting qualitative data through focus group discussions or key informant interviews (see *MSTK 12 - Individual & Group Interview Guide*). The structure of the questionnaire/interview guide will vary depending on the purpose and type of data required. Project teams should use questionnaire checklists to ensure they have considered all key aspects (*MSTK 8c - Questionnaire Preparation, Review, and Validation Checklists*).

FIGURE 2.4 : SPOTLIGHT ON KAP SURVEYS

What: A Knowledge, Attitude, Practices (KAP) survey is a data collection method using predefined questions through a standardized questionnaire that provides both quantitative and qualitative information. A KAP survey can be used for multi-sector projects as well as single sector interventions. For examples of a KAP survey, please see *MSTK 7 – KAP Survey Examples and Guidance*, and Action Against Hunger self-training on KAP surveys.

How and Why: Through structured interviews, KAP surveys can be used to: 1) establish a baseline and learn contextual information; 2) assess progress and adjust activities to overcome challenges; and 3) compare with data collected in the same way at the start of the project to assess results.

For further guidance in preparing and executing a questionnaire see MSTK 8c - Questionnaire Preparation, Review, and Validation Checklists.

Other data collection methods such as mapping, focus groups, interviews, observation, ranking, scoring, story-telling etc. will require different tools to be used, adapted or developed. As usual this will come down to the project and sectoral information requirements. Examples of commonly used tools for qualitative data collection can be found in the Multi-Sector Toolkit, including *MSTK 9 - Participatory Data Collection Techniques; MSTK 12 - Individual & Group Interviews*; and *MSTK 13 - Direct Observation Guidance.*

The development of data collection tools will also be influenced by whether or not it has been determined to incorporate any ICT into the process. This may for example involve transferring an existing paper questionnaire to a digital platform (e.g. using ODK), or developing new or adapted data collection tools utilizing functionality that wouldn't have been feasible using paper-based or other direct physical modes of data collection.

2.4.4 Minimize Error and Bias in Data Collection & Analysis

Project teams should minimize error and bias to ensure reliable M&E data. Bias occurs when an M&E team member's opinion influences data collection or when disproportionate weight is placed on some aspects of the findings due to problems with sample selection. This can undermine the accuracy and precision of M&E and can be minimized by the appropriate use of specific tools and approaches, including:

- **Representative Sampling and Selection**: Selection bias should be avoided by ensuring that the people, places, and time periods selected for data collection are representative of the project population, location, and context. The accuracy of data can be tested by repeating data collection over a period of time, geographic area, and population to show trends and ensure it is representative. However, repeat studies of the most successful or convenient sites or populations to reach should be avoided. See *Annex 11 - Sampling Guidance Note* for more information on the sampling process.
- **Leading Questions**: Questions should be neutral in their phrasing and leading questions that encourage respondents to answer in a particular direction should be avoided. For example, asking, "What benefits has this project brought to you and your family?" pushes the respondent to reply in the affirmative as it assumes that the project has been beneficial. Using a more neutral question, such as, "What changes have you seen as a result of the project?" gives the respondent the option of providing positive or negative feedback.
- **Effective Data Management**: Appropriate coding and correct data entry must be ensured, and those undertaking data entry and data analysis must be appropriately trained. A random selection of data forms collected should also be double-entered or checked against data entered. See *MSTK 10 - Data Entry & Analysis Guide* for more information on data entry practices.
- **Effective Data Analysis**: Poor data analysis can lead to inaccurate conclusions and reporting. Systematic "bias" can occur due to common mathematical mistakes, such as incorrect calculation of percentages. Bias can also happen in instances of analysis of small sample sizes or if the sample is not representative of the population. Interpretation of quantitative data based on assumptions that are not tested or do not hold (e.g. sufficient sample size and random sampling) can also result in erroneous or biased conclusions. Where the reasons are not understood for data results differing from those expected, teams should undertake qualitative data collection to ascertain reasons.
- **Use of Comparison Groups**: Inclusion of a comparison group (also known as a control group) in an evaluation can help attribute progress of outcome in its interventions. However, Action Against Hunger usually does not use control groups due to the ethical considerations

of a humanitarian situation and logistical requirements. However, when a comparison group is used (such as in rigorous evaluation and research contexts), the comparison group should be a group similar in socio-economic and demographic terms to those with whom we are working, perhaps phased into the project later (see *ADV 8 - Stepped Wedge Cluster Design* for more ideas*).*

- **Triangulation of Data and Sources**: Checking various types of data collected against each other in-country and globally can also help test for error by checking the reasonability of the findings. For example, data collected by Action Against Hunger on nutrition or crop production in a particular locality can be cross-checked against that collected by other NGOs, by the UN, or by local government statistical services to highlight any differences that need to be followed up. Similarly, data can be cross-checked against international databases.

2.4.5   Recruit & Train Data Collectors

When possible, internal project staff should undertake data collection. However, monitoring activities may require additional external data collectors to be hired on a temporary basis to be able to collect sufficient data within available timeframes and without undermining other ongoing project implementation. In preparing to recruit data collectors (also known as field monitors, interviewers, enumerators, or surveyors) the following four steps should be taken (see *MSTK 8d - Steps for Data Collector Recruitment & Job Description* for more detail and guidance):

1. Determine the number of data collectors required;
2. Agree on desired skills for the data collectors and supervisors;
3. Develop job description for the data collectors; and
4. Hire and train local data collectors.

Training (of internal and external data collectors) should include: an overview of the project, objectives of the data collection activity, guidance on how to collect high quality data using specific data collection techniques (such as completing questionnaires in their entirety and avoiding leading questions), a thorough review of the tools to be used, methods for selecting participants, a review of the fieldwork protocol, and field practice and pre-testing of tools.

As a result of practice, data collectors will be more at ease during actual surveys and discussions, making respondents and participants more comfortable as well. In addition, **field-testing of tools** identifies any unclear questions as well as questions that will not provide the desired information. Following the field test, tools should be revised to incorporate feedback from the field test.

Examples of concepts, materials, and good practices to be included in enumerator trainings can be found on the **SMART website**: http://smartmethodology.org/survey-planning-tools/smart-capacity-building-toolbox/. However, note that these trainings relate to surveys utilizing a fairly complex methodology and a high level of human resources. Non-population based data collection typically involves less intensive training of enumerators.

2.4.6 Conduct a Baseline (and Endline) Survey

Baseline Survey: A 'baseline' survey for each selected indicator needs to be collected and recorded prior to the start of project implementation. Baseline surveys are the first measurement of each indicator in a target population and serve as the starting point against which all progress can be assessed. At a minimum, project teams must capture the starting point for all key and thematic logframe indicators in the appropriate sector. A baseline survey should include an

appropriate mix of both quantitative and qualitative methods (*MSTK 6 - Baseline Survey Example* and *Annex 2 - Conducting Baseline & Endline Surveys*).

The baseline data and methodology must be well documented (e.g. baseline survey report and raw data) and saved (in electronic and print versions). This information will be used later in the project and/or at its end to determine what progress the project has made towards its objectives. Project teams should also note the time of year when the baseline survey was conducted to ensure that, where possible, the endline survey is carried out at the same time to minimize any seasonal bias.

Endline Survey: An endline survey is done at the end of project implementation. Endline data is compared with baseline data to assess what difference the project has made towards its objectives. An endline survey should replicate the methodology that was used during the baseline survey and, at a minimum, collect data on the same indicators that were included in the baseline survey (as well as on any new indicators that were added during project implementation).

To share findings with project stakeholders regarding changes between baseline and endline, tables, charts, and graphs can be effective for quantitative indicators. Narratives describing conditions before and after the project may be the best way to demonstrate changes found in analysis of qualitative indicators and data.

2.4.7 Set-Up the Stakeholder Feedback Mechanism(s)

Feedback mechanisms should be included in an M&E system to facilitate the provision of stakeholders' feedback (including concerns or complaints) about Action Against Hunger and its work (see Chapter 4 on Accountability for detailed guidance on feedback mechanisms). In exceptional circumstances where a full feedback mechanism cannot be implemented (e.g. security constraints), participation of beneficiaries in the M&E system is especially important (see Chapter 1 Section 1.4).

2.4.8   Collect Monitoring Data

Monitoring is the systematic, periodic and continuous collection, analysis, and utilization of information on project processes, outputs, and outcomes throughout the project life cycle. Project staff should observe activities while they are happening and while beneficiaries are engaged to highlight opportunities for operational improvements. During data collection activities, the team should be regularly debriefed and coached by the Project Manager and dedicated M&E staff (where available).

Depending on the project, issues or factors that staff are likely to need to collect data regarding include:

- **Management of commodities and distributions**: type, quantity, quality, amount distributed, losses, and utilization; (see *Annex 12 - M&E for Distributions* for specific additional guidance on monitoring distributions, and *MSTK 11 - Onsite & Post-Distribution Monitoring Examples* for some example templates and content).
- **Management of cash**: quantity, amount distributed, losses, and utilization;
- **Quality of infrastructure** built, and utilization: e.g. water and sanitation facilities
- **Beneficiaries**: number, gender, age breakdown, and appropriate targeting;
- **Performance** of staff and partners: in line with operating procedures, MOUs, and ethics;
- **Quality of training and capacity building**: in line with objectives, comprehension, learning

by doing, and attendance; (see **Annex 13 - M&E for Capacity Building** for further guidance in this regard)

- **Adherence to cross-cutting issues**: gender, equity, nutrition security, resilience, environment, and standards (see Chapter 1 section 1.6 and 1.7); and
- **Relationships with key local stakeholders**: communities, partners, and authorities.
- **Social and behaviour change** (see **MSTK 18 - SBCC M&E Guidance Note** for further information)

2.4.9 Define Data Entry and Management Processes

Data entry and management procedures must be clear. Required skills, templates, and equipment must be explicitly decided to reliably enter, clean, store, manage, and access M&E data. Data management systems will vary by project needs, size, and complexity. It will also be influenced by the type of data involved (e.g. quantitative vs. qualitative data, KAP surveys vs. spot checklists, etc.) and whether or not projects utilize ICT for electronic data collection. Accordingly, each project must determine the most appropriate structure of the data management system (**MSTK 10b - Data Management System Types**).

When entering data, project staff should adhere to the following guidance (see **MSTK 10d - Key Data Entry & Data Access Considerations** for further guidance):

1. **Agree on data format:** Data are likely to be entered/recorded, stored, and reported in many forms including numerical, descriptive, visual, and audio. Standardized formats and templates improve consistent formatting. Formats and units of measurement must be consistent throughout the project (e.g. do not measure some MUAC in centimeters and some in millimeters).
2. **Agree on data organization rules**: A project should have clear rules for filing and categorizing information electronically and physically for easy access and use. Information can be organized in many ways, project teams should agree on what is most appropriate for the project. A nomenclature should be used to ensure data is always recorded the same way regardless of the enumerator and consistently in time.
3. **Agree on data management and storage**: Typically data will be stored in either Excel, as a csv or other data file, or as a Word document. Data tied to indicators should be stored in a common format for ease of analysis.
4. **Agree on data access:** Data should be available to intended users but secured against unauthorized use (see **Annex 8 – M&E Principles and Ethical Considerations**). Teams will need to decide who will have permission to access data, how data will be searched and found, archived, and disseminated.
5. **Agree on data quality control procedures:** The project team should have clear rules for checking and cleaning data entered, and how to treat missing data. Poor data can be the result of mistyped data, duplicate data entries, inconsistent data, and accidental deletion. There should be regular supervision and random spot-checking of quality during data entry. Mathematical calculations (including formulas in Excel or statistical software) should be double-checked.
6. **Agree on responsibility and accountability for data entry and management**: A qualified team member should be responsible for developing and/or maintaining the data management system, assisting team members in its use, and enforcing any data management rules. For confidential data, clear lines of authorization should be in place. Paper-based surveys may require team support for entering data into Excel or an electronic system. Electronic data will likely require some steps for data cleaning.

2.5 STEP 5: ANALYZE & UTILIZE MONITORING DATA

STEP 5: ANALYZE & UTILIZE MONITORING DATA

Objective: Ensure data are properly analyzed and key recommendations and actions agreed
Timing: During project implementation
Activities:
5.1 Agree on data analysis plan and responsibilities
5.2 Prepare and analyze the data, assessing key findings and trends
5.3 Triangulate data to arrive at conclusions and make recommendations
5.4 Utilize information to facilitate decision-making, planning and learning

Data analysis converts collected raw data into usable information to support decision-making for improved project management and organizational learning. Data analysis involves looking for trends, clusters, or other relationships between different indicators and/or types of data. Data analysis facilitates (1) assessing performance against plans and targets, (2) forming conclusions, (3) anticipating problems, and (4) identifying solutions and good practices.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

*Multi-sectoral project teams should **analyze monitoring results together to identify trends that are meaningful to more than one sector and jointly discuss common challenges and solutions**. Multi-sectoral teams should consider each sector's unique perspectives and capabilities when deciding on follow-up actions.*

2.5.1 Agree on a Data Analysis Plan and Responsibilities

Accurate data analysis contributes to improved data reporting and dissemination. A clear data analysis plan can be included in the M&E Plan. When planning for data analysis, agreement should be reached regarding:

- **The purpose of data analysis**: What and how data are analyzed is determined by project objectives and indicators as well as the target audience and their information needs. For example, regular analysis of output indicators can determine if activities are occurring according to plans. If off-track, program managers can identify alternative solutions.
- **The frequency of data analysis**: This will depend on the frequency of data collection and information needs of users. Given that data is collected to improve decision-making and learning, data should be analyzed as soon as it is available so projects can be adjusted to respond to important findings. Data analysis can be scheduled to feed into key reports but remember that it is time consuming.
- **Responsibility for data analysis:** Analysis of monitoring data may be done by data collectors or by the Project Manager. Ideally data findings should also be discussed and analyzed with other key stakeholders. Multiple perspectives can help crosscheck data

accuracy, and improve critical reflection, problem-solving, learning, and utilization of information. Stakeholder involvement in analysis helps build ownership of M&E data, acceptance, and credibility.

- **The format for data analysis**: The format in which data are captured will either facilitate or hinder analysis. Teams must decide if the format used will allow for the full analysis required or if data has to be exported into other formats.

2.5.2 Prepare and Analyze the Data, Assessing Key Findings and Trends

Data preparation involves cleaning the data and getting it into a more usable form for analysis.

- Qualitative data should be transcribed, translated if necessary, and clustered or coded using key themes.
- Quantitative data should be coded to match the initial questionnaire, cleaned, and crosschecked for accuracy and consistency.

There are distinct detailed steps for preparing and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data (see *MSTK 10c - Prepare Quantitative and Qualitative Data for Analysis* for a detailed account of the steps).

> ### *TIP: One choice question vs. multiple choices question: a trap to avoid!*
> *A very common error needs special attention when analyzing data: if a quantitative question is answered by a unique choice, then the total of responses will be 100% (for example 38% Yes, 52% No, 10% Don't Know). If the respondent is allowed multiple answers, then the analysis will be done as a percentage against the entire sample, and the total is very likely not 100% (ex. 95% have a daily with diet rice, 87% with oil, and 12% with meat).*

Project Managers and other staff engaged in the analysis of monitoring data should assess key findings by describing what happened (e.g. conditions, states, and circumstances) as well as explaining why it happened and what may be the associated factors (e.g. relationships, trends, etc.). Qualitative data that has been coded should be summarized in narrative format to convey main ideas, highlight critical points, or note trends for further analysis. A clean quantitative dataset should be analyzed to look at the status (e.g. mean) of particular indicators of interest and perhaps at trends, if data across time exists.

FIGURE 2.5: EXPLAINING VARIANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Project teams must track and explain variance against targets to:
1. Know if a project is on track in the timeframe planned;
2. Identify, understand, and correct gaps between actual performance and targets;
3. Highlight how realistic expected results are;
4. Shape resource planning and inform decision-making;
5. Help capture lessons learned to revise plans or aid future planning; and
6. Critically analyze project performance.

When assessing findings, ask:
1. Are there any **trends/clusters in the data**? If yes, why?
2. Are there **similarities in trends from different data sets** (e.g. qualitative and quantitative)? If there are **contradictions between data sets**, what might be the explanation?
3. Is the information showing **what was expected** (logframe objectives)? If not, why not? Is there anything surprising? If so, why?
4. Is there a **noticeable difference** in indicator values between the baseline and endline

surveys? Is the difference statistically significant (depends on sampling approach)?

5. Have **any challenges** been highlighted? If yes, why have they occurred?
6. Is there **any variance to targets**? If yes, why (see box above)?
7. Are any changes in assumptions/risks identified? If yes, why? How can it be addressed?

FIGURE 2.6: KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN ANALYZING DATA

- Always check if any **additional information or analysis** is required to clarify a finding;
- Focus on **objective findings**, rather than basing analysis on personal opinions. Any assumptions/limitations in data analysis should be recognized and documented;
- **Engage multiple stakeholders** to ensure inclusion of different perspectives;
- **Compare findings** to project objectives and plans including logframe indicators, demographic targeting, and geographic coverage;
- Consider, and include when relevant, credible contextual data, beneficiary feedback, and historical data in analysis;
- Use summary tables, graphs, diagrams, and other **visual aids** to organize and describe key trends/findings. For example, when assessing progress against plans, use a traffic light approach to highlight indicators as green, yellow, or red, if they are on track, slightly delayed but expected to meet targets, or will definitely not meet targets; pictures may provide a very tangible idea of a representative qualitative information
- Consider if data needs to be weighted or adapted for **standard errors**;
- For unexpected calculation results, check the data for any **outliers**;
- Consider if the **sample size** is enough to make generalizations of the wider population; and
- **Analyze quantitative and qualitative data together** as results will complement each other and enhance understanding.

2.5.3 Triangulate Data to Arrive at Conclusions and Make Recommendations

Triangulation is a process to crosscheck data for validity and reliability and to reduce bias. Project staff should look at data from different sources (both quantitative and qualitative) to see whether they support the same interpretation and broaden understanding and perspective. Project staff should compare:

- Data generated by different methods (e.g., comparing observations with group discussions, comparing results from quantitative surveys with focus group discussion feedback);
- Information from different primary and secondary sources and from different key-informants (e.g., women and men, field, and HQ);
- Information from different data collectors; and
- Results of different analytical techniques

The findings from the data analysis should be used to make recommendations and justify actions. There should be a clear rationale for proposed actions, linking evidence from findings to specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) recommendations. It is also useful to appoint one individual (usually the Project Manager) to follow up with all others to ensure that actions have been taken forward. The appointed stakeholder can use an action log to document actions and ensure they happen *(ADV 4 - Action Log Template* or *MSTK 21 - Recommendations Follow-up Matrix).*

2.5.4 Utilize Information to Facilitate Decision-Making, Planning, and Learning

The overall purpose of the M&E system is to provide useful information. Therefore, information utilization should be a central planning consideration! **Information is only valuable if it is used**. The process of utilizing information to facilitate decision-making, planning and learning is sometimes referred to as **adaptive management**.

The information gathered through monitoring is used to:
- **Inform decisions** to guide and improve ongoing project implementation.
- **Advance organizational learning** for current and future programming.
- Demonstrate **how and what** work has been completed, and whether it was according to specific standards or donor requirements.
- **Highlight accomplishments** and advocate for further change.
- **Provide data to stakeholders**, communities, administrations etc. for better planning, resource allocation, and protection of the environment.

If a piece of information is not used for decisions, compliance, or knowledge then it is likely not required and should be removed from future data collection activities.

It is ultimately up to the user/decision-maker to decide when and how to put information to use. The more effectively data are presented, the greater the likelihood of usage. Appropriate procedures for documenting and responding to information findings and recommendations should be built into the project. These procedures may include:
- A decision log to keep record of key project decisions (**ADV 5 - *Decision Log Template***). Also useful for audit purposes, staff can use this to check that all decisions are followed through with and that they are recorded for institutional memory. If a disagreement arises over why a decision was made, the log can be referred to for the justification.
- An action log kept by Project Managers to ensure M&E findings and decisions are followed-up and acted on. Follow-up should be systematic, monitored, and reported on in a reliable, timely, and open manner so that the project team are kept updated
- Decision and action logs are also useful to record explicit responses of project issues identified in M&E reports and recommended actions.

To facilitate learning, project teams must document lessons and reflect on them to inform future project and organizational planning. Follow these steps to facilitate learning:
- **Organize a learning session**: Project staff should gather after each monitoring/analysis/ reporting cycle as close to the end of the cycle as possible so that lessons are not lost.
- **Consider key findings**: During the learning session, Project Managers should encourage staff to consider key findings and identify lessons learned by answering questions such as, "What would you change, add, or delete if you could start the project all over again?" All staff should be encouraged to participate.
- **Document lessons learned:** All lessons learned should be documented during the discussion in the lessons learned log or equivalent (***ADV 6 - Lessons Learned Log Template***).
- **Use lessons learned:** Project staff should brainstorm on how best to take action to address each lesson going forward, answering questions such as, "How do we incorporate this lesson into our project implementation? How do we avoid making the same mistake? What can feasibly be changed?"
- **Share lessons learned:** At the end of the session, project staff should agree on the best way to share the identified lessons with other project stakeholders (internal and external)

FIGURE 2.7: CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF LEARNING

To encourage greater interest and willingness to learn, project teams should:

- **Promote curiosity and innovation:** Implementing a proper M&E system requires staff to question how things work and have a willingness to try new things to see whether they could be more effective than the current approach.
- **Value failure:** Many projects, under pressure to achieve short-term "results", see failure as something to be avoided at all costs and risky activities are not undertaken. When things don't work as planned, efforts are sometimes made to cover up the failures, rather than accept that failing sometimes is normal and inevitable. . As a result, no learning occurs and people keep making the same mistakes over and over again.
- **Seek feedback:** The entire project team should continuously seek, provide, and reflect on feedback. Feedback can be formal or informal and internal or external. In promoting a learning environment, be open to outside ideas that can provide new perspectives.

Adapted from: *Integrated monitoring: a practical manual for organizations that want to achieve results. S. Herraro. 2012.*

2.6 STEP 6: REPORT MONITORING FINDINGS

Step 6: Report Monitoring Findings

Objective: Include findings in reports to relevant stakeholders to inform day-to-day and long-term decision-making and management

Timing: Agree on general guidance at project planning phase, finalize details when project implementation starts, and report findings during implementation

Activities:

6.1　　Agree on reporting needs, responsibilities, and formats

6.2　　Disseminate reports to relevant stakeholders

The compilation, presentation, communication and dissemination of reports is an important part of the M&E system – this combined process is a key part of the **uptake strategy** (i.e. the activities that facilitate and contribute to the utilization of information produced by the M&E system by stakeholders).

2.6.1　　Agree on Reporting Needs, Responsibilities, and Formats

Data must be well presented or reported to facilitate decision-making and learning. Reporting is resource-intensive and project teams must carefully plan for it. Reports should be prepared for a specific purpose/audience and limited only to what is necessary for its intended purpose. Sufficient context or situational analysis should be included to facilitate decision-making.

FIGURE 2.8: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF REPORTING?

Reporting is a key part of the M&E system as it:
- Communicates to key internal and external stakeholders **if a project is on track against plans**;
- Highlights how **needs** are being addressed and what **results** have been seen;
- Highlights **risks/blockages** to help managers decide on mitigating measures required;

- Contributes to **transparency and accountability** to all stakeholders; including contractual requirements and providing information to the humanitarian community;
- Helps **raise visibility** of the project and mobilize resources; and
- **Captures learning** from projects;
- Forms an important **source of information for evaluations**

A Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix can be used to assess the information and reporting needs of key stakeholders and to define who is responsible for compiling which types of reporting (*MSTK 19 - Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix*). The matrix helps to ensure the format, frequency, and content of reports meets their needs.

A Reporting Plan can be used to summarize all reports compiled by the project to allow stakeholders to see what reporting is undertaken at a glance; this is included in the M&E plan development process and tools (see *MSTK 1 – M&E Plan & Calendar*).

Projects must differentiate between external and internal requirements. While external reporting is important for accountability, internal reporting plays a more crucial role in actual project implementation and lesson learning. Using key internal tools such as the APR (*MSTK 3 – Activity Progress Report*) will make preparing external reports easier.

Reporting frequency should align with the flow of information and decision-making needs (during project planning and accountability events) of project stakeholders. For example, an emergency context will usually require more frequent reporting than a long-term development context. Frequency will also be influenced by the complexity and cost of data collection. For instance, it is much easier and affordable to report on a process indicator for the number of workshop participants, than an outcome indicator that measures behavioral change in a survey. While data may be collected regularly, not everything needs to be reported to everyone all the time.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

*Multi-sectoral project teams can **harmonize reporting efforts to ensure consistent reporting and save time**; e.g. identify common reporting requirements, including formats etc. Joint reporting can improve the interpretation and causal explanation of data and results.*

Report formats vary widely. Both the content and format must be appropriate to the needs of intended users, as presentation can play a key role in how well the information is understood and used For example, reports with graphs and charts may work well with project management, participatory discussion meetings with field staff, community (visual) mapping with beneficiaries, and a glossy report or website for donors. See *MSTK 19 – Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix* for examples of commonly used reporting format, as well as the sector specific toolkits for examples of presenting key indicator data.

FIGURE 2.9: TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REPORT WRITING

- Use an **executive summary** to summarize the overall project status and highlight any key issues/actions to be addressed;
- **Explain reasons for any variance between targets and actuals**, detailing what lessons have been learned and if any actions are required;
- Explain the **effects of contextual factors** (cultural practices, seasonal changes, and other implementing agencies working in the same area) on the project's progress;
- Identify and summarize **specific actions** (including who's responsible and expected timing) required in response to the report findings and recommendations;

- Be **clear and concise**, avoiding long sentences and jargon, and spell out any acronyms;
- **Explain the importance of any data included**, do not leave the reader to do the analysis;
- Use formatting, such as **bolding** or <u>underlining</u>, to highlight key points;
- Use **graphics, photos, quotations**, and examples to highlight or explain information;
- Be accurate, balanced, and aim to be impartial and unbiased;
- **Avoid any contradiction** between different sections;
- Justify any methodological deviations so subsequent surveys use the same **methodology** and may be clearly interpreted and compared; and
- **Translate reports to relevant language(s)** (e.g. for beneficiaries, stakeholders, donors).

2.6.2   Disseminate Reports to Relevant Stakeholders

There are several mediums available to share reports and other project information. Similar to report formats, deciding how to share information is largely dependent on the user and purpose of information.

Reports should be provided to each of the identified stakeholders in the Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix. Consideration should also be given to who is responsible for presenting M&E data at forums such as community meetings, conference calls with HQ, donor meetings, coordination meetings, etc.

While beneficiaries may not have formal reporting requirements, all project information should regularly be shared with them in an appropriate way. This helps us be accountable and prevents M&E from becoming merely an extractive process.

FIGURE 2.10: MEDIUMS FOR SHARING REPORTS
1. Print materials distributed through mail or in person
2. Internet communication (e-mail, web sites, blogs, cloud, forums/d-groups etc.)
3. Radio communication
4. Telephone communication (voice calls, text-messaging, etc.)
5. Television and filmed presentations
6. Live presentations, such as project/program team meetings and public meetings

2.7 STEP 7: REVIEW AND REVISE M&E PLANS BASED ON PROGRESS

STEP 7: REVIEW AND REVISE M&E PLANS BASED ON PROGRESS
Objective: As the project proceeds, revise plans where appropriate to reflect actual progress and lessons learned
Timing: During project implementation
Activities:
7.1 Review and assess the M&E system
7.2 Update the M&E system

2.7.1 Review and Assess the M&E System

While the project is being implemented it is important to review the M&E system to ensure it is delivering its intended purpose and has sufficient resources allocated to it. The effectiveness of the M&E system in achieving its purposes should be assessed (*see **ADV 3 - M&E System Assessment Tool***) and the system updated and refined.

During reviews, project teams should assess the M&E system's ability to: (1) collect, enter, analyze, and utilize data; (2) facilitate evidence-based decision-making; (3) appropriately use allocated resources (human, financial, equipment, and time); and (4) engage and involve stakeholders. See *ADV 2 - M&E System Review Considerations* for more information.

The project team should agree on how, how often, and by whom the M&E system should be assessed to see if it is meeting its intended purpose. The timing of such reviews will depend largely on the timeframe of the project itself.

As well as project M&E systems, organizational M&E processes should also be reviewed, such as through a meta-evaluation (*Annex 3 - Types of Evaluations*) or through after action reviews (*MSTK 15 - After Action Review*). Finally, it is important to ensure that any changes to the M&E system are clearly explained to key stakeholders, especially when requiring donor approval (e.g. in instances where changes to the logframe and indicators are required).

The review of the M&E system can also be done through external parties, such as an external evaluator, but also another NGO, the donor's representatives, a local authority, or the community as a role of a steering committee of the project.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E
*Multi-sectoral project teams should **periodically review the M&E plan during implementation**. There may be aspects of the plan that are working for one sector but not for another. These issues should be raised and solutions jointly agreed upon*

2.7.2 Update the M&E System

Project objectives may change due to contextual factors (e.g. conflict or natural disaster), external changes (e.g. donor funding or government policy), personnel/capacity changes, or simply to refine and improve the project. When such changes happen, **assumptions in the logframe should be reassessed** to determine if changes are needed and in turn, if the original M&E plan is affected. **Challenges to the M&E system that might occur and potential solutions to them include**:

- Collected data may not indicate project progress or facilitate decision-making; consideration should then be given to collecting alternate/additional data;
- Collected data may not be correctly entered and managed; re-training of staff might be necessary;
- Collected data may not be fully analyzed and utilized; teams should reassess the relevance and timing of data collection as well as the dissemination medium and format of reports;
- The cost of conducting M&E activities might be higher than planned; in this instance budgets should be reviewed and budget line items flexibility utilized;
- Stakeholders may express concerns or grievances with M&E processes; this should be discussed openly with stakeholders, and agreement reached on how to improve processes;
- There may be demands for more M&E information, such as to investigate unexpected issues identified during data analysis; M&E resources should then be reallocated; and
- There may be changes in M&E capacity, due to increased skills or turnover of staff, which may impact the M&E plan; it is thus advisable to have back-up M&E focal points for each project.

2.8 STEP 8: EVALUATE RESULTS

Step 8: Evaluate Results
Objective: As the project concludes, gather and analyze data to assess and report on project results
Timing: At the end of (or at some point after) project implementation

The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) defines evaluation as a systematic and impartial examination of humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve policy and practice and enhance accountability (see Buchanan Smith, M. & Cosgrave, J.). Action Against Hunger currently evaluates its projects performance according to criteria detailed in the Evaluation Policy & Guidelines.

To undertake an evaluation, the project team should:
1. Begin planning for an evaluation from the start of the project, incorporating evaluation topics into the project and M&E system design.
2. Plan the procurement of an external evaluation in collaboration with the Evaluation, Learning, and Accountability (ELA) team in Action Against Hunger-UK.
3. Provide inputs to the evaluation TORs.
4. Facilitate the conduct of the evaluation.
5. Provide comments to the evaluation report.
6. Provide feedback on the evaluation process.
7. Follow up on the evaluation recommendations, mid-term or final evaluation, to ensure we capture learning and good practices.

Please see *Chapter 3 (Evaluation)* in these guidelines for detailed step-by-step instructions on how to conduct an evaluation.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO M&E

All sectors involved in a multi-sectoral project should provide inputs to the evaluation process. ***Questions to assess the multi-sectoral approach itself could be added to the evaluation methodology***:

1. *Was the project designed according to all sectors' policies?*
2. *To what extent did people benefit from all sector components of the project?*
3. *Were analysis, planning, and implementation joined up so that the project purpose was addressed in an integrated way?*
4. *Were field staff deployed across sectors where they had the necessary skills and efficiency?*
5. *Did design and management of the project sufficiently take account of the linkages between related objectives? Was progress towards objectives managed in an integrated way?*
6. *Were cross-cutting issues addressed in a coherent way by all sectors?*

2.9   SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

1. **There are 9 key steps to set up an M&E system, each undertaken at specific stages of the project cycle.** These are:
Step 1: Initiate development of the project's M&E System
Step 2: Design core documents to set up M&E system
Step 3: Establish project M&E system
Step 4: Collect and manage monitoring data

Step 5: Analyze & utilize monitoring data
Step 6: Report monitoring findings
Step 7: Review and revise M&E plans based on progress
Step 8: Evaluate results

2. **All steps are applicable to all project contexts** but the difference is the speed with which they are planned and undertaken, the type of data collected, and methods used.

3. Project teams should consider and address **ethical issues** at each step of the M&E process – including in data collection, storage, and reporting – to protect the privacy, health, and safety of beneficiaries.

4. Project teams should incorporate a **multi-sectoral approach to M&E** when appropriate and possible to save resources and improve relationships, usage of findings, and reporting.

5. **Action Against Hunger's key indicators for each sector are <u>strongly recommended</u> for applicable projects**. Our <u>key</u> indicators ensure that all projects in a given sector work towards common objectives, enable comparative cross-project data, and encourage greater focus on medium-term changes.

6. Our key indicators should be supplemented with **optional <u>thematic</u> indicators to facilitate standardization across projects**, while also allowing flexibility to adapt to specific contexts.

7. It is advisable to **develop an initial M&E plan during project design** to ensure appropriate and sufficient resources can be requested through the project proposal.

8. **All projects should include baseline and endline surveys** to measure the change(s) that occur during, and perhaps in part as a result of, the project. At a minimum, both surveys should collect data, in the same way, on the key indicators for the relevant sector.

9. Project staff should agree on the **data collection methods and tools** that will be used well in advance of the data collection itself to ensure that resources are available.

10. Project teams must determine the appropriate **sample size and sampling methodology** to best fit their needs and to avoid wasting resources.

11. **Findings from data analysis should be used to make recommendations and justify actions**. There should be a clear rationale for proposed actions, linking evidence from findings to specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) recommendations.

12. The overall purpose of the M&E system is to provide useful information. Therefore, information utilization should be a central planning consideration! **Information is only valuable if it is used**. The process of utilizing information to facilitate decision-making, planning and learning is sometimes referred to as **adaptive management**.

13. **Reporting** is resource-intensive thus project teams must carefully plan for it. Reports should be prepared for a specific purpose/audience and limited only to what is necessary.

14. The **effectiveness of the M&E system should be assessed** and the system updated and refined periodically depending on the project's length and scope.
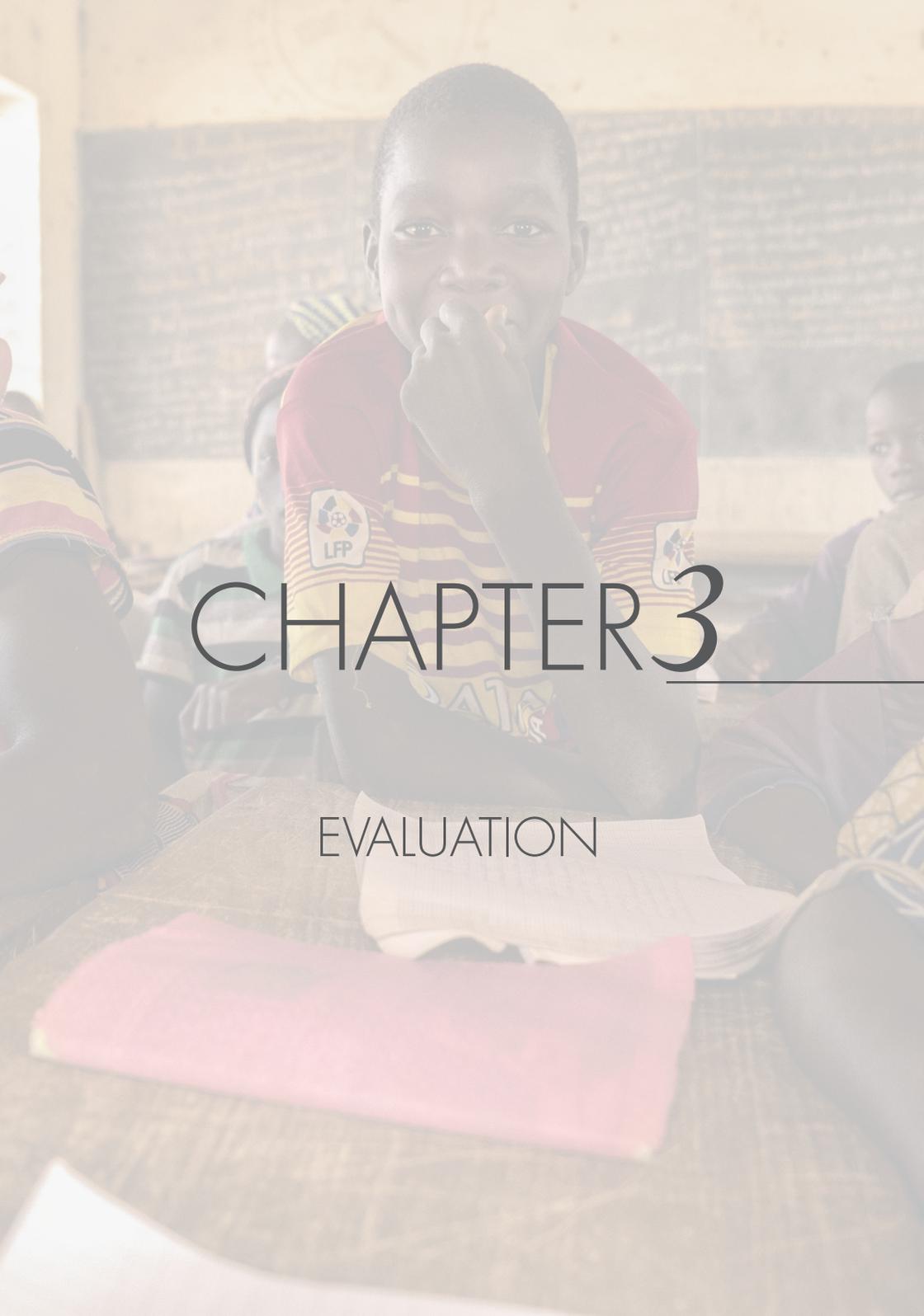
CHAPTER3

EVALUATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES & CONTENTS

Chapter 3 supports Section 1.3 with a step-by-step approach to the evaluation process at Action Against Hunger. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the **Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy** (see *EVAL 2 – Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy*) and **Evaluation Guidelines** (see *EVAL 3 – Action Against Hunger Evaluation Guidelines*), which define when projects should be evaluated, what type of evaluation should be conducted, and how, based on factors including the size of the project. Please also refer to the M&E Guidelines' Evaluation Toolkit (EVAL) for supporting tools and documentation.

The guidance in this Chapter is targeted toward Action Against Hunger field teams. It aims to provide practical guidance on the general steps required to carry out an evaluation, including considerations to improve their quality and usefulness. Project teams should use the evaluation checklist to ensure they have considered all parts of the process (*EVAL 4 - Evaluation Checklist*).

There are seven general steps to managing an evaluation, listed in the chapter contents below:

Chapter 3 Contents	
3.1	**STEP 1: PLAN AND BUDGET FOR EVALUATIONS**
3.1.1	Agree on Responsibilities for Evaluation
3.1.2	Agree on Purpose and Type of Evaluation
3.1.3	Agree on Evaluation Objectives
3.1.4	Engage Stakeholders for the Evaluation
3.2	**STEP 2: COMMISSION THE EVALUATION**
3.3	**STEP 3: AGREE ON EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**
3.4	**STEP 4: CONDUCT THE EVALUATION**
3.4.1	Plan and Conduct Data Collection
3.4.2	Conduct Country/Field Visits
3.5	**STEP 5: REPORT EVALUATION FINDINGS**
3.6	**STEP 6: UTILIZE EVALUATION FINDINGS**
3.7	**STEP 7: DISSEMINATE AND LEARN FROM EVALUATION FINDINGS**
3.8	**CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY**

More detailed steps for launching an independent evaluation, including important procurement requirements, are provided in the Evaluation Guidelines.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIONS

Evaluation is defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as "…***the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme, or policy, its design, implementation, and results.***"[7] Evaluations serve a variety of purposes within international humanitarian and development organizations. Evaluations can have a range of objectives, but in nearly all cases they relate to improvement, learning, and/or accountability.[8]

Action Against Hunger promotes and facilitates evaluation of our work to obtain the evidence required for **results-based management and institutional learning**. A high quality evaluation backed by strong monitoring systems can provide the information needed for – among others – resource allocation decisions, causal and barrier analysis, identification of emerging problems, and technical and humanitarian advocacy.

The Evaluation, Learning & Accountability (ELA) Team, based within the Action Against Hunger UK office, plays a key role in supporting and coordinating evaluations across the organization, particularly independent evaluations. Staff involved in designing and planning independent evaluations should consult the ELA for guidance. The ELA has also set up a network of **Evaluation Focal Points** to facilitate planning and budgeting for evaluations based on specific project criteria.

3.0.1 Types of Evaluations and Approaches

Action Against Hunger's Evaluation Policy defines the following key types of project evaluation:

TYPE OF EVALUATION	DESCRIPTION
FIGURE 3.1 TYPES OF EVALUATIONS	
Process/Real-Time	Evaluations that focus on the internal dynamics of the implementing organizations, their policy instruments, service delivery mechanisms, management practices, and linkages among these.
Thematic	Evaluations that focus on Action Against Hunger core sectors (Nutrition and Health, Food Security and Livelihoods, WASH, Mental Health and Care Practices, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience).
Policy	Evaluations that focus on Action Against Hunger International policies, assessing the effectiveness and benefits of these policies on beneficiaries.
Impact	Evaluations that measure the project's long-term "impact" (or likelihood of impact), rather than the delivery process. In rigorous evaluation and research contexts, the term "impact evaluation" refers to the use of a particular evaluation design to demonstrate cause and effect. They require a valid counterfactual to attribute change to the intervention.[9]
Joint	Evaluations carried out jointly with partners and/or donors to gain a broader understanding of the intervention.

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[7] OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DAC), Glossary.
[8] Similarly, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) defines evaluation as a systematic and impartial examination of humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve policy and practice and enhance accountability. See *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action, ALNAP (2010)* www.alnap.org/pool/files/2010-training.pdf
[9] Based on World Bank and OECD/DAC definitions. See "Impact Evaluation in Practice," The World Bank Group, 2011.

Results/ Performance	Evaluations of interventions against their original/intended objectives.
Regional/Country Strategy	Evaluations of the organization's performance in the region/country, the contribution of related programmes and projects in achieving the objectives, and the strategy contribution to regional/national priorities.
Project/ Programme	Evaluations that assess project/programme relevance, design, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and likelihood of impact, management, and effectiveness.

Other major types of evaluations and related terminology are summarized in the M&E Guidelines' *EVAL 5 - Types of Evaluations*. It should be noted that most types of evaluation have additional associated sub-types and design approaches, which will not be discussed here. In practical terms, **Performance Evaluations** and **Real-Time Evaluations (RTE)** cover the majority of evaluations that Action Against Hunger conducts in relation to our programming.

- Project Performance Evaluations assess project performance against planned objectives. They are used to improve project performance and contribute towards organizational learning. They also generate good practices which can be scaled up and replicated in other contexts. These evaluations can be either mid-term or final depending on the project total budget.
- Real-Time Evaluations are formative, utilization-focused process evaluations that provide immediate feedback. Their main function is of improving rather than proving, and can be applied when a programme is in continuous state of change.[10] At Action Against Hunger, a Real-Time Evaluation may sometimes take the form of a project mid-term evaluation.

The evaluation community of practice is vast and continually innovating. In addition to overarching evaluation types, there are a number of different **methods and approaches to evaluation**, many derived from anthropology and from social science research methods that have been applied in public health practice and public policy. Approaches range from a heavy reliance on qualitative methods (e.g. Outcome Mapping) to those that are almost exclusively quantitative. Some evaluation methods are more **participatory** than others.[11] For an overview of methods applied to data collection, see *Annex 5 – Data Collection – Methods, Tools & Approaches*.

A NOTE ON MIXED METHOD EVALUATIONS

As a good practice, **Action Against Hunger promotes mixed method, participatory approaches** *in evaluations. Mixed methods are those that employ both qualitative and quantitative data. Participatory methods are those that actively involve beneficiaries and stakeholders in data collection. Evaluations will generally be of the highest quality and utility when they combine empirical data with in-depth, descriptive information, while participatory techniques can help to empower communities and orient evaluations to the local context. Teams must also balance the time implications involved with higher levels of participation.*

The choice of evaluation type and approach depends on many factors, including the goal for the evaluation, questions to be answered, timeframe required, and availability of monitoring data. Certain evaluation methods, such as impact evaluations, often require extensive planning before

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[10] Adapted from: Evaluating Humanitarian Action in Real Time: Recent Practices, Challenges, and Innovations; Riccardo Polastro, IOD Parc, 2014.
[11] While approaches to evaluation are too extensive to be discussed here, there are an abundance of reference materials available. See, for example, The World Bank Group's "The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations," 2009.

the project begins and cannot be commissioned once the project is underway. Field teams can consult with the ELA or HQ for guidance on appropriate types of evaluations and methods to employ for their projects and programmes.

3.0.2   Categories of Evaluation at Action Against Hunger

Evaluations conducted within Action Against Hunger also vary based on the degree of independence of the management structure and the evaluator employed. The Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy describes the following categories:

FIGURE 3.2 EVALUATIONS CATEGORIES	
CATEGORY	**DESCRIPTION**
Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluations are evaluations that are both managed and conducted by Action Against Hunger staff who have been involved in the design and implementation of the intervention, including project/programme/country management, technical coordinators, and advisors backstopping the intervention. For this reason, self-evaluations typically have the lowest degree of independence.
Internal Evaluation	Internal evaluations are conducted either by an independent consultant or by an independent Action Against Hunger staff who has not been involved in the implementation of the design and implementation of the intervention. This lends a degree of impartiality to the evaluation. The management of an internal evaluation still rests with Action Against Hunger staff, including project/programme/country management, technical coordinators and advisors backstopping the intervention.
Independent Evaluation	Independent evaluations are managed by an independent Action Against Hunger staff and overseen by the ELA. They are carried out by external evaluators who have no previous links to the intervention.
External Evaluation	Also known as third-party evaluations, external evaluations are managed from outside Action Against Hunger and conducted by external evaluators who have no previous links to the intervention being evaluated.

To ensure the highest possible accountability to our beneficiaries and donors, Action Against Hunger promotes impartial and independent evaluations to the extent feasible. Based on the criteria established in the Evaluation Policy (***EVAL 2***), a project might be applicable for an internal, independent or external evaluation.

3.1   STEP 1: PLAN AND BUDGET FOR EVALUATIONS

Project evaluations should be planned during the design stage of the project life cycle and be included in the M&E Plan and budget from the beginning of a project. A good practice is to allocate roughly **3 to 5 per cent of the total intervention budget to M&E.** Out of this, **1 to 2 per cent should be allocated for evaluation.**

Country Directors and Technical Teams should check proposals and budgets to ensure that evaluations have been included where appropriate, *before* final submission to the donor (see ***EVAL 6 – Evaluation Budget Checklist*** and ***EVAL 7 – Evaluation Budget Template***).

3.1.1 Agree on Responsibilities for Evaluation

Action Against Hunger's **Evaluation Guidelines (*EVAL 3*)** define the major roles and responsibilities for centralized, independent evaluations. For decentralized evaluations, Project Managers and Technical Coordinators should plan the evaluation(s) of projects in coordination with the M&E/PQA Departments and in consultation with HQ Technical Advisors and the ELA team as needed. Country Directors should coordinate evaluations of the overall country strategy as well as evaluations of specific projects. A focal person for the evaluation management of a country programme should be agreed upon, most likely the Country Director or Deputy Country Director Programmes.

In each type of evaluation, an **Evaluation Manager** should be appointed. This person plays a key role in coordinating the evaluation and ensuring quality and compliance in line with the organization's Evaluation Policy. The Evaluation Manager, among other tasks, helps plan the evaluation and facilitates the preparation of the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), selects and contracts the evaluator, manages a consultant or internal evaluator, and supports dissemination and follow-up tasks.

3.1.2 Agree on Purpose and Type of Evaluation

Action Against Hunger's Evaluation Policy and Guidelines provide clear criteria defining the type of evaluation that should be conducted as a minimum requirement for each project. There are a range of evaluation types (summarized in Section 3.0 and in *Annex 3 - Types of Evaluation*) related to the overall purpose of the evaluation and project criteria.

Externally led evaluations allow for greater independence and objectivity and tend to focus on measuring results, outcomes, or strategic performance, whereas internally led evaluations tend to focus on implementation approaches and processes. There are advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations. See *EVAL 3 – Evaluation Guidelines* for criteria in selecting the type of evaluations.

> ### *REMINDER ON EVALUATIONS VS. AUDITS AND REVIEWS*
>
> *Evaluations should not be confused with audits and reviews. An audit seeks to assess compliance with established rules, regulations, or procedures. Reviews tend to be broader in scope, more focused on strategic issues, and less in-depth than evaluations, although review tools and the information generated can usefully contribute towards evaluation. For example, After Action Review (AAR) is an increasingly popular tool to facilitate reflection of an intervention's effectiveness* **(MSTK 15 - After Action Review Guidance Note)**.

3.1.3 Agree on Evaluation Objectives

It is essential for a project or programme team to agree early on the evaluation objectives, as this will determine the applicable evaluation approach and the monitoring data required to support the evaluation. The programme team together with the evaluation focal point, ELA team, and the respective HQ team need to discuss and agree on the key objectives for the evaluation. Sometimes the donor needs to validate the ToR before the evaluation proceeds and can provide valuable inputs regarding the focus of the evaluation.

In general, it is better to focus on a few key questions that the evaluator can expand on rather than creating an exhaustive list that may constrain the evaluator's flexibility. To answer these questions, **an evaluation must be sufficiently planned for and integrated into the project design and M&E system** to guarantee the necessary data is collected during the project cycle. An appropriate monitoring framework must be established for the project, linked to the evaluation

objectives. Most evaluations will require, at minimum, a baseline survey that provides data on indicators relevant to the evaluation questions. In all cases, **stakeholder participation** in the formulation of the evaluation questions is encouraged to increase the likelihood that the findings are relevant to them and used (see 3.1.4 below).

Project evaluations can also be used to compare initial project hypotheses or its theory of change (as detailed in its logframe) with the actual results observed in the monitoring data. Criteria from other sectoral, crosscutting, context-specific frameworks, or frameworks for specific approaches (e.g. training or multi-sector projects) may also be included.[12]

In addition to assessing specific criteria and outcomes of a programme, **all Action Against Hunger evaluations should provide at least one example of a best practice** from the project. This example should relate to a technical intervention, either in terms of processes or systems, and should be potentially applicable to other contexts where Action Against Hunger operates.

3.1.4 Engage Stakeholders for the Evaluation

Project teams should also consider the evaluation's intended audience and their specific information needs when developing the ToR and priorities for an evaluation. Not all stakeholders hold equal interest in the project. The following questions should be answered (also refer to *MSTK 19 Stakeholder Information Needs Matrix*):

1. Who are the primary stakeholders for this evaluation?
2. How will they be engaged to ensure their ownership of the findings and relevance of the evaluation to their needs?
3. Which stakeholders need to be consulted, informed, or influenced?
4. Which stakeholders' needs should be prioritized so that the evaluation is do-able and focused?
5. How will the results of the evaluation be fed back to the various stakeholders involved?

3.2 STEP 2: COMMISSION THE EVALUATION

For all evaluations, the Evaluation Manager should draft an evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) in line with Action Against Hunger's standardized Evaluation ToR template *(see EVAL 8 – Performance Evaluation ToR Template and EVAL 9 – Real-Time-Evaluation TOR Template*). A draft timetable for the evaluation (*EVAL 10 - Evaluation Timetable Template*) should also be incorporated into the ToR and finalized with the evaluator(s). The ToR should be circulated to key stakeholders for feedback and approval; this might include the donor.

For external evaluations, a Steering Group comprised of project stakeholders can be appointed to support the Evaluation Manager, and the ToR should be put to tender for evaluators to bid (coordinated through the ELA). For independent and internal evaluations, the ToR should be circulated amongst the managing team for feedback.

If a consultant is hired, logistics procedures for consultant recruitment need to be followed (consult the Evaluation Guidelines and check with your Logistics Advisors and Action Against Hunger Kit Log). An expression of interest should include a proposition on how the consultant would approach the evaluation, proposed tools to use, estimated timeframe and estimated resources necessary.

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[12] For more information about developing good evaluation questions, see "The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations," The World Bank Group, 2009. Chapter 6.

3.3 STEP 3: AGREE ON EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Once evaluator(s) have been selected, the Evaluation Manager and other relevant project staff should brief the evaluator(s) on the project background, key stakeholders, key project documents (including baseline and endline data and reports), and purpose of the evaluation (***EVAL 11 – Tech Briefing/Debriefing***).The briefing should be held at the HQ and field level for independent evaluations. The objective is to ensure the quality of the evaluation conducted by helping the evaluator gain sufficient insight into the intervention and context.

Following the briefing and provision of key documents, the evaluator(s) should draft a short inception report for approval by the Evaluation Manager and evaluation Steering Group, if applicable (***EVAL 12 - Inception Report Purpose and Template***). The inception report should demonstrate the evaluator(s)' understanding of the project, purpose of the evaluation, and approach to be adopted, aligned with the ToR. Mixed methods approaches to data collection and analysis (i.e. using both quantitative and qualitative methods) and use of gender- and age-disaggregated data are highly recommended when possible.

The Evaluation Manager should review the quality of the inception report and, in coordination with relevant staff, provide feedback.

CAVEAT ON EVALUATION STEPS

For more complex evaluation methods and approaches, field teams must decide to employ them before commissioning the evaluator and potentially before the project begins. For example, impact evaluations require extensive pre-project design. Less common evaluation methods (e.g. Outcome Mapping) require an evaluator to bring related expertise. Any specific methods and skills required must be clearly defined in the ToR during Step 2.

3.4 STEP 4: CONDUCT THE EVALUATION

3.4.1 Plan and Conduct Data Collection

Once the inception report is approved, the evaluator(s) should plan and conduct all preliminary data collection including: (1) a detailed review of key project documentation; (2) key informant interviews at HQ and in the field; and (3) focus group discussions and/or workshops with key stakeholders. Data collection should employ methodological triangulation using more than one method for data collection, and aim for mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) whenever possible (see Section 3.0.1).

Developing questionnaires for the evaluation and undertaking further quantitative analysis for validation of the data and to improve understanding are also recommended. Best practices in data collection, including data ethics and sampling approaches, must be utilized (see ***Annex 8 – M&E Principles and Ethical Considerations*** and ***Annex 11 – Sampling Guidance Note***). Existing data from the project's monitoring system (e.g. baseline and endline survey data) should be referenced first to avoid overburdening respondents and to incorporate relevant findings in the evaluation.

Field travel details (dates, site visit locations, stakeholders to be met, etc.) should be approved. A clear timeframe needs to be agreed for deliverables and the feedback process for finalization and approval of the evaluation report. A more detailed uptake and dissemination plan (to help ensure that findings are both communicated and used) can also be agreed on before fieldwork commences.

3.4.2 Conduct Country/Field Visits

Upon arrival in country, details of country activities should be agreed on with the Evaluation Manager, administrative, and logistics staff. Any additional documentation only available locally should be reviewed. A schedule of field visits to meet with key stakeholders should be finalized. Workshops, focus groups, or interviews with key stakeholders should be arranged for data collection and discussion of evaluation questions (***Annex 5 - Data Collection Methods Matrix***). After field visits, the evaluator(s) should have some time to analyze and synthesize data.

An optional trip report can be documented. When in-country activities are completed, a debriefing session with the Country Director, coordination team, Evaluation Manager, and any other relevant staff must be organized.

3.5   STEP 5: REPORT EVALUATION FINDINGS

Having collected and analyzed all primary and secondary data for the evaluation, the evaluator should prepare a first draft of the evaluation report (see ***EVAL 14 – Evaluation Report Template***) and share it with the Evaluation Manager. The draft report should include:

a. ***Executive summary***: Project background including operational context and objectives, purpose and audience of the evaluation, brief methodology overview, and main findings (in order of importance) and recommendations;
b. ***Introduction:*** Evaluation objectives, scope of work, methodology overview, and list of evaluation team members;
c. ***Contextual and operational overview:*** Background to the project, objectives of the project, and key activities;
d. ***Findings and recommendations:*** Presentation of key findings and recommendations against each of the evaluation criteria. There should be no more than 10 recommendations and these should be clearly linked to the findings; recommendations can either be grouped by theme or by intended user.
e. ***Annexes:*** ToR, evaluation methodology and tools, evaluation uptake/dissemination plan, recommendations and plan for follow-up actions, list of persons interviewed, list of documents reviewed, list of places/locations visited, evaluation itinerary.

The first draft of the report should be circulated to the Steering Group and other relevant key stakeholders for feedback. The draft evaluation report should be assessed based on criteria in the Evaluation Guidelines (**EVAL 3,** Section 4.5). Evaluators should revise the report, based on the feedback, and then circulate a revised version of the report. This presents an opportunity for management to respond to the report if there is any disagreement with the findings. Feedback should be used to finalize the report.

A PowerPoint presentation based on the evaluation report executive summary should be prepared as part of the final report. Translations should be made as required.

3.6 STEP 6: UTILIZE EVALUATION FINDINGS

The utilization and uptake of evaluation findings is essential to capitalize on learning towards continuous improvement i.e. to ensure that recommendations are followed-up and acted upon to achieve practical changes in approaches for improved outcomes. Evaluation findings also present an opportunity for organizational learning to occur. Results can be used to adjust ongoing projects and ensure intended results and outcomes are achieved. Lessons learned at the end of a project can be used to inform the design and mitigate risks on future projects.

Two major strategies to promote utilization of evaluation findings include:

- **Learning Review/Workshops**: Project staff (including programme and support teams at country and HQ level) should meet for a learning session soon after an evaluation so that lessons are not lost. The length of the learning session will depend on the scope of the evaluation and the strategic learning needs of the team. All staff should be encouraged to participate, as varying perspectives will enrich the quality of lessons learned. Lessons learned should be documented during the discussion (e.g. *ADV 6 - Lessons Learned Log Template*).

- **Post-Evaluation Action Plan and Recommendation Follow-Up**: A clear action plan (e.g. *EVAL 15 - Post Evaluation Action Plan*) for following up on, and implementing, recommendations and learning should be agreed, including assigning responsibilities at the management level for ensuring that what has been agreed is done.

3.7 STEP 7: DISSEMINATE AND LEARN FROM EVALUATION FINDINGS

As part of the learning review and action planning, project staff should **agree on the best way to share the identified lessons with other project stakeholders (internal and external)**, and also how to effectively **encourage uptake of recommendations and learning**, both at the project stakeholder level and more widely within Action Against Hunger, and externally where relevant.

Finalized evaluation reports should be prepared in an appropriate format for dissemination. For some audiences, the executive summary might suffice. Where PowerPoint summaries are more appropriate, these should be crafted from the report. If the report is to be discussed with beneficiaries, appropriate discussion guides should be developed. It may also be useful to develop a one-page document with key findings or a short narrated presentation to circulate as an audio-visual complement to the report.

Two of the overarching strategies used within Action Against Hunger to disseminate evaluation findings and promote learning include:

- **Workshops and debriefing sessions:** Sessions can be arranged to discuss findings and results with key stakeholders. At the field and HQ level, debriefing sessions should be held and include all relevant staff. External stakeholder workshops should be arranged well in advance to ensure attendance, and the report and executive summary circulated beforehand to allow time for stakeholders to absorb findings. The structure and content of the workshops should be appropriate for the audience and should assess the findings. Discussions should be held with stakeholders to determine if they agree or disagree with the findings and recommendations. It is good practice to ensure that the interviewed population receives feedback on the evaluation too.

- **Evaluation information management:** To contribute to greater learning, evaluation reports will be easily accessible to project teams during project design and strategy discussions from the Action Against Hunger Intranet, **No Hunger Forum**. Evaluation **recommendations and good practices** will also be stared in an internal database on No Hunger Forum. Field and HQ staff are responsible to ensure the recommendations and good practices inform future programs.

3.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

1. The overarching **Evaluation Policy** and **Evaluation Guidelines** define when projects should be evaluated, what type of evaluation (internal or external) should be conducted, and how, based on factors including the size (amount of funding) of the project.

2. The **Evaluation, Learning & Accountability (ELA) Team,** based within Action Against Hunger's UK office, plays a key role in supporting and coordinating evaluations across the organizational network. Staff involved in designing projects and planning the related evaluations should consult the ELA for guidance.

3. **Project evaluations should be planned during the design stage** of the project life cycle and be included in the M&E Plan and budget. The project / programme monitoring system should be set up to integrate any information requirements into routine data collection, based on the type of evaluation and evaluation objectives.

5. Project teams should consider the evaluation's **intended audience and their specific information needs** when developing the terms of reference and focus for an evaluation. As much as possible, stakeholders should be engaged in developing evaluation questions.

6. Data collection should employ **methodical triangulation** using more than one method for data collection, and aim for **mixed method** (quantitative and qualitative), participatory approaches whenever possible.

7. **The utilization and uptake of evaluation findings** is essential to capitalize on learning towards continuous improvement**.** A clear post-evaluation action plan for implementing recommendations and learning should be agreed, including assigning responsibilities.

8. Project staff should **agree on the best way to share identified lessons with project stakeholders**, and how to effectively **encourage uptake of recommendations and learning**.
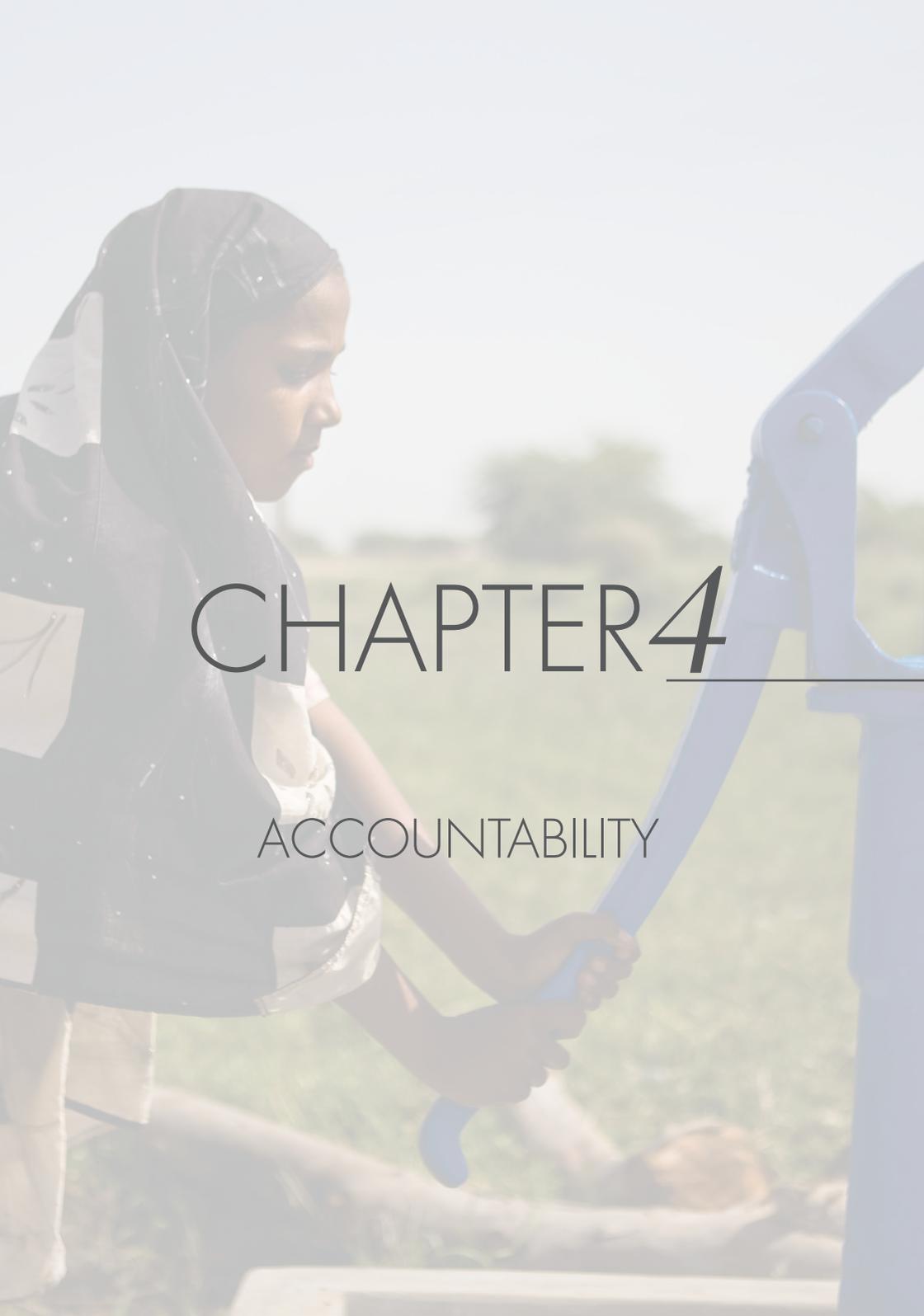
CHAPTER *4*

ACCOUNTABILITY

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES & CONTENTS

Chapter 4 introduces accountability as part of programme and evaluation processes, and provides a step-by-step approach for establishing formal feedback mechanisms.

Please refer to the **Accountability (ACC)** Toolkit accompanying this chapter for further guidance and tools to assist staff in designing and implementing feedback mechanisms.

CHAPTER 4 CONTENTS	
4.1	DEFINING ACCOUNTABILITY
4.2	DEFINING A STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK MECHANISM (FM)
4.3	ESTABLISHING A STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK MECHANISM
4.4	INCORPORATING FEEDBACK COLLECTION INTO ROUTINE MONITORING
4.5	SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

4.1 DEFINING ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability has been defined as **"*the means through which power is used responsibly. It is a process of taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of power"[13]*.** Accountability can pertain to multiple levels of stakeholders in a project e.g. donors, target populations, governments, etc., and is concerned with how the needs of different groups are balanced and considered in decision-making and activity implementation. However, a primary focus is on ensuring that the men, women, boys and girls affected by a crisis, and that the project aims to assist, are involved in planning, implementing and judging interventions[14]. International standards[15] have been set to guide humanitarian organizations in being accountable; these standards suggest that an organization should:

- **Set out the commitments that it will ensure accountability** on and how these will be delivered;
- Ensure that **staff have competencies** that enable them to meet the organization's commitments;
- Ensure that the people it aims to assist and relevant stakeholders have **access to timely, relevant, and clear information** about the organization and its activities;
- **Listen to the people it aims to assist**, incorporating their views and analysis in program planning and decisions;
- Facilitate ways for the people it aims to assist and relevant stakeholders **to raise complaints and receive a response** through an effective, accessible, and safe process; and
- **Learn from experience** to continually improve its program performance.

Establishing a feedback mechanism(s) is a key step towards meeting these standards and strengthening the accountability of Action Against Hunger projects.

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[13] The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management. HAP. 2012
[14] The Good Enough Guide, ECB, 2007
[15] The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management. HAP. 2012

4.2 DEFINING A STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK MECHANISM

A feedback mechanism (FM) can be defined as "*a set of procedures and tools formally established and used to allow humanitarian aid recipients (and in some cases other crisis-affected populations) to provide information on their experience of a humanitarian agency or of the wider humanitarian system. Feedback mechanisms can function as part of broader monitoring practices and can generate information for decision-making purposes.*"[16]

Feedback reflects perceptions (positive or negative) from stakeholders about what is and is not working in a project. Gathering feedback is a key means of monitoring quality and the extent to which a project is addressing identified needs, and is successful and inclusive in doing so. Aspects working well can be reinforced, while those working less well can be addressed and valuable lessons learned. At a minimum, any FM should include the means to voice grievances.

Feedback can be internal or external. Most importantly, beneficiaries should have the opportunity to share their perceptions of the project. Other stakeholders (e.g. project staff, volunteers, partners, and donors) should also have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions.

Project staff and community leaders need to be encouraged to view feedback as opportunities for change and learning rather than threats to be avoided. To mainstream this, received feedback can be included as an indicator of success in project logical frameworks – demonstrating a commitment to accountability and participation.

FIGURE 4.1: BENEFITS OF A FEEDBACK MECHANISM

An effective feedback mechanism can:

- **Provide insight** into whether a project is being delivered as intended, and if not why not, and what **corrective actions** are needed;
- **Identify and respond to unintended results or potential problems** before they escalate into larger problems;
- **Identify solutions to problems**, corrective action, best practices, and lessons learned;
- **Empower those the project aims to assist** by enabling them to hold staff and other stakeholders with the means to influence project implementation and decision-making responsible and answerable for their actions;
- **Build credibility with stakeholders** in target communities by demonstrating accountability and responsiveness;
- **Encourage greater involvement, participation and ownership** from program participants and other relevant stakeholders;
- Preempt rumors, clarify misunderstandings, and rectify minor or unintended mistakes by **enabling dissatisfied stakeholders to express themselves to Action Against Hunger rather than to others**, such as the media;
- Channel ad-hoc feedback in a more **constructive and efficient** manner, saving time and project resources to ensure a project is delivering what is required; and
- Meet **external requirements for accountability** to program participants.

A feedback mechanism is only effective if, at a minimum, it supports the collection, acknowledgement, analysis of, and response to the feedback received, thus forming **a closed**

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[16] Closing the loop: effective feedback mechanisms in humanitarian contexts - practitioner guidance. ALNAP. 2014

feedback loop. Where the feedback loop is left open, the mechanism is not fully effective (see the following illustration).

Figure 4.2: Closed Feedback Loop

Feedback mechanisms can take a number of different forms and should be determined based on stakeholder requirements and what is effective, feasible and appropriate in a given context (*ACC 1- Feedback Mechanisms Types*). A feedback mechanism needs to provide an established process for stakeholders to safely voice their negative experiences or concerns, with these addressed objectively against a standard set of rules and principles. It provides an opportunity for organizations to respond to any misconduct (e.g., abuse of power, corruption, fraud or issues of sexual exploitation). Negative feedback management should be part of an overall feedback mechanism.

4.3 ESTABLISHING A STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK MECHANISM

A project FM will need to be developed and rolled out **according to project needs and what is appropriate in the operating context**. It is important to begin planning for an FM prior to project implementation, and to **involve key stakeholders in its design**. Similarly, the team should consider having a standard FM set up in its areas of intervention, no matter how many and what type of projects are being implemented. An overarching FM will ensure coherence and transparency across the various projects implemented. The team can take the following steps to establish a project FM:

- **Orient the project team on the objectives of the FM** - brainstorm a list of reasons why an FM would be useful; this can help to build staff buy-in. The output: a list of reasons for having an FM.
- **Agree on types of feedback that will require action** – brainstorm a list of the types of feedback often received, positive or negative. These can be grouped by theme, agreement reached by type, and which ones would require most urgent action. A risk log can be used for this exercise (**ADV 7 - Risk Log Template**). The output: a prioritized list of types of feedback and suggested response action.
- **Agree on which stakeholders will have access to the FM** – brainstorm the list of stakeholders connected to the project and agree on who should have the ability to access submitted feedback. This can be done using **stakeholder analysis** that should be drafted for the project. The output: Stakeholder analysis and defined access levels to feedback (**MSTK 9f - Stakeholder Analysis**).
- **Assess the most appropriate communication channel(s)** – there is no standard FM as ways of communicating and dealing with grievances differ across cultures. FMs can be written or verbal, it can be done directly or through intermediaries, individually or in a group, personally or anonymously, depending on what is most appropriate in the context. Project teams should review the FM design checklist for additional considerations (**ACC 2 - Feedback Mechanism Design Checklist**).
- **Design the FM, including how feedback will be processed and responded to** – agreement will need to be reached on the process for collecting and processing feedback, i.e. who should **review and respond to feedback (sensitive and not sensitive), the expected timeframes for responding, procedures and steps to follow etc**. The process agreed on should be documented in detail so that staff are clear on it and if evaluated, documentation is available.
- **The FM can be the responsibility of a centralized/specialized department or of the project team more generally**. Centralized departments will be better able to ensure neutrality and objectivity, analyze and report on feedback across office functions (finance, human resources, logistics, etc.) and projects. The responsible team should also have an adequate gender mix available to collect and feedback on sensitive data as well as the appropriate skill set to facilitate the uptake and feedback to the stakeholders (effective communication and reporting). Note however that even where a centralized department has a formal and leading role in collecting and managing feedback, listening to and responding to the target communities remains everyone's responsibility.
- **A feedback log** can also be used to provide an overview of feedback received and how they were addressed (**ACC 4 - Feedback Log Template**). Ideally, this should be summarized for managers through a quarterly reporting process so that there is higher-level awareness of the nature of the feedback.
- **Agree on how feedback can be submitted**: The feedback method should be appropriate to the local context (Examples are outlined in **ACC 1 - Feedback Mechanism Types**). Depending on the specific project context and needs, consider the following questions when selecting the method(s):
    1. Can this method collect a high volume of information?
    2. Will the method require dedicated technical capacity to manage? Are there adequate resources (financial, human, technology) to support the tool?
    3. Can this method be used by hard to reach communities, different population groups, illiterate persons, etc.?
    4. Can this method be used for sensitive information? Is there an option for anonymity?
    5. Are the population and local stakeholders familiar with the method or will it require continuous sensitization?

6. If several methods are selected, can data from each be aggregated for comprehensive analysis?

7. Will the method require specific data entry and analysis skills? How will the data be validated?

8. Does this method take into account other feedback channels established by other stakeholders? Will this method duplicate or cause confusion?

- **Use a standard feedback template**: A standard template for capturing any projects' feedback should be made readily available for all feedback methods and across all communities or stakeholder groups
- **Communicate the process to stakeholders**: Stakeholders must be familiar with the FM if valuable feedback is to be received. An information campaign targeted towards intended users should be carried out to communicate the purpose of the FM, how users can provide feedback, frequency of availability of the FM, who is on the frontline facilitating the feedback collection on behalf of the organization, how feedback will be handled, and what response can be expected.
- **Analyze and validate collected data**: Statistics around feedback provided should be collected and trends identified. For example, high frequency or concentrated location of one particular type of feedback suggests action is required.

FIGURE 4.3: STEPS TO ANALYZE AND VALIDATE FEEDBACK

Turning the raw data into information that can be acted upon requires several steps:
- Disaggregate raw data (by sensitive data, urgent/not urgent data, geographical location, sex, age, etc.);
- Assign IDs, call-in numbers, or other codes to different types of issues raised (e.g. quality of project inputs, or challenges with use of assistance items provided, feedback on coverage and targeting, or requests for additional or different type of assistance);
- Record both quantitative and qualitative feedback in analysis.
- Incorporate unsolicited feedback when possible;
- Check and verify data to make sure it is reliable, triangulating sources when possible and appropriate. The more far-reaching the expected change is (as a result of the feedback provided), the greater the need is to validate affected populations' feedback and make sure it is featured in relevant reports to decision-makers and even donors;
- Look for trends over time. Even issues that are raised only sporadically (but repeatedly over time) should be recorded and verified and looked into as appropriate.
- Review on regular, weekly or monthly basis. Longer term projects can be reviewed on quarterly basis.

Source: *Closing the loop: effective feedback mechanisms in humanitarian contexts - practitioner guidance. ALNAP. 2014.*

- **Learn from feedback**: analyzed feedback should be reported to relevant stakeholders and managers, with the appropriate level of detail. Lessons learned should feed into decision-making, readjustment of project plans, as well as, future project planning.

SHARE FEEDBACK WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Community members should have access to the feedback that has been provided to enable their involvement in analysis and other uses (advocacy, etc.) they themselves may have for the information. Feedback can be shared in **whichever way - community meetings, crowdsourcing platforms, social media, fliers,** *etc. - is most appropriate to the local context.*

- **Review and improve the FM**: whenever possible, include the FM (particularly the use of feedback from affected populations) as one of the assessment criteria in project evaluations

to determine whether and how the mechanism contributes to project improvement, ownership, transparency, and improved two- way communication.

4.4 INCORPORATING FEEDBACK COLLECTION INTO ROUTINE MONITORING

In addition to establishing a formal FM, **the collection of feedback can also be incorporated into regular monitoring activities during implementation**. Routine on-site monitoring (during community meetings, post distribution questionnaires, etc.) presents an opportunity to ask beneficiaries questions to solicit feedback on issues tied to programme accountability. Examples of questions that could be included in routine monitoring are:

1. Were you aware of the project selection criteria? (Yes/No)
2. If yes, did the selection criteria help us reach the right people?
3. If no, is assistance reaching the right people, those most in need? Who else should be benefiting from the project?
4. How successful has the project been in meeting the most important needs of community members?
5. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very unhappy; 5 = very happy), how happy are you with the way you were involved in this project including information provided to you?
6. What one improvement do you want us to make on informing and involving you in this project?
7. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very unhappy; 5 = very happy), how happy are you with how you were treated by Action Against Hunger staff?
8. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very unhappy; 5 = very happy), how happy are you with how you were treated by partner staff?
9. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very unhappy; 5 = very happy), how happy are you with the project activities?
10. What level of ownership does the community have of the project?

4.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

1. **To be accountable, Action Against Hunger projects should**:
- Set out the commitments that it will be held accountable for and how they will be delivered;
- Ensure that staff have competencies that enable them to meet the organization's commitments;
- Ensure that the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders have access to timely, relevant, and clear information about the organization and its activities;
- Listen to the people it aims to assist, incorporating their views in program decisions;
- Facilitate that the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders have opportunities to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible, and safe process; and
- Learn from experience to continually improve its performance.

2**. Feedback reflects perceptions (positive or negative) from stakeholders about what is and is not working in a project**. Gathering feedback is a key means of monitoring quality and the extent to which a project is addressing identified needs. Aspects working well can be reinforced, while those working less well can be addressed and valuable lessons learned. At a minimum, any feedback mechanism should include a complaints mechanism to voice grievances.

3. A **feedback mechanism** is only effective if, at a minimum, it supports the collection, acknowledgement, analysis of, and response to the feedback received, thus forming a closed feedback loop. Where the feedback loop is left open, the mechanism is not fully effective.

4. A project FM will need to be developed and rolled out **according to project needs and what is appropriate in the operating context**. It is important to begin planning for a feedback mechanism prior to project implementation, and to involve key stakeholders in its design.

5. In addition to establishing a formal FM, **the collection of feedback can also be incorporated into regular monitoring activities** during implementation.

ANNEXES

1. ANNEX 1: DESIGNING A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND INDICATORS

Logic Models

A **logic model** is a tool (a table, flow chart, etc.) used to graphically depict a program theory, which explains how an intervention or initiative is expected to contribute to a sequence of results. The logic model provides the building blocks for both the program design and the M&E system used to measure progress toward the results. Thus, M&E perspectives should help inform the development of logic models, as it can help determine what results are logical and measureable.

There are a number of types of logic models, which employ slightly different structures and terminology for components of program theory. While Action Against Hunger generally uses the logical framework approach (LFA), the model used by individual projects may depend on donor preference/requirements.

Types of logic models include:

- **Logical Framework (logframe)** – Most commonly used in our programs, the logframe is preferred by multiple donors including DFID and ECHO. While formats and terminologies vary slightly, at minimum the logframe includes four central categories containing information on the project/programme's intended Impact, Outcomes, Outputs, and Activities (also referred to as the *Goal, Purpose, Results, and Activities*). For more information, see: http://betterevaluation.org/evaluation-options/logframe.

- **Results Framework** – The results framework emphasizes objectives and results. At the impact level, there is an overarching strategic objective (SO) that the program aims to achieve through key intermediate results (IRs). The intermediate results are linked to and achieved through sub-intermediate results (sub-IRs). The Results Framework has been popular with USAID in the past, and it has also been used by DFID and the World Bank.

  For more information, see: https://www.urbanreproductivehealth.org/toolkits/measuring-success/tips-building-results-framework

- **Theory of Change** – The formal theory of change model emphasizes the pathways and process by which change occurs in the achievement of a long-term goal. More than other models, it articulates assumptions which underlay each stage of the change process. The model has a more flexible structure and allows program planners to specify the requirements and assumptions necessary for change to occur. For more information, see: http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/ and http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluation-methodology/an-introduction-to-theory-of-change

- **Results Chain** – The results chain is relatively new but increasingly popular logic model tool. It has a more flexible structure that takes into account the highly complex pathways of change that may support achievement of objectives. It is also useful for emphasizing the wider changes in systems and markets that may be connected to a project. The results chain has been used and studied extensively by the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED), and tested by DFID and SIDA. For more information

see: "Guidelines to the DCED Standard for Results Measurement: Articulating the Results Chain" DCED, 2015.

Each type of logic model is a valuable tool in project design and planning in order to avoid leaps of logic between activities and higher level outcomes/impacts that are envisioned. In practice these tools do not differ much.

Since the majority of ACF projects employ the logframe, the process for developing a logframe is discussed at length in the remainder of the annex.

Designing a logical framework

A project logical framework (logframe) is an important tool through which you can summarize the project plan, map the multiple levels of project objectives, and associate results in the short, medium and long term. It can be derived by undertaking a "problem tree" analysis that breaks down problems faced by communities to build them back up into a "solutions tree" or logframe.

The logframe is one form of a logical or logic model - a model where there should be a clear relationship of one thing leading to another. In this instance, inputs or resources are used by project activities to produce results. Results are defined as "the effects of actions, that can be intended or unintended, positive or negative," and can be split into different levels of results depending on the significance of their achievement and level of change attained. In the Results Chain indicated in Figure 1 below, three levels of results are identified—outputs, outcomes and impacts. A project's intended results can be referred to as objectives, and are determined at the planning stage.

The logical relationship of inputs leading to activities that produce outputs, which result in medium term change (or outcomes) which result in longer term change (or impact), can be mapped out as a Results Chain, as in Figure 1 below: **Inputs are used to carry out activities, → Activities produce specific outputs, → Outputs produce outcomes, → Outcomes contribute to the goal (impact) of a project.**
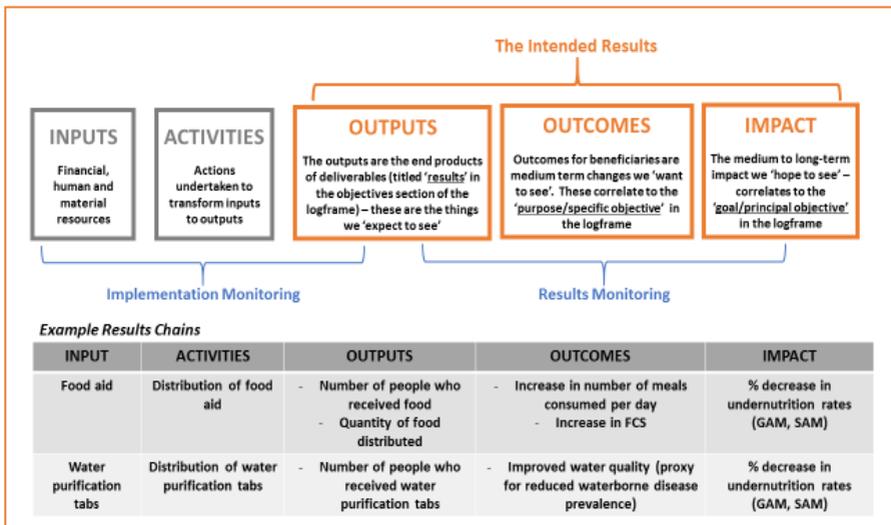
Table 1 shows the definitions of each of the levels of logframe objectives and their associated results that can be measured by indicators, as well as examples of M&E activities that might measure these at each level of the logframe.

TABLE 1: LEVELS OF LOGFRAME OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

Logframe <u>Objectives</u> Definitions		Levels of <u>Results</u> and associated Objectively Verifiable <u>Indicators</u> (OVI) that measure objectives	
Impact [Goal/ Overall Objective]	Higher level project objectives in terms of longer-term benefits to beneficiaries and the wider benefits to society. The goal will not be achieved by the project alone; the project aims to contribute to its goal	**Impact Indicator**	Impact indicators measure this long term change in conditions of the community (e.g. % change in malnutrition rates or mortality rates due to malnutrition)
Outcomes [Purpose/ Specific Objective]	The short-term and medium-term objectives in terms of benefits to the project beneficiaries due to the intervention's outputs; the project can only indirectly control achievement of outcomes; behaviour change is often a key component	**Outcome Indicator**	Outcome Indicators describe the medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. (e.g.% change in the population with access to adequate food, rate of adoption of improved farming practices, % of beneficiaries using latrines, % practicing hand washing)
Outputs [Results]	The outputs produced by undertaking a series of activities. This is what will be delivered to the intended beneficiaries or target group, and it should be possible for project management to be held accountable for this delivery	**Output Indicator**	Output Indicators describe the immediate effects of an activity; tangible products, goods and services, and other immediate changes that lead to the achievement of outcomes (e.g. number of people or % of population served).
Activities	The tangible goods and services delivered by the project. (e.g. distribution of inputs)	**Process Indicator**	Process Indicators describe the activities undertaken (e.g. quantity of inputs distributed)
Inputs	The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention	**Input**	Indicators used to measure the utilization of inputs

Lower level results (i.e. processes and outputs) contribute to the achievement of higher ones (i.e. outcomes and impact). To assist with project planning, it is useful to draw out the logic model of the project (or theory of change) to check whether the logic of it flows and makes sense. Each

level of objectives should have correlating intended results that can be measured by respective indicators.

While inputs and activities are typically well-defined and are constrained in their lograme position, the placement of higher-level results within project logframes can be more nuanced (for example, some projects may consider food security to be the Overall Objective, rather than an outcome). This is particularly the case given the complex pathways to nutrition security addressed by ACF programs. The placement of these objectives will largely depend on the ultimate goal set by ACF or the donor, as well as the activities and objectives that are emphasized.

Figure 2: Logic Model – building up a logframe
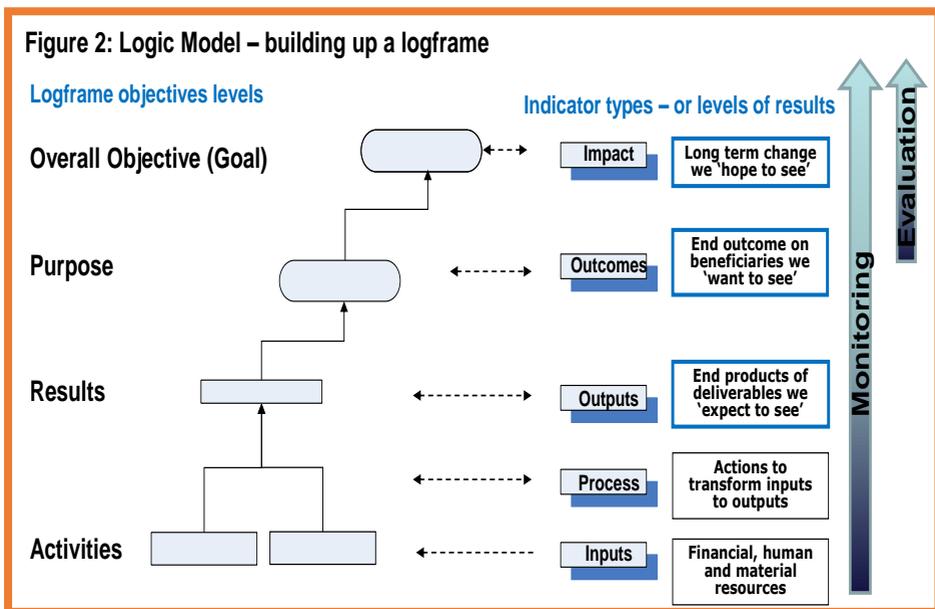
An M&E system should reflect this flow or chain of results that builds on the logframe and is used to create an M&E plan (see *MSTK 1a - M&E Plan and Calendar Template).* Most results can be measured through monitoring, depending on the length of the project. Higher level results (outcomes, impact) may take longer to become evident and therefore to measure, and may become clearer in an evaluation.

Of course, reality does not always work in a linear fashion. By mapping out the logical flow, theory of change or chain of results, the results expected from each activity or combination of activities undertaken over a period of time can at least be mapped out with correlating indicators agreed upon to measure whether the expected result is being achieved.

Higher-level objectives (e.g. outcomes and impact) – which are by definition outside the direct control of the project – often rest on assumptions about the operational context. For example, achieving objectives in a food security project may require the assumption that there will be no drought or an increase in a conflict's severity. Any assumptions made at each stage of the logical model will be captured, and referred to in the assumptions column of the logframe.

The actual logframe (see Figure 3 below) therefore summarizes this theory of change over time by detailing each of the objectives (goal, purpose, results) intended by the project, the related indicators that measure the extent to which results against each objective have been attained, the assumptions that need to hold if each level of objectives is to lead to the next, and the means by which indicators will be measured (Means of Verification (MOV**)). Indicators and the MOVs then form the basis of a project's M&E system to measure the achievement of intended (as well as unintended) results**.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)	Means of Verification (MOV)	Assumptions
Overall Objective (Goal)	Then	Impact indicators		
Project Purpose	Then	Outcome indicators	If	
Results	Then	Output indicators	If	
Activities	Then	Inputs ~~Costs~~	If	
			If	Pre-conditions

Figure 3: Logframe template highlighting the links between assumptions and objectives

Measuring impact can be challenging, costly and sometimes not possible for short-term projects, given that impact is change seen in the medium to long term, depending on the project objectives. Increasingly in the humanitarian sector, many argue in favor of adopting sector-wide measurements of impact rather than project-specific ones. **Given these challenges in measuring impact and determining attribution, these Guidelines focus primarily on M&E for results up to outcome level only.**

Designing indicators

The quality of a logframe is critical for successful project M&E, and its logical flow should therefore be rigorously checked. Logframes should be prepared as close to the field as possible with input from beneficiaries and partners. These should also key into measuring the success of objectives through jointly agreed upon indicators and means of measurement.

Indicators are means or units of measurement, that define ways in which to determine whether targets have been achieved or not. They are called indicators given that they are often only indicative of whether an objective has been achieved rather than wholly demonstrating it. Often a number of indicators are required to give a sense of whether an objective has been achieved or not.

FIGURE 3: SMART AND SPICED INDICATORS

The acronyms **SMART** and **SPICED** indicators act as a helpful guide to consider what a good indicator looks like (SMART) and how it should be derived (SPICED).

SMART indicators:

S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable   Or: acceptable, applicable, appropriate, attainable or agreed upon

R Relevant   Or: reliable, realistic

T Time-bound

SPICED Indicators:

S Subjective - Informants have a special position or experience that gives them unique insights which may yield a very high return on the investigators time. In this sense, what may be seen by others as 'anecdotal' becomes critical data because of the source's value.

P Participatory - Indicators should be developed together with those best placed to assess them. This means involving a project's ultimate beneficiaries, but it can also mean involving local staff and other stakeholders.

I Interpreted and communicable - Locally defined indicators may not mean much to other stakeholders, so they often need to be explained.

C Cross-checked and compared - The validity of assessment needs to be cross-checked, by comparing different indicators and progress, and by using different informants, methods, and researchers.

E Empowering - The process of setting and assessing indicators should be empowering in itself and allow groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation.

D Diverse and disaggregated - There should be a deliberate effort to seek out different indicators from a range of groups, especially men and women. This information needs to be recorded in such a way that these differences can be assessed over time.

Indicators should be measurable, through clear Means of Verification, and should each have a clear target and baseline against which to measure progress, as illustrated in the example below:

FIGURE 4: EXAMPLE - SAMPLE AGRICULTURAL INDICATORS

	Indicators (OVI)	Means of Verification (MoV)
Impact	X% of households (HH) that can meet their food needs during the hunger gap in XX region following provision of assistance (Baseline: YY%)	- HH survey - Focus group discussion
Outcome	X % change in household production of major crops (by crop type and unit) in XX region between XX and XX period of time (Baseline: YY%)	- HH Pre- and Post-Harvest survey - Focus Group Discussion for each targeted livelihood group
Outputs	Area (hectares) of (newly) cultivated land as a result of agricultural assistance activities (Baseline: YY hectares)	- Observation - HH survey

For our projects, a selection of mandatory core and optional thematic indicators should be drawn on to shape indicator logframes. An overview of these is included in *MSTK 2 – Core Indicators for All Sectors* and *MSTK 4 – Thematic Indicators for All Sectors*.

When deciding what data to select as part of indicator data, consider the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Only collect data that meets project stakeholder information needs, to inform project management and decision-making. Excess information can be costly and make project management more difficult.
- **Validity:** Data collected should be able to measure the changes being tracked.
- **Precision & Accuracy:** Data should represent the actual population and their situation.
- **Coverage & Completeness:** Data should cover all study groups of interest.
- **Reliable:** Data should be verifiable, producing the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same thing over time.
- **Comparable:** Where possible, especially for quantitative studies, data findings can be stratified/clustered and compared across different contexts e.g. areas or population groups.
- **Standardized:** Related to comparability, data should, when possible, use standard indicators so they can be consistent and comparable.
- **Realistic:** It must be possible within the resources available to collect, analyze, and use the data specified.
- **Timely:** Data collection, analysis, and reporting should be timely for its intended use – e.g. to inform decisions about how the project should progress. Accurate information is of little value if it is too late or infrequent. A compromise between speed, frequency, and accuracy may be necessary.
- **Ethical:** Data collection, as well as analysis and use, should respect the dignity and security of all stakeholders involved (*Annex 8 - M&E Principles and Ethical Considerations*).
- **Secondary:** When appropriate, data that can be obtained from reliable secondary sources can save time and money.

2.   ANNEX 2: CONDUCTING BASELINE & ENDLINE SURVEYS, & REFLECTION EVENTS

What are baseline and endline surveys, and when should they be undertaken?

Baseline Survey

A baseline survey **measures the situation <u>before project activities commence</u>**. By measuring project indicators at the starting point, this provides benchmark data, such that M&E activities can assess progress made against these indicators and the extent to which the project has made a difference. The baseline is an essential part of the M&E plan as it is almost impossible to measure outcomes of a project without having assessed the starting situation. Baseline studies can also be used to confirm the initial set of selected indicators to ensure those indicators are appropriate to measure project results and can be effectively collected.

Note: A baseline survey differs from a needs assessment that is traditionally conducted earlier during the design phase of the project cycle and aims to increase understanding of communities' needs, priorities, capacities, resources, and problems. Given the different purposes of a baseline survey and a needs assessment, it is not recommended that one replace the other. However it should be noted that baseline data collection might happen during needs assessment – for example this may particularly be the case in rapid onset crises.
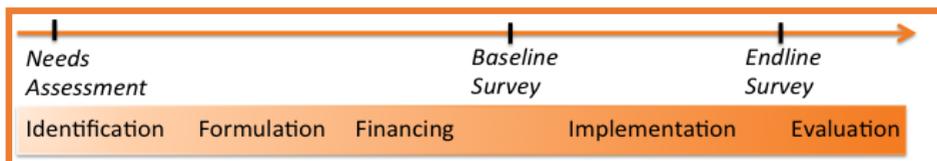
Endline Survey

Endline surveys measure the situation **at the <u>end of the project,</u> upon completion of activities**, to determine the degree of change that has occurred as a result of the project. Baseline and endline survey data contributes to a project evaluation and to monitoring changes on longer-term projects.

Some projects may also include **Midline Surveys**:

- A mid-line survey, as the name suggests, is done at approximately the half-way stage during project implementation, using the same indicators as the baseline and endline to enable a comparative measure of progress at the various stages in the project cycle.

- It is useful to help gauge the extent to which the project is on track to achieve its intended outcomes, whether corrective action is required if the results are not as expected, whether the indicators continue to be appropriate, can be effectively collected, and whether additional indicators are required.

The **timing of the surveys is important because seasonal influences can confuse outcomes**. For example, if a baseline survey is conducted after harvest, during a time when food stocks may be greater, and an endline survey is carried out during the middle of the lean season, core indicators such as Dietary Diversity Scores for the FSL sector may decrease. It will not be clear if this decrease would have been worse were it not for the intervention. For those projects less than twelve months in duration, contextual trends should be analyzed and presented to explain the seasonal effect upon outcomes.

Baseline and Endline Surveys - Indicators

- Every baseline, endline (and mid-line) survey should at a minimum measure the starting point of the **core indicators** in the relevant sector. Project-specific **thematic indicators** selected by the project team to fit the specific components of the project will also be added

- In addition, the project team can review the OEDC/DAC criteria often used when evaluating projects to ensure that they are collecting relevant indicators to be able to demonstrate progress against each of these after the project has ended

- **Sometimes during project implementation, new or different indicators become relevant**. In these cases, project teams should collect new baseline data by gathering as much information as possible about the initial condition prior to project implementation. Sources for this information may include:
    o Data collected for other purposes, in written records, meeting minutes, surveys, photos, etc.
    o Interviews and focus groups during which participants are asked when and how much things have changed.

- **Endline and mid-line surveys** should at a minimum match the types of data collected during the baseline as well as include any additional indicators that may have been identified as relevant during project implementation

Collecting Quantitative and Qualitative Baseline and Endline Indicators & Data

Baseline and endline surveys should include the collection of both quantitative and qualitative indicators and data.

Collecting Quantitative Indicators & Data for Baseline & Endline

- Measure or count the indicators at its initial condition prior to project implementation (baseline), and in its final condition after project activities have concluded (endline)
- Participatory methods such as mapping can add value to quantitative data. It can also be helpful to express and share quantitative data using a graph or trend line, adding historical data when possible

Collecting Qualitative Indicators & Data for Baseline & Endline

- Try to construct a descriptive scenario of the current situation before, during or after project implementation. Interviews, and focus groups are a useful way of ensuring beneficiaries and other stakeholders participate in establishing the situation.
- At baseline stage encourage participants to envision the scenario at the end of the project, and then assess the same issues in their initial condition (see A Participatory Approach box below).
- At endline encourage participants to describe the current scenario after project completion and their perspectives on any changes the project may have caused or contributed to, and then assess how the situation has changed since the project began.
- Be prepared for participants in mid-line and endline studies to describe unintended results that cannot be captured in the baseline/endline indicators. These unintended results should be recorded, analyzed, and shared.

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

A community can assess their current status with regard to each criteria / indicator using a four-point scale. The scale can represent phases of the moon, with a new moon representing beginnings and a full moon representing a situation that had reached its potential. This sets a baseline against which both targets and future progress can be measured. This same type of scorecard can also be used during implementation to ensure regular monitoring remains participatory.

Aspects of Vision (Indicators)	1 (N e w Moon)	2 (Young Moon)	3 (3 / 4 Moon)	4 (Full Moon)
Reliable source of safe drinking water		x		
Income generating activities	x			
Homes and land safe from landslide and floods				
Crop diversification	x			

Adapted from: 'Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, Reflection and Learning for Community-based Adaptation: A Revised Manual for Local Practitioners © 2014 CARE International

Reflection Events

To support better project analysis and learning, project teams can organize **reflection events** to collect data on project processes and immediate outputs. They can occur as often as monthly but at a minimum should coincide with reporting schedules (e.g. quarterly, mid-line, end-line etc.). Reflection events can be internal discussions with project staff or focus group discussions/community workshops with project stakeholders (including beneficiaries).

Questions that can be explored during reflection events include:

1. **What have been the problems**, if any, with project implementation? **What have been the successes**, if any, with project implementation? What are the reasons for these problems and successes?

2. **What has been the project's progress** so far (considering multiple levels of indicators)? Has progress varied among different groups? Consider different geographic areas, households of different socioeconomic status, and male and female participants.

3. Are project activities **reaching the target groups**? Consider who is participating in meetings, attending trainings, and receiving inputs or goods. Discuss the effectiveness of the targeting with nonparticipants as well to receive an additional perspective.

4. **What feedback have we received** from community members? Has this varied for different community groups, such as men and women or project participants and non-participants? How can this feedback be addressed?

5. **What has changed or is changing in the broader context** for these communities and households? Consider change in relation to the project's critical assumptions. How should the project tailor its future activities or interventions to account for these changes in context?

6. Have **any unintended positive or negative changes** occurred due to the project? If so, why and who has experienced this change?

Adapted from: *Guidance on M&E. Hagens, Morel, Causten, et al. CRS. 2012.*

3.   ANNEX 3: TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

Evaluations can be divided into a number of different categories. Note that there may be overlaps between types of evaluation:

Evaluation Types by Timing[17]:

- **Ex-ante evaluation**: An evaluation that is performed before implementation of an intervention
- **Ex-post evaluation:** Evaluation of an intervention after it has been completed. Note: It may be undertaken directly after or long after completion. The intention is to identify the factors of success or failure, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts, and to draw conclusions that may inform other interventions
- **End-of-project evaluation**: These are summative, and are undertaken at the end of a project to assess performance against intended objectives. These tend to be externally led to allow for an independent third party analysis.
- **Impact evaluation**: These are conducted after project activities have ended to assess long-term changes achieved relative to a project's goal and purpose, and the sustainability of the project. Note that the term "impact evaluation" has a separate and more technical meaning in rigorous evaluation and research contexts. Here it refers to the use of particular methods in setting up the evaluation in order to determine *causal* effects of a project on particular development outcomes. These are known as "experimental" or "quasi-experimental" methods.
- **Mid-term evaluation:** These are formative evaluations to assess performance against plans and whether any external or internal factors changed requiring an alteration in plans. They are undertaken half-way through project implementation to assess whether any changes are required for the remainder of the project's life cycle.
- **Summative evaluation:** A study conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. Summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program.

Evaluations by Approach/Methodology:

- **Cluster evaluation:** An evaluation of a set of related activities, projects and/or programs
- **Cost-benefit analysis:** This is an economic tool used to compare the benefits against the costs of a project or activity. It values the economic benefits of a project to demonstrate improvements in human welfare and can supplement other evaluation methods to determine changes in populations.
- **Formative evaluation:** Evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs. Note: Formative evaluations may also be conducted for other reasons such as compliance, legal requirements or as part of a larger evaluation initiative
- **Meta-evaluation:** The term is used for evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators.

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[17] Many of the descriptions of evaluation types in this section are drawn from *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, OECD, 2010* http://www.oecd.org/development/peer-reviews/2754804.pdf

- **Process evaluation**: An evaluation of the internal dynamics of implementing organizations, their policy instruments, their service delivery mechanisms, their management practices, and the linkages among these
- **Program evaluation:** Evaluation of a set of interventions, marshaled to attain specific global, regional, country, or sector development objectives. Note: a program is a time bound intervention involving multiple activities that may cut across sectors, themes and/or geographic areas.
- **Project evaluation:** Evaluation of an individual intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules, often within the framework of a broader program.
- **Real-time evaluations** (RTEs): These are conducted during a project's implementation to get real-time analysis of progress against higher-level objectives and facilitate immediate recommendations on changes to the project to improve implementation.
- **Thematic evaluations:** Focuses on one thematic area, such as cash or gender, across a number of projects, and look to common findings or trends. A specific type is a **cluster evaluation** which focuses on thematic clusters.

Evaluation Types by Stakeholders Involved:

- **External evaluations**: These are conducted by evaluators who are not part of the project team and are often independent consultants, to provide an objective assessment of performance. These tend to focus on accountability and evaluators are recruited by tender.
- **Independent evaluation:** An evaluation carried out by entities and persons free of the control of those responsible for the design and implementation of the intervention. Note: The credibility of an evaluation depends in part on how independently it has been carried out. Independence implies freedom from political influence and organizational pressure. It is characterized by full access to information and by full autonomy.
- **Internal evaluation:** Evaluation of an intervention conducted by a unit and/or individuals reporting to the management of the donor, partner, or implementing organization. Related term: self-evaluation. While cheaper than external evaluations, and helping to build staff ownership of a project, they may be seen as lacking in credibility given conflict of interest.
- **Joint evaluation**: An evaluation to which different partners participate. Note: There are various degrees of "jointness" depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting. Joint evaluations can help overcome attribution problems in assessing the effectiveness of programs and strategies, the complementarity of efforts supported by different partners, the quality of aid coordination, etc. They tend to be useful in humanitarian contexts where interagency learning is the rationale or where attribution of impact by different projects is difficult. While costs can be shared, they carry additional costs of coordination.
- **Participatory evaluation:** Evaluation method in which representatives of agencies and stakeholders (including beneficiaries) work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting an evaluation.
- **Self-evaluation:** An evaluation by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of an intervention.

The majority of evaluations should be highly **participatory** with sizeable input from beneficiaries and other stakeholders. These can get to the heart of whether needs are being met, but are more resource intense, both in terms of time and cost. However, they can result in longer term savings by virtue of better assessing the extent to which needs are met. Evaluations should thus be as participatory as possible. Where time and money are constrained, or beneficiary access is difficult,

evaluations based on staff interviews and cross-checking participatory monitoring data and previous evaluations is an alternative.

Evaluations can be internally or externally led (refer to the ACF Evaluation Policy for guidance on when to use internal or external evaluators)**,** each with advantages and disadvantages that should be considered when planning an evaluation.

| INTERNAL EVALUATORS	EXTERNAL EVALUATORS
+ Know the organization	+ Objective
+ Understand organizational behavior and attitudes	+ No organizational bias
+ Are known to staff	+ Fresh perspectives
+ Are less threatening	+ Broader experience
+ Often a greater chance of adopting recommendations	+ More easily hired for longer periods of time
+ Are less expensive	+ Can serve as an outside expert
+ Build internal evaluation capability	+ Not part of the power structure
+ Contribute to program capacity	+ Can bring in additional resources
- Objectivity may be questioned	+ Trained in evaluation
- Structure may constrain participation	+ Experienced in other evaluations
- Personal gain may be questioned	+ Bring fresh perspectives from similar programs in other organizations
- Accept the assumptions of the organization	+ Regarded as an "expert"
- Full participation may be constrained by usual workload	- May not know the organization
- May not be trained in evaluation methods	- May not know of constraints affecting recommendations
- May lead to the evaluation not having acceptable outside credibility	- May be perceived as an adversary
- May have difficulty avoiding bias	- Expensive
- May lack special technical expertise	- Contract negotiations may take time
	- Follow up on recommendations is not always there

Evaluations should always clarify their primary purpose around accountability or learning and their primary audience. Most evaluations seek to combine accountability and learning objectives.

CHARACTERISTIC	ACCOUNTABILITY-ORIENTED	LESSON-LEARNING ORIENTED
Terms of Reference (ToR)	Likely to be set by those external to the program, e.g., country director/HQ.	Likely to be set by those directly involved in the program e.g., program coordinator.
Evaluation team composition	Independent external team.	Internal team of project staff, or mixed team of project and non-project staff.
Resources (time & budget)	Likely to require more time and may be more expensive, particularly if external evaluators are recruited and a more thorough review of project details is required.	Likely to be less resource intensive in most areas, save internal staff and time.
Emphasis in approach	Methodology of data collection and analysis emphasize objective, assessment of achievement of plans with resource available.	Process of reflection and reaching conclusions emphasized – more subjective.
Evaluation type	Likely to be undertaken at end of project to check achievement against plans.	Likely to be undertaken during project for lessons to feed back into current/future project(s), e.g., through real time evaluation. After Action Reviews are particularly useful and cost-effective for internal learning.
Management style	More directive	More facilitative
Report dissemination	In public domain	Internal to organization/restricted/ external

Source: Adapted from: Buchanan-Smith, M. & Cosgrave, J. (2010) Evaluation of Humanitarian Action, ALNAP

4.   ANNEX 4: PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING & EVALUATION SYSTEMS

ACF encourages active stakeholder participation in project formulation, implementation, and M&E activities to ensure relevant programming and accountability (see section 1.5). There are, however, degrees of participation with associated resource implications that have to be factored into the M&E plan.
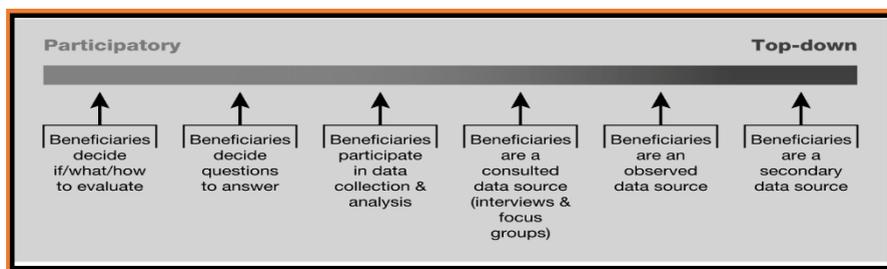
Source: Program/Project M&E Guide. IFRC. 2011.

There are several types of participation that can be incorporated into a project. Project teams should consider:

TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH TYPE
1. Passive Participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or what has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
2. Participation in Information Giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3. Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4. Participation for Material Incentives	People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. It is very common to see this called participation, though people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

5.Functional Participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
6. Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7.Self-Mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

There are several advantages and disadvantages of participatory M&E:

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
• Evaluations show that involving people improves project impact. It empowers them to analyse and find solutions for their own situation (as "active participants" not "passive recipients"). • Builds local capacity and ownership to manage and sustain project achievements. Increases likelihood of acceptance and utilization of findings. • Builds collaboration between beneficiaries, staff and partners. • Reinforces accountability to beneficiaries. • Can save money and time in data collection compared to using project staff. • Provides direct field input to facilitate management decision-making to execute corrective actions.	• Can require more time and cost to train and manage local staff and community members, and slow down activities. • Requires skilled facilitators to ensure that everyone understands the process and is equally involved. • Can challenge quality of data collected where vested local interests are involved. Data analysis and decision-making can be dominated by the more powerful voices in the community (related to gender, ethnic, or religious factors). • Demands genuine commitment of local people and the support of donors, since the project may not use the traditional indicators or formats for reporting findings.

To ensure that stakeholders (particularly beneficiaries) are involved throughout the project, review the following steps. It may not always be possible to apply all of these steps, for example due to time constraints or the level of stakeholder interest; however every effort should be made to ensure as much stakeholder participation as is feasible:

HOW TO ENSURE STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION THROUGHOUT A PROJECT

STEP	DETAILS
1. Before assessment	• Determine and clearly state assessment objectives • Inform the local community and local authorities well before the assessment takes place • Include both women and men in the project team • Make a list of vulnerable groups to be identified during the assessment • Check what other NGOs have done in that community and get copies
2. During assessment	• Introduce team members and their roles • Explain the timeframe for assessment • Invite representatives of local people to participate • Create space for individuals or groups to speak openly • Hold separate discussions and interviews with different groups (i.e. local officials, community groups, men, women, and local staff). • Ask these groups for their opinions on needs and priorities. • Inform them about any decisions taken. • Note: If it is not possible to consult all groups within the community at one time, state clearly which groups have been omitted on this occasion and return to meet them as soon as possible. Write up findings, describing the methodology and its limitations. Use the analysis for future decision- making.
3. During project design	• Give local authorities and community, including the village committee and representatives of affected groups, the findings of the assessment • Invite representatives of local people to participate in project design • Enable the village committee to take part in project budgeting • Check the project design with different groups of beneficiaries • Design a feedback mechanism that is accessible and usable by all relevant stakeholders
4. During implementation	• Invite local community, village committee, and local authorities to take part in developing criteria for selection of beneficiaries • Announce the criteria and display them in a public place • Invite the local community and village committee to participate in selecting beneficiaries • Announce the beneficiaries and post the list in a public place • Announce the feedback mechanism and encourage beneficiaries to provide feedback
5. During distributions and other activities	• If recruiting additional staff, advertise openly and ensure this will be accessible by the target communities • Form a project/activity committee comprising the village committee, government officials, and NGO staff • Consider how the planned activities will include the most vulnerable, such as disabled people, elderly people, and other poor or marginalized groups

	• Give the local authority and local community a date and location for distributions or other activities in advance where and when safety allows
	• List items for distribution and their cost and display this list in advance in a public place
	• Include people living a long way from the village or distribution point and consider providing transport costs
	• Distribute first to groups who will face challenges with longer waiting times (e.g. pregnant or lactating women, elderly, disabled)
	• Ensure people know how and where to provide feedback and are able to do so
6. During monitoring	• Invite the village committee to take part in the monitoring process
	• Share findings with the village committee and communities

Adapted from: ECB (2007) Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: The Good Enough Guide

5.   ANNEX 5: DATA COLLECTION – METHODS, TOOLS & APPROACHES

MATRIX OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS & TOOLS

- The matrix below details a range of data collection methods and tools – listed in alphabetical order. The terminology used for data collection in terms of defining what is a 'method' and what is a 'tool' or 'technique' is by no means consistently applied in the wide array of literature on the subject – e.g. what one person refers to as a tool is referred to as a method, or an approach by someone else. As such the categorisation applied below is not an attempt at any kind of firm classification or definition of the terms (what is a 'method', what is a 'tool' etc.). However an attempt has been made to group tools that fall within a particular type or 'method' as far as possible e.g. calendars, geo-spatial mapping, surveys, ranking, interviews etc. There were also a significant number or methods or tools which weren't obviously variations on the same type which have been listed as singular data collection types.
- Given the very large number of data collection methods and tools in existence, and the fact that this continues to evolve with further tools and variations being developed, this list is far from comprehensive. It does however cover the key types of data collection that are likely to be utilized by ACF staff for M&E.
- For some of the data collection methods or tools in the matrix there is more detailed guidance included within these M&E Guidelines. This is indicated by a'*' after the relevant method/tool name. Check the contents of the annexes and toolkits to locate these (primarily in the MSTK).

DATA COLLECTION TYPE / METHOD	TOOLS	DESCRIPTION	WHEN TO USE	QUANTITATIVE/ QUALITATIVE
ABC Technique		This technique compares behaviors with their consequences, in order to analyze an individual's or group's readiness to change. With an individual or group, ask participants to: A - Explain the actual behaviors or actions that are needed in order to change; describe how you want the new situation to be B - List the disadvantages of the current behavior and list the advantages of the new proposed behavior C - List the advantages of maintaining the current behavior or situation and list the disadvantages related to changing to the new proposed behavior or situation	Used in Social & Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC), e.g. at the end of a behavior change initiative, ABC can be used to evaluate the new perceived A-B-C equilibrium	Qualitative

Calendar	Seasonal Calendar*	A graphical presentation of the months in the year representing seasonal patterns in terms of factors including: crop production, key food and income acquisition strategies, key seasonal periods such as the rains, periods of peak illness, lean season etc.	For assessment and project planning; baseline and endline (if relevant)	Qualitative
	24 Hour Calendar*	A visual method of showing how people allocate their time between different activities over a 24-hour period. Can be used to gather information for project design, and for monitoring changes in terms of participants' time and activities	For project planning and monitoring	Qualitative
Case Study		A detailed descriptive narrative of individuals, communities, events, projects, time periods, or a story. Particularly useful in evaluating complex situations and exploring qualitative impact. Helps to illustrate data and find commonalities; only when combined (triangulated) with other case studies or methods can one extrapolate key principles. To write a case study of a project, consider the following questions: What type of project is it? What does it aim to achieve? How will it achieve this aim? What will the final output be? How many people are being assisted, and what proportion of the total catchment area is this? Why was this community selected? What is the impact on beneficiaries and how was it achieved? When profiling an individual beneficiary consider: personal details (e.g., name, age, family size, who is head of HH, family circumstances, current income, current sources of income and coping strategies); context of the person's life: major changes in their life in the reference period? What assistance is the beneficiary receiving? Why? How does the beneficiary feel he/she is benefiting? What difference is this assistance making to the beneficiary? What hopes does he/she have for the future?	Useful throughout a project to document examples of project achievements. Useful to exemplify specific activities or effects on individual households, particularly for inclusion in internal or donor reports or for communications / media messaging.	Qualitative

Checklist		A list of items used for validating or inspecting that procedures/steps have been followed, or the presence of examined behaviors. Checklists allow for systematic review that can be useful in setting benchmark standards and establishing periodic measures of improvement.	Useful reminders for project teams; for semi-structured/ unstructured interviews	Quantitative and/or Qualitative
Community Book		A community maintained document of a project belonging to a community. Can include written records, pictures, drawings, songs or whatever community members feel is appropriate. Where communities have low literacy rates, a memory team is identified whose responsibility it is to relate the written record to the rest of the community in keeping with their oral traditions.	Help communities to monitor and document change	Qualitative
Force Field Analysis		A graphic representation is drawn on the ground or on paper based on the group's discussion and inputs to identify and list the different hindering and supporting factors in the change process. The drawing is then used to analyze these factors and the strength of their influence and to suggest creative solutions to remove, reduce, or reinforce them. Has been used in SBCC M&E.	At baseline & endline can be used to measure changes in hindering and supporting factors (and their influence).	Qualitative
Geo-Spatial Mapping* *(see MSTK 9: Geo-Spatial Mapping for more detailed matrix of mapping tools)*	Hazard/R isk Mapping	To show hazards or risks and their frequency and severity. Also used to identify vulnerable populations in the area	Maps can be used for different purposes at various stages of a project cycle including assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation	Qualitative and/or Quantitativ e
	Zone Mapping	To show local land use zones (e.g. coast zone, plains or mountainous areas and their associated resources and primary livelihood types) Mapping of differences in geography, agro-ecology and types of livelihoods facilitates analysis of challenges that may occur as well as response options		
	Resourc e Mapping	To get an overview of the main geographical features and other resources in one area, e.g. arrangement of houses, fields, roads, rivers and other land uses, services, which resources are assessable and owned by the community		

		and individuals. Can be used to capture specific local resources. Maps detailing wealth groups and access to services, resources and infrastructure are often also referred to **Social Mapping**		
	Transect Walk	For describing/showing the location of resources, buildings, services, landscape, land-uses etc. along a given transect. Comprises a walk through the selected area using observation to seek out and record areas of interest		
Interview (Individual)*	**Household Interview**	Used to obtain an understanding of the functioning of the household and/or to gather project-specific information from beneficiaries (e.g. monitoring surveys). Generally involves structured or semi-structured questioning.	Assessments, project monitoring, evaluations etc.	Qualitative and/or Quantitative
	Key Informant Interview	An interview with a person having special information about a particular topic. These interviews are generally conducted in an open-ended or semi-structured fashion.	When seeking specific information (e.g. from experts)	Qualitative
	Ethnographic Interviewing	In-depth interviewing of a limited number of individuals to provide a good picture of how a particular event has affected them. Helps to put human detail into a larger picture	In depth research into the impact of an event	Qualitative
	Exit Interview	An exit interview provides insight into people's perceptions and actual knowledge gained after participating in activities. E.g. used in SBCC to explore what people learned, what they remember, what they liked, what they didn't like, what they would share etc.	Used after activities to measure progress towards outcomes, learn unintended consequences, and identify problems.	Qualitative (primarily); and/or Quantitative
Interview (Group)*	**Focus Group Discussion**	Focused discussion with a small group of participants to record attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs pertinent to the issues being examined. A facilitator introduces the topic and uses a prepared interview guide to lead the discussion and elicit discussions, opinions, and	To explore issues in more detail as part of research on why certain things are	Qualitative

		reactions.	happening or understand change	
	Community Meeting	A form of public meeting open to all community members. Interaction is between the participants and the interviewer, who facilitates the meeting and asks questions using a semi-structured/unstructured guide/checklist	Providing information to communities, monitoring and verbal reporting back.	Qualitative
Journal		Participants are asked to write in a journal at specified times on specific subjects. Textually-illiterate people can use a set of recognizable images depicting everyday activities, issues, resources, capacities, etc. which are printed and used to record events and changes over time	Can be useful to detect changes in behavior or verify maintenance of behavior changes over time	Qualitative
Laboratory Testing		Precise measurement of specific objective phenomena, for example soil tests, water quality testing, food quality testing, seed testing, nutrient e.g. iron test	Where relevant as per intervention design and indicators	Quantitative
Observation	Direct Observation*	The observation and recording of what has been witnessed, usually pertaining to people, their interactions, the physical environment, or other relevant visible events. Can enable the collection of sensitive information without necessarily talking to the affected people. It is not participatory as it is done discretely by the person collecting data.	Potentially useful in multiple situations, e.g. on-site monitoring, during group discussions and surveys	Qualitative and/or Quantitative (less common, but possible e.g. counting)
	Participant Observation	A technique first used by anthropologists; it requires the researcher to spend considerable time with the group being studied (days) and to interact with them as a participant in their community. This method gathers insights that might otherwise be overlooked, but is time-consuming.	For in-depth anthropological research	Qualitative
Problem Tree		Small group exercise to conduct a shared analysis of a problem though the graphic identification of the different root	E.g. could be used at baseline and	Qualitative

		causes and consequences of problems. Can be used in SBCC	endline to measure changes in the underlying causes of a behavior	
Questionnaire*		A data collection instrument containing a set of questions organized in a systematic way, as well as a set of instructions to the enumerator/interviewer about how to ask the questions (typically used in a survey). Generally uses closed-questions but can include questions with space for more open/descriptive responses	Can be utilized at all stages in the M&E cycle	Quantitativ e and/or Qualitative
Ranking	**Pairwise Ranking***	In a community group of about 6 to 10 people, community priorities and preferences are locally defined and ranked through a process of consultation and participation (also consider preference ranking, matrix ranking, card piling and sorting)	To understand locally defined needs or preferences and priorities	Quantitativ e
	Wealth Ranking*	Through group consultation obtain community perspectives about population classification according to socio-economic status and in order to identify and better understand local indicators and criteria (income, assets, education, housing etc.), and to identify proportions of the population in each category	Assessment s, progress monitoring, (e.g. baseline and endline surveys)	Qualitative and Quantitativ e
Review & Reflection	**After Action Review***	Encourages reflection and learning on how an intervention was carried out, what went well and what less so. The focus of the exercise is on lesson learning and generally involves project staff primarily. A facilitated discussion that focuses on key questions of: What was planned? What actually happened? What went well? What could have been better? What would we do differently next time?	For internal reflection, review and lesson learning following a specific activity, an event or a project. Can be used as part of evaluations	Qualitative
	Participa tory Project Review	A form of participatory self-evaluation which can be tailored to different timeframes and contexts. It combines	Similar to AAR can be used for	Qualitative

		participatory methodologies, drawing from Empowerment Evaluation, and Most Significant Change.	internal review, but includes beneficiaries.	
		Source: Fetterman, D. M. (2001). Foundations of Empowerment Evaluation. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi. http://evaluation.blogspot.com/ and http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/region4/DavidFettermanPresentation.pdf		
	Reflection Event*	To support better project analysis and learning, project teams can organize reflection events to collect data on project processes and immediate outputs. Can be internal staff discussions or with other stakeholders. Focuses on project successes, challenges, progress against indicators, targeting and participation, feedback received, unintended changes, and contextual changes	They can occur as often as monthly but at a minimum should coincide with reporting schedules	Qualitative
Rich Picture		A "rich picture" provides a comprehensive representation of a situation or issue, and is compiled collaboratively in a public/group setting, using text, pictures, symbols, diagrams and drawings. Has been used in SBCC M&E.	Can be used to measure changes in what a group knows about an issue	
Secondary Data Review	**Statistical Data Review**	A review of population censuses, databases, research studies, and other sources of statistical data	At planning, monitoring and evaluation phases.	Quantitative
	Desk/ Document/ Literature Review	Can provide a cost effective and timely baseline or other information and a historical perspective of the project. This is a key first step in any data collection process. It includes written documentation, (i.e. project records and reports, training materials, correspondence, legislation, and policy documents), as well as videos, electronic data or photos. However, it can be difficult to assess the reliability and validity of some sources.	Research before a project starts, during implementation and as part of an evaluation	Qualitative and/or Quantitative
Self-Monitoring	**Beneficiary/ Comm**	Data collection is undertaken directly by beneficiaries/ community members and the data is then shared with project staff.	To enable regular data collection of	Qualitative and/or Quantitativ

	unity Self-Monitoring	E.g. community-based water monitoring. Can be useful for increasing local participation and engagement, and also potential skills transfer (depending on type of information to be collected and tools required)	mutually agreed indicators	e
Stakeholder Analysis*		The process of identifying individuals or groups, and categorizing them according to their relationship with an activity or issue based on their likely impact on the action and the impact the action will have on them.	For project planning; to identify stakeholder M&E information needs and participation	Qualitative
Story-Telling/ Collection	e.g. Success Story, Learning Story	Obtaining participants experiences of change by collating their observations of an event or a series of events. A success story illustrates a project's impact by detailing an individual's positive experiences in his or her own words. A learning story focuses on the lessons learned through an individual's positive and negative experiences with a project.	For monitoring and evaluation. Can also be helpful in setting qualitative baselines	Qualitative
	Most Significant Change*	A participatory monitoring technique based on stories about important or significant changes, rather than indicators. They can give a rich picture of project impact and provide the basis for dialogue over key objectives and the intervention value	For a detailed overview of change faced by individuals/ households over time	Qualitative
Survey	Administered Survey	Systematic collection of information from a defined population, usually by means of interviews (using questionnaires) administered to a sample of units in the population. Surveys tend to be used extensively in project M&E (e.g. baseline, post distribution, midline, endline etc.)	Can be used throughout the project cycle. Uses enumerators/ data collectors	Quantitative and Qualitative
	Online Survey	Requires internet access. Allows quick and cheap surveys that can be used to identify issues for further analysis e.g. through www.surveymonkey.com	Where respondents are literate and have internet access	Quantitative and/or Qualitative

	Mini Survey	Data collected from interviews with 25 to 50 individuals, usually selected using non-probability sampling. Structured questionnaires with a limited number of closed-ended questions are used to generate quantitative data that can be collected and analyzed quickly.	Seeks information on specific issues using a small sample.	Quantitative
	Self-Administered Survey	A written survey completed by the respondents. Online surveys would be self-administered	Respondents must be literate	Quantitative and/or Qualitative
SWOT Analysis*		Encourages and empowers communities to develop action plans by building on strengths and opportunities, whilst also identifying weaknesses and threats that need to be addressed, or at least factored into planning. Can be used to analyze multiple types of topic, including organizations, groups, issues, livelihoods, institutions, situations etc.	During project planning or review phases, context/trend analysis, monitoring and evaluations	Qualitative
Timeline	**e.g. historical**	A graphic, participatory group-based method used to show non-repetitive changes, shocks or events taking place over time and promote critical reflection on causes and impacts of change. Mainly used to examine a sequence of events over many years, but can also be used to look at events within particular time periods. Data requires triangulation.	Mainly used at the assessment stage. Can also be used to help track changes	Qualitative
Venn or Institutional Diagrams*		A useful tool to examine similarities, differences and relationships between institutions, people, and issues in a community or between communities. Diagrams are made up of a variety of circles or shapes, each representing a different actor or influence, and are sized and placed accordingly	At assessment, project planning stage, baseline and endline, as well as for M&E	Qualitative

Adapted in part from: Buchanan-Smith, M. & Cosgrave, J. (2010) *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action*, ALNAP

DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

The table below summarizes two approaches to data collection – Participatory Rural Appraisal, and Rapid Appraisal – that use multiple methods and tools.

APPROACH	DESCRIPTION	WHEN TO USE
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (or Participatory Learning & Action (PLA))	Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which evolved from Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), and also now referred to as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), uses community engagement techniques to understand community views on a particular issue. They enable those from outside the community to capture knowledge that is held by the community. Although originally developed for use in rural areas, PRA has been employed successfully in a variety of settings. PRA tools can be thought of as helping communities to overtly analyze issues and to translate their analysis into a format that those outside the community can understand. They are usually done quickly and intensively – over a 2 to 3-week period. Examples of PRA tools/techniques include (see **MSTK: Participatory Data Collection Tools & Techniques** for further guidance): • Calendars (seasonal, 24 hour, multi-annual) and other calendars • Proportional piling • Ranking (pair-wise, wealth etc.) • Transect walk • Mapping (wealth, hazard, mobility, social, resource, risk, network, influence, relationship etc.) • Venn diagrams • Time lines/histories • Stakeholder analysis Participation is defined as a people-centred approach which has the highest probability of success because it offers the potential to strengthen the voice of the most vulnerable and enables local people to play a central role in analysis and planning for interventions. At a minimum, participatory appraisals imply consultation, knowledge exchange and equitable arrangements for sharing of benefits. Participatory appraisal is the term used to describe a process and a set of techniques for the collection and analysis of qualitative data.	Useful throughout the project cycle at assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation phases to be able to access more in-depth community information and enable greater/ substantive levels of participation throughout
Rapid Appraisal	Rapid Appraisal (RA) is a quick cost-effective approach to gather data systematically; this can be for decision-making, to gather assessment data, or as part of the monitoring system. Determining whether RA is the appropriate approach will depend on several factors, including timeframe, resource constraints (budget, staff), and the level of accuracy, reliability and validity of the findings required e.g. for decision-making. RA uses qualitative and quantitative methods, for example interviews, mini-surveys, focus groups, mapping, direct observation and secondary data review. This approach shares	For quick assessments or monitoring and evaluation exercises to aid decision-making; where you face time and resource

	many of the characteristics of participatory appraisal (such as triangulation and multi-disciplinary teams) and recognizes that indigenous knowledge is a critical consideration for decision-making.	constraints
	For further information on rapid appraisal see USAID TIPS: Using Rapid Appraisal Methods, 2010 (available through http://www.innonet.org/resources/node/636)	

ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF COLLECTING DATA FROM INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS

Some data collection methods can be applied to groups or individuals. When deciding which approach will yield the best data, consider the following:

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Individual	• Manage the discussion more easily • Can get detailed information • Data can be structured in a way that enables statistical analysis	• Consumes more time if data is needed from many individuals • Cannot generate consensus • Not always cost-effective
Group	• Generate new learning in some participants as information is shared • Can provide a forum for all marginal voices to be heard • Can show where convergence and divergence of opinions lie	• Can cause data validity problems • Group dynamics can influence individuals • Cannot include sensitive information • Requires facilitator able to deal with group dynamics • Must consider group composition

Adapted from: R. Siles. CARE. 2004.

ELECTRONIC DATA COLLECTION IN OPEN DATA KIT (ODK)

Using electronic devices such as mobile phones and tablets can greatly improve the efficiency of M&E and the quality of information collected. There are a wide range of ICT applications for M&E, Many types of data collection tools discussed above are available in electronic format. ACF's preferred platform for electronic data collection is Open Data Kit (ODK). ODK is a simple tool which can be very useful in the contexts of the field surveys and questionnaires, as well as a time saver; therefore we are promoting its use among our missions.

What is it? Open data kit is an open-source tool which provides help in most data collection procedures. It replaces traditional paper-based questionnaires by digital questionnaires collected through mobile devices.

What do I need? To implement this tool requires a mobile device (Smartphone or tablet running on Android) to carry out data collection.

How? Easily, we only need to download ACF standard forms (or build a data collection survey, XLSform is recommended), send it to the mobile device through a software, collect the data on the mobile device and transfer it to a server (during or after the field work). Finally, we extract data in ready-to-use formats for the data analysis.

When: Whenever you need to collect data with questionnaires. ODK is very suitable to use in identification, monitoring & evaluation.

> ### *BEFORE ODK*
>
> *Data collection was time-consuming, relying heavily on human resources and with high possibility of errors. Paper-based data collection requires several stages:*
>
> - *Prepare the questionnaires.*
> - *Print them.*
> - *Fill the questionnaires on the field.*
> - *Collect the location data (coordinates) with GPS in each community/household.*
> - *Take picture for each community or household using digital camera.*
> - *Record any relevant information for each questionnaire.*
> - *After data collection, data entry to start the data analysis and preparing of beneficiary lists, maps, etc.*
>
> ### *All these steps can now be covered by ODK more quickly!*

Advantages: The procedure of data collection becomes more practical, more accurate, much easier and quicker. Location data coordinates can be included. It also allows enumerators to take pictures, videos and recordings. Another possibility is to include calculations, signature capture, constraints and to guide the surveyor though the questionnaire including relevant questions. This tool works both online and offline, therefore internet connectivity is not mandatory neither during the data collection phase nor during data aggregation and extraction; data can be uploaded to the servers via internet or via USB cable. The outputs of the ODK are CSV (comma separated values) formats, easily converted to Excel format and ready for the data analysis. There is no need for data entry, ODK does it for you.

Limitations: Non-standard questionnaires should be designed through an Excel file and sent to the mobile device. This can require some up-front investment in training. Open-ended questions are not recommended due the time to type the answers, however they can be considered. Battery of the mobile device might end during data collection, so you may need a charger or spare battery.

For trainings and data collection tools in ODK format, see **MSTK 23 – ODK Format Tools and Trainings**.

A complete set of questionnaires and detailed guidance is also available from the ACF-Spain eTraining website: http://odk.acf-e.org/odk/start_here.html.

6. ANNEX 6: ACF NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY SUMMARY AND POSSIBLE M&E SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS

ACF's Nutrition Security Policy is based on a set of core programmatic and institutional principles defined to maximize the organization's impact on under-nutrition. The following table summarizes these principles as well as some options for incorporating each principle into an M&E system:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE	POSSIBLE M&E SYSTEM
Embed nutrition security into policies, strategies, and programs	• Include nutrition goals, objectives, and indicators in logical frameworks when possible and relevant • As far as possible, M&E systems should support in understanding how a project has contributed to nutrition security of targeted population
Promote and ensure coordination, coherence, and synergies	• Incorporate a multi-sector approach to each step of establishing an M&E system as noted throughout Chapter 2 • Control for coherence between M&E systems of different projects operating in the same area (e.g. by using a common set of nutrition indicators when relevant)
Prioritize high burden areas and nutritionally at risk populations	• Collect data on key nutrition indicators to measure levels of under-nutrition and use monitoring methods (such as focus group discussions) that solicit feedback from communities to validate targeting of areas with the highest prevalence of under-nutrition • Disaggregate data by gender, age and other vulnerable population groupings to validate targeting of the most vulnerable to undernutrition, and support analysis of project impact on undernutrition by group
Base programming on multi-sectoral nutrition-sensitive analysis	• Incorporate systematic multi-sectoral analysis of the extent, severity, seasonality, and forms of under-nutrition into regular analysis of monitoring data. (e.g. by incorporating indicators related to key undernutrition risks factors in the M&E plan) • Ensure that the M&E system captures relevant contextual indicators that may influence project outcomes with regards to undernutrition

Design holistic, integrated, at scale, and long-term response strategies	• Incorporate a multi-sector approach to establishing an M&E system as noted throughout Chapter 2 • Take steps to measure progress and evaluate the project's significant and sustainable undernutrition outcomes
Aim for nutrition impact and enhanced nutrition-sensitivity of interventions	• Response strategies and interventions should incorporate specific, explicit, and attainable nutritional objectives, targets, and indicators.
Do no harm to nutrition	• Undertake routine monitoring to capture unintended negative effects on nutrition during implementation. As for project expected outcomes, potential unintended negative effects are identified at project design phase and relevant indicators incorporated in the M&E plan • Establish a closed-loop feedback mechanism (Chapter 3) to detect and correct negative impacts on nutrition and its immediate and underlying factors
Apply a systematic gender analysis & mainstream women's empowerment	• Disaggregate all M&E data collected and employ participatory monitoring methods to assess and address gender considerations in decision-making processes
Assess, document, and be accountable for nutritional impact	• Undertake both a baseline and endline surveys to assess progress of project's activities and determine outcomes • Conduct context-appropriate evaluations and conduct learning sessions to document lessons learnt • Establish a feedback mechanism to encourage communication with key project stakeholders
Build and foster adequate skills and capacity	• Train project staff on how to monitor and evaluate nutrition security interventions
Align to local priorities and realities	• Include accountability questions in routine monitoring methods to assess the level of buy-in.

Advocate for lasting changes in policies, practices, and capacity	• Advocate in project reports when appropriate for evidence-based, lasting changes in policies and practices to put an end to under-nutrition • Design M&E systems and use M&E findings bearing in mind the potential role for advocacy and policy recommendations (e.g. selection of relevant indicators, timing and format of reporting, sharing of lessons learnt and community feedbacks)

Adapted from: ACF Nutrition Security Policy. 2014

7.   ANNEX 7: INTEGRATING THE ACTION AGAINST HUNGER GENDER POLICY INTO MONITORING & EVALUATION

DEFINITION, GOAL AND APPROACHES – ACF GENDER POLICY

Adhering to the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) gender guidelines and checklists, we support a broad definition of gender. **Our definition takes into account the different needs and priorities of women, girls, boys, and men, recognizing their respective roles and capacities and fostering mutual awareness and partnership**.

The goal of the policy is to **increase the impact of our interventions** for women, girls, boys, and men **by analyzing and addressing gender issues in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation** of our policies, programs, projects, and research. To adhere to the policy's principles, project teams should:

- **Recognize gender equality** as a fundamental condition for the full enjoyment of human rights by women, girls, boys, and men;
- Understand that **gender equality is fundamental to Action Against Hunger's mission and mandate**;
- Ensure **active participation** of women, girls, boys, and men to formulate and implement interventions in a **culturally acceptable** way that provides **meaningful roles** for each and respects the human rights of all;
- Base our policies and programs on a **nutrition-sensitive gender analysis**, in all contexts;
- Abide by **Do No Harm principles**, preventing and mitigating negative effects of our action;
- Actively **hold themselves and others accountable** to ensuring gender equality in our policies, programs, projects, and research; and,
- Regularly **review** the implementation of the policy to **facilitate learning**.

Action Against Hunger's Gender Policy takes **two approaches to gender equality** by:

1. **Mainstreaming gender** across all departments, countries, and program strategies; and
2. **Targeting interventions in response to the special needs of vulnerable groups** including pregnant and lactating women, children under five, and the elderly.

<u>Sample gender sensitive indicators:</u>

Different types of indicators need to be disaggregated by sex and age in order to measure the following:

- **Needs:** % of girls and boys at school, suffering from malnutrition, types of violence affecting girls and boys in different age groups
- **Access:** attendance levels disaggregated by sex and age for nutrition centers, % of women and men trained in nutrition practices or improved agricultural techniques, % of male and female health staff recruited and trained
- **Quality of facilities**: % of latrines in region X separated by sex and age, with lock and external lighting

- **_Impact:_** % of women/men satisfied with their access to ACF services at the end of the project

Gender- sensitive indicators refer to gender ratios rather than using simple numerical indicators that only reflect numbers of women and or men benefiting from interventions.

Sample Indicators:

- % of time spent by women, girls, and boys in collecting water/queuing up
- % of time available for rest and leisure, education, or IGAs for girls and women
- % of focus group discussions on exclusive breastfeeding done with women versus men

Sources: ACF Gender Policy: Increasing the Impact of ACF's Work Through Gender Equality Programing. 2014. ACF Gender Toolkit. 2014. and WFP Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Handbook. 2006.

8. ANNEX 8: CHECKLIST OF M&E PRINCIPLES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CONSIDERATION	DESCRIPTION
Informed consent	• Potential respondents for any M&E activity should be informed of the purpose of the data collection (including what it is looking to find out), how the information will be used, and whether it will be published. • Potential respondents should also be informed of the interview ground rules including: 1) option of confidentiality; 2) means of information gathering and recording; and 3) the participation requirements. • For key informant interviews this can be done with an Interview Protocol Card or equivalent (see Interview Guide). Once rules have been explained, respondents' consent for participating should be sought. Note that when collecting information directly from minors (under 18 years), informed consent from a parent or guardian must be secured. • Note that collecting data without informing the individuals or communities involved and gaining their assent could also expose you, the organization, or the project to risk (e.g. http://conflict.lshtm.ac.uk/page_14.htm#Ethical_Community_approval) • A simple informed consent clause for a cash transfer project PDM is as follows: *"Hello. We are working for Action Against Hunger, a non-governmental humanitarian organization. We would like to ask you some questions about your family to better understand your experience with Action Against Hunger's cash transfer project and ways we can improve it. The survey usually takes about 20 minutes to complete. Any information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. This is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any or all of the questions. However we hope that you will participate since the information you will provide is essential to evaluate your situation and improve the assistance we provide.* *Do you agree to participate in the survey?"* **Yes/No**

Anonymity / **Confidentiality**	• A person's right to provide information in confidence and anonymously should be built into data collection, with potential respondents asked about their preference for anonymity. Any sensitive information should not be traceable to its source. • Where necessary names can be replaced by "Respondent One," "Respondent Two," or similar type of coding etc. If one respondent is made anonymous, it may be appropriate for all respondents at that location to be anonymous. • Any sensitive information should not be traceable to its source. This does not of course mean that all monitoring data is or should be anonymous (and in some cases it is necessary that it's not), but rather that respondents are provided with the option.
Data Storage and Security of Personal Information	Collecting and storing personal information or personally identifiable information (PII) from local populations poses ethical obligations for M&E to avoid compromising individuals' privacy and security. PII consists of information from which an individual can be identified, such as names, ID numbers, physical, postal or email addresses, telephone numbers, photographs, age, gender or biometrics • Collect only the minimum amount of PII data needed. • Any data that encompasses individuals' PII should be kept in secure locations, in restricted folders or locked filing cabinets. • Consider password-protecting sensitive files, beneficiary lists, health records or anthropometric data. • Access privileges should be considered for data that is not anonymous but is traceable to specific persons. • Data storage should take into consideration any current and future ACF policies/requirements for storage and access. • For more, see OCHA Policy Paper: "Humanitarianism in the Age of Cyber-warfare: Towards the Principled and Secure Use of Information in Humanitarian Emergencies"
Right to privacy	People may not want to openly discuss issues and should always be given the option to decline.

Do no harm	The '**do no harm**' **principle** has been adopted from medical ethics to humanitarian work. It arose from the recognition that aid can be misused and may have unintended, negative consequences on local populations. The principle requires **humanitarian** organizations to strive to 'minimize the **harm** they may inadvertently be doing by being present and providing assistance. Important considerations include: • Data collectors and those disseminating M&E findings/reports should take into account where information might endanger or embarrass respondents or those non-community members involved in conducting the M&E. • While the integrity of findings should not be compromised given the legal and ethical responsibility to report evidence of criminal activity or wrongdoing that may harm others (e.g. child abuse or domestic violence), no harm should come to those involved. • Care should be taken when working with marginalized groups (e.g. internally displaced people or ethnic minorities) or following traumas (e.g. natural disaster, conflict, or domestic violence).
Systematic **Inquiry**	• All research should be thorough, using appropriate methods of enquiry and the highest technical standards, and based on valid data. Information should be validated using multiple approaches and sources. • All reasonable efforts should be made to remove or minimize bias. Staff should remain neutral and promote evidence-based inquiry and reporting. • Clearly communicate the methodology or approach to allow stakeholders to understand and critique M&E activities. Methodologies should include tools and questions to capture both the intended and unintended project impact, whether positive or negative.
Competence	• Data collectors, enumerators, and analysts should be equipped with the appropriate training, skills, and experience to undertake their respective tasks and should only be expected to work within the limits of their professional training and competence. • There should be continuous striving to improve methodologies and practice skills.

Integrity	• ACF organizational procedures, standards and code of conduct should be adhered to as part of any M&E and any real or potential conflict of interest should be raised to the relevant people.
	• Misrepresentation of data and results should be avoided and any wrongdoing should be reported.
	• Honor agreements made with stakeholders regarding M&E activities (e.g. timing, sharing results)
	• Beneficiaries often give significant amounts of their own time to answer enumerator questions, so make it a priority to share M&E information with communities in which you are working. M&E should not be a solely extractive exercise in data collection to satisfy the requirements of donors and implementers. Rather, it should be fed back to communities.
	• Ensure, to the best of your knowledge and ability, that M&E data are accurate. Address and correct any questionable M&E practices observed during data collection or analysis, whether due to negligence or mistakes by M&E team members
	• Ensure that M&E results are accurately represented and attempt to prevent their misuse.
Respect and cultural sensitivity	• Local customs on dress code, personal interaction, religious beliefs and practices, should be respected and cultural sensitivity shown.
	• Differences in religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity should be taken into account in all M&E.
Time constraints	• People may be extremely busy and their participation in M&E can be burdensome. Ample notice should be given as much as possible and demands on time minimized.
Responsibility for outputs	• Criticism can have serious consequences for individual and organizational reputations. Those collecting and reporting on data should be mindful of any potential consequences, in terms of security and local presence.
Accountability	• M&E should be in line with the M&E Plan and Terms of Reference (where applicable) agreed and results presented accurately, identifying any limitations or uncertainties that could impact interpretations.
	• All expenditures should be accounted for to ensure value for money.
	• Present M&E findings in a way that is accessible to all stakeholders (whilst ensuring participant confidentiality is maintained as necessary)
Omissions	• When issues and findings not directly part of M&E but related to a project arise, they should be acknowledged and discussed with the relevant staff.

Maximize Benefits and Minimize Harm	• M&E activities should maximize benefits and minimize harm. Both the human and financial time and resources required to conduct the M&E activity should be outweighed by the benefits of knowledge gained or results demonstrated. Respondents should not be put at risk physically, subject to discrimination, or disadvantaged in any way due to their participation in the M&E activity. • Care should be taken when working with marginalized groups (e.g. internally displaced people or ethnic minorities) or following traumas (e.g. natural disaster, conflict, or domestic violence)
Code of Conduct, Transparency, and Anti-Corruption	Lessons from mega-disasters such as the South Asian Tsunami or the earthquakes in Haiti and Pakistan, where there is a high concentration of donor resources, have highlighted the need for clear policies of transparency in the utilization of funds and zero tolerance on corruption. • Monitoring of potential or actual corruption in projects and communities should continuously be reviewed and checked. • Internal audit and program quality processes can support the definition of systems and tools, as well as the detection of corruption and fraud throughout the implementation process.

Source: Adapted from: CIDA (1990), CIDA Evaluation Guide, pp.26-28 and Hagen, C (2008): Short Cuts – A Framework for Addressing Ethical Concerns in M&E, CRS/American Red Cross

9. ANNEX 9: CODES AND STANDARDS OVERVIEW

What codes and standards is ACF signatory to requiring adherence in M&E?

M&E should be conducted in line with codes and standards appropriate and relevant to ACF and the project being undertaken, and adherence to them monitored. Relevant codes and standards to which ACF is a signatory include:

- **The Action Against Hunger Charter** requires adherence to the principles of: Independence, Neutrality, Non-Discrimination, Free and Direct Access to Victims, Professionalism and Transparency.
- **The Sphere Handbook eight core 'process and people' standards** that are relevant to each of the technical sectors, including: (1) participation, (2) initial assessment, (3) response, (4) targeting, (5) monitoring, (6) evaluation, (7) aid worker competencies and responsibilities, and (8) supervision, management and support of personnel in line with People in Aid.
  See also: **Sphere for Monitoring & Evaluation**, 2015 http://www.alnap.org/resource/19900
- **The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief** requires adherence to the principles of: (1) humanitarian imperative, (2) basis of need, (3) no proselytizing, (4) not being foreign agents, (5) respecting culture, (6) building on local capacities, (7) Involving beneficiaries, (8) reducing vulnerability, (9) two-way accountability, and (10) respecting victims as human beings.
- **Professional standards in M&E** including our Evaluation Policy, Gender Policy, Nutrition Security Policy etc., and any sector or donor standards being adhered under a particular project.

What other codes exist but to which ACF is a non-signatory?

A project might also seek to adhere to other codes and standards to which the organization is not a signatory, but it is felt that adherence to them may encourage best practices. These could include:

- **The Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP)**. While Action Against Hunger is not a HAP member, the HAP benchmarks can nevertheless be used to shape interventions. These include: (1) humanity, (2) impartiality, (3) neutrality, (4) independence, (5) participation and informed consent, (6) duty of care, (7) witness, (8) offer redress, (9) transparency, and (10) complementarity.
- **People in Aid (PIA)**. While we is not a PIA-approved member, the PIA code can nevertheless be used to shape projects in line with the following PIA principles: i) Human resources strategy, ii) Staff policies and practices, iii) Managing people, iv) Consultation and communication, v) Recruitment and selection, vi) Learning, training and development, vii) Health, safety and security.
- **Group URD's Quality Compass** encourages the following principles of best practices for projects: the project responds to a demonstrated need; the project achieves its objectives; the project removes or reduces the risk of negative impacts; the project aims for positive impacts beyond implementation; the project is consistent with the agency's mandate and principles; the project respects the population; the project is flexible; the project is integrated in its institutional context in an optimal manner; the agency has the necessary resources and

expertise; the agency has the appropriate management capacity; the agency makes optimal use of resources; the agency uses lessons drawn from experience.

What other sources should I consult?

There is a diverse range of guidelines and standards pertaining to various aspects of monitoring and evaluation that can be consulted, with evaluation and accountability in particular being the subject of numerous guidelines and standards. The following provides a selection of useful references, although please note that this is by no means comprehensive or definitive:

- **The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality & Accountability,** HAP, 2014 http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf
- **Evaluation of Humanitarian Action: A Pilot Guide**, ALNAP, 2013 http://www.alnap.org/resource/8229
- **The Good Enough Guide: Impact Measurement & Accountability in Emergencies** http://www.ecbproject.org/resource/18044 is a set of basic guidelines on how to be accountable to local people and measure program impact in emergencies, and includes a range of tools to facilitate this.
- **Evaluating Humanitarian Action using the OECD/DAC criteria,** An ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Agencies, ALNAP, 2008 http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/eha_2006.pdf. On the same topic of evaluation criteria and standards, see also DAC Guidelines and Reference Series: Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, OECD, 2010 http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/44798177.pdf
- **The American Evaluation Association (AEA),** which aims to promote ethical practice in evaluation, has published Guiding Principles for Evaluators (2004) http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciples.asp. The main principles are systematic inquiry, competence, integrity/honesty, respect for people, and responsibilities for general and public welfare. Note that different national evaluation associations often have their own guidelines and standards.

A substantial source of further M&E materials and resources can be found on the **ALNAP website**: http://www.alnap.org/resources/

10. ANNEX 10: USING ICT FOR M&E: PLANNING, APPLICATIONS AND INNOVATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS & PRESENTATION

The utilization of information communication technology (ICT) applications and tools is becoming an increasingly significant part of data collection, analysis and presentation. They have improved the way in which information is collected, stored, analyzed, and shared to contribute to the accountability, responsiveness, and effectiveness of development programs. With hardware costs (e.g. phones, tablets) reducing year on year, and continuous innovation and development of affordable applications, for example for mobile data collection, it is important to include consideration of these options when designing your M&E system.

Planning whether and how to incorporate ICT in M&E

ICT are now used extensively by many organizations for M&E activities, and are only likely to increase in terms of their importance and scale of use given the rapid and ongoing development of the ICT sector, and the general trend towards relative reduction in costs over time.

ICT for M&E has many potential benefits including: (1) continuous, real-time feedback and information, yielding faster, more informed decision-making; (2) direct communication channels with beneficiaries, thereby reducing bias and increasing credibility and use of findings; (3) improved accuracy and availability of information; (4) identification of more complex trends or patterns; (5) potentially lower costs once established compared to paper-based data collection and analysis; and (6) potential for increased private sector engagement.

On the other hand, using ICT for M&E also has several potential downsides including: (1) potentially costly to establish and/or maintain a system and necessary equipment; (2) slow set-up and/or slow adoption by stakeholders, if for example they aren't familiar with the technology being introduced; (3) limited transferability resulting in unlikely sustainability (if due attention isn't given to the selection of appropriate applications, software or equipment at the outset); (4) over-complication of processes and (5) risk of focusing on the appeal of the technology rather than on the information to be collected.

In light of the potential benefits and downsides, project teams should be strategic when choosing to use new technologies by carefully assessing the following considerations:

- Is the new technology prohibitively expensive to adopt? Technological innovations will often reduce costs in the medium to long-term but require significant up-front investment. Would the monetary value exceed the benefits to the program?
- Would the technology take too long to adopt and roll-out? How soon would data be

> ### NOTE ON OPEN DATA KIT (ODK)
>
> *Action Against Hunger works with the Open Data Kit (ODK) system for electronic data collection and strongly encourages all programme teams to adopt the same approach where possible. For more information on electronic data collection in ODK, please see* **Annex 5 – Data Collection**.
>
> *Example surveys in ODK format can also be found in the Multi-sector Toolkits. Training materials for ODK are provided in* **MSTK 23 – ODK Format Tools and Trainings.**

available to program decision-makers? Can the new technology be easily customized to the unique context of the project?

- Would staff accept the new technology? How much new training would be required to kick-start, roll-out, and maintain the new technology?
- Who will have access to the information provided by the new technology? Will the information be easy to understand or will it require advanced analytical skills? Who will feed data into the new tool? Are these parties interested and willing to contribute?
- Will beneficiaries or partners be wary of the new technology? Could the new technology be perceived to risk breaches of privacy? How will privacy be protected?
- Will local partners, if the new technology is to be used by them, have the expertise to sustain the system after the conclusion of the project?
- Are planning and programming modalities flexible enough to try, adopt, and benefit from the findings of new technologies?

These questions should facilitate planning for ICTs in M&E at the earliest stages of project design and planning. It is of course also critical to dedicate time to identifying and selecting ICTs which are appropriate to the task and context.

Applications of ICT for our Programs

The following table is not exhaustive, but summarizes many available ICT applications, tools and platforms that can be utilized for a program's M&E. Many of these tools are already in use within our programs worldwide, so field teams are encouraged to check with HQ and technical advisors for additional guidance. Also see *MSTK 9 - Geo-Spatial Mapping* for further information regarding ICT for mapping (GIS etc.).

MOBILE DATA COLLECTION	
What is it?	The targeted gathering of structured information using mobile phones, tablets, or PDAs via a special software application
When to use it?	Where the advantages of mobile data collection outweigh the advantages of paper-based data collection and/or where data collection requires or significantly benefits from audio, video, geographic information or other integrated/ multifunctional data collection formats enabled by mobile applications
Pros	- Can improve the timeliness and accuracy of data collection - Can remove the requirement for separate data entry (as required with paper-based collection) – saving both time and money - Can allow data to be immediately available for review and analysis to staff at all field locations and HQ (assuming internet access is available) - Platforms allow customization of surveys to include photographs, voice recordings, GPS coordinates, etc. usually not collected through a paper- based survey - Can enable interactive mapping of results (where relevant, appropriate and feasible)
Cons	- Technology alone will not improve the survey design or instrument - Initial set-up costs (purchase of phones/tablets, software, technical support) may be an obstacle - Requires technologically literate data collectors - Likely to require additional training (although not necessarily significantly more time consuming than any training for data collection tools), especially for system administrators

Tools	
	• Not feasible to use for all data collection needs (e.g. one-time, small sample surveys).

Tools	• **OPEN DATA KIT (ODK) –** *ODK is our preferred mobile data collection platform* **https://opendatakit.org/**

Open Data Kit (ODK) is a free and open-source set of tools which help organizations author, field, and manage mobile data collection solutions. Allows users to:

- Build a data collection form or survey;
- Collect the data on a mobile device and send it to a server; and
- Aggregate the collected data on a server and extract it in useful formats.

In addition to socio-economic and health surveys with GPS locations and images, ODK is being used to create decision support for clinicians and for building multimedia-rich nature mapping tools.

As noted above, ODK has been selected for use of mobile data collection. A sample of the other (numerous) mobile data collection applications and platforms are listed below for reference.

- **EPICOLLECT.NET http://www.epicollect.net/**

EpiCollect.net provides a web and mobile app for the generation of forms (questionnaires) and freely hosted project websites for data collection. Data are collected (including GPS and media) using multiple phones and all data can be viewed centrally (using Google Maps / tables / charts).

- **GIS CLOUD http://www.giscloud.com/apps/mobile-data-collection/**

GIS Cloud Mobile Data Collection enables you to have media enriched location information from any place, any time and on any device. Allows users to populate data into a map layer in real time. Features include GPS, offline data capture, multimedia collection, build custom forms, and options to analyze, share and publish data.

- **iFORMBUILDER.COM https://www.iformbuilder.com/**

iFormBuilder is a cloud based mobile data collection platform with the ability to build robust and flexible forms, maintain security on mobile devices and collect data with or without an Internet connection. Includes free (limited number of users etc.) and paid platforms.

- **MAGPI http://home.magpi.com/**

Mobile data gathering through forms created in a web-based dashboard. Features of the latest version include: SMS and web-entry data collection; Real-time and offline data capture; Form sharing via email and SMS; Multiple question types; Photo capture; Instant data analysis and publishing of data sets and maps; Import/export of forms, data and contacts; Integrated Geographic Information System (GIS); Automatic calculations; Customizable form roles and privileges.

The Magpi platform also offers Broadcast Text and Voice Messaging which

enables the creation of mass SMS or voice messaging campaigns in any language from a web interface (without having to work through the mobile network providers)

- **POIMAPPER** http://www.poimapper.com/data-collection-methods/

Poimapper allows office based and mobile users to collect, share, and visualize geographically tagged data in real-time. Offers subscription or transaction-based pricing (only the basic application is free). The key modules within Poimapper are:
- Mobile application
- Data Management Portal (Form builder, Web service interface, User administration, Quality assurance and Data viewer.)

Examples	See the application websites (links above) for numerous examples of the varied types of work they have been used for globally

CROWDSOURCING	
What is it?	A large number of people actively report on a situation around them, often using mobile phone technology and open source software platforms; "citizen reporting" or "see something, text something"
When to use it	Where requirements for data collection go beyond the scope of more traditional M&E, when quantitative information is required, or for sensitive issues where anonymity is preferred (e.g. corruption)
Pros and Cons	• Can gather massive, location specific data in real-time with lower running costs than more traditional methods • Can boost civic engagement by establishing direct channels of communication from the ground up • If systems are set up right, crowd-sourced data tends to be more difficult to manipulate and less vulnerable to biased interpretation, therefore potentially increasing independence and credibility • Requires incentives for citizens to continuously participate • Requires tailoring a crowdsourcing platform
Tools	• Ushahidi platform, a crowdsourcing mapping tool, www.ushahidi.com • SeeClickFix, a communications platform for citizens to report non-emergency issues, and governments to track, manage, and reply, seeclickfix.com • FrontlineSMS, an open source software to distribute and collect information via text messages (SMS), www.frontlinesms.com • RapidSMS, an open-source framework for dynamic data collection, logistics coordination and communication, leveraging basic SMS mobile phone technology, www.rapidsms.org • Ideascale, a platform that gives stakeholders a platform to share, vote and discuss feedback, ideascale.com
Examples	• Tracking Violence Against Children in Benin, an SMS-based system based on Frontline SMS in Benin, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zVqwkuLoVM • Ipaidabribe, a platform to tackle corruption by harnessing the collective energy of citizens; data can be used for evaluations as well as for monitoring, www.ipaidabribe.com

MICRO-NARRATIVE	
What is it?	The collection and aggregation of thousands of short stories from citizens using special algorithms to gain insight into real-time issues and changes in society
When to use it	When real-time quantitative information from a large number of beneficiaries is required that cannot otherwise be collected
Pros and Cons	• Provides access to real-time data for faster, more informed decision-making • Allows evaluators to collect independent quantitative information from a potentially large number of citizens, potentially increasing the credibility of data collected • Makes it possible to design, monitor, and evaluate evidence-based policies and programs under conditions of uncertainty • By detecting weak initial signals in the stories collected, this approach can provide early warning signs for policy or program implementation in the communities they are trying to effect; this introduces the possibility for the first time of predicting future developments and building foresight into decision-making • Lower running costs once set up compared to repeated surveys • High initial investment in pattern detection software and information campaigns to inform and motivate participants • Citizens must have the skills and continuous incentives to participate
Tools	• Sensemaker, a proprietary pattern detection software for analyzing micro- narrative, www.sensemaker-suite.com, by Cognitive Edge (www.cognitive-edge.com) • GlobalGiving Story Tools, www.globalgiving.org/story-tools/
Examples	• Evaluating Development Initiatives through Micro-Narrative Capture and Self-Tagging in Kenya, GlobalGiving, www.globalgiving.org/ www.jcr-content/gg/landing-pages/story-tools/files/microsoft-powerpoint--- makingsenseofsensemaker.pdf • Using Sensemaker to measure the level of inclusion of smallholder farmer in Vietnam and Equator, Vredeseilanden/VECO, 02-05-2013, www.veco-ngo.org/blog/using-sensemaker-measure-learn-and-communicate-about-smallholder-farmer-inclusion

DATA EXHAUST	
What is it?	Massive and passive collection of transactional data from people's use of digital services like mobile phones and web content such as news media and social media interactions
When to use it	When analyzed in bulk, it makes it possible to calculate the current status of entire communities and identify changes happening in real-time through web- based and social media search queries; this conversational data can also be used to predict human behavior
Pros and Cons	• Data is already collected and available • Can allow mining of massive qualitative data to distil quantitative information which would otherwise be beyond the reach of traditional M&E, thereby increasing the potential credibility of monitoring or an evaluation • Potential bias that makes digital data skewed in favor of better

	educated, well-off citizens while neglecting those less articulate or with less access to digital services
Tools	• Google Trends, a free tool to track the level of Google search requests over time www.google.com/trends/ • Recorded Future, a commercial service that scan tens of thousands of digital sources to explore the past, present and predicted future of a wide variety of things, www.recordedfuture.com
Examples	• Google.org Flu Trends, http://www.google.org/flutrends/ • Google.org Dengue Trends, http://www.google.org/denguetrends/

INTELLIGENT INFRASTRUCTURE	
What is it?	Equipping all - or a sample of - infrastructure or items, such as roads, bridges, buildings, water treatment systems, hand-washing stations, latrines, cook stoves, etc., with low-cost, low-power, reliable, and remotely accessible electronic sensors to relay usage or operational data in near real-time to the internet via cellular phone technology, feeding into an automated, remote monitoring system
When to use it	When monitoring or an evaluation attempts to measure and track over time the value of infrastructure or public services to the people (e.g. to determine whether the infrastructure is actually used enough to justify the cost) and when data is actually required for a certain purpose, and not simply because the technology exists
Pros and Cons	• The massive amounts of data generated can be used to better understand programmatic, social, economic, and seasonal changes and behavioral patterns that influence the quality of a policy or a service • Real-time data on infrastructure or public service use makes faster, more informed decisions possible • Potentially lower running costs once system is set up compared to repeated sample surveys using experts and enumerators • More objective and real-time operational data on the usage and performance of infrastructure or services may result in greater credibility and use of monitoring information and evaluations • Initially expensive, high-tech monitoring option which requires special technical expertise • Lack of maintenance or malfunctioning equipment can 'contaminate' data • Potential privacy concerns if users, or user groups, can be identified
Tools	SWEETSense, a technology and concept which was tested and demonstrated by the Sustainable Water, Energy and Environmental Technologies Laboratory (SWEETLab) at the Portland State University, www.sweetlab.org/sweetsense/
Examples	Monitoring pedestrian footbridge usage at three remote sites in rural Guatemala, sensors on ground water hand pumps in Uganda, portable latrine usage in India, usage monitors for a statistically significant sample of hand-washing stations in Indonesia, sensors on school-based water treatment systems in Nepal, www.sweetlab.org/projects/

REMOTE SENSING

What is it?	Observing and analyzing a distant target using information from the electromagnetic spectrum of satellites, aircrafts, or other airborne devices
When to use it	When access is limited due to physical barriers or security concerns or for observable changes on the earth's surface like agriculture, deforestation, glacial features, oceans, natural resource management in general. Can also be used for monitoring social public policies and programs related to urban areas, demography, land-use and land-cover, humanitarian conflicts or disasters, or as a proxy for wealth. For social policies and programs, remote sensing data might be at its most valuable when used in combination with traditional methods such as surveys, public records, interviews, and direct observation
Pros and Cons	• Possible to collect data on dangerous or inaccessible areas • Observed objects or people are not disturbed • Privacy concerns over government misuse of information • Potentially high costs for obtaining images or for primary data collection using remote sensors
Tools	SenseFly operates autonomous mini-drones and related software solutions for accurate mapping of mining sites, quarries, forests, construction sites, crops, etc., www.sensefly.com
Examples	• Grassroots Mapping is a series of participatory mapping projects focused on communities involved in land disputes and using low-cost and simple devices such as balloons and kites, grassrootsmapping.org

DATA VISUALIZATION

What is it?	Representation of data geographically and interactively, often in the form of videos, interactive websites, infographs, timelines, data dashboards, maps, etc.
When to use it	To better identify trends and patterns of complex or large data sets during the analysis phase of monitoring or of an evaluation or to better communicate information resulting from monitoring or from evaluations
Pros and Cons	• Effectively visualized data is more likely to be understood and used • Can identify trends and patterns which would otherwise be unclear or difficult to discern • Visualization needs to fit the purpose of analysis and the intended target audience of communication • Identifying and putting together data visualization can be time-consuming, or costly if outsourced
Tools	• DevInfo, www.devinfo.org, a database system for organizing, storing, and visualizing data in a uniform way • Tableau, www.tableausoftware.com, a set of software solutions to combine, analyze, and visually show data • Google Fusion Tables, www.google.com/drive/apps.html#fusiontables, a tool to combine, visualize, and share data • Visual.ly, visual.ly, or Easel.ly http://www.easel.ly, tools to get inspired by and/or commission infographics • TimelineJS, http://timeline.knightlab.com, a tool to establish visually-

	rich, interactive timelines
Examples	• Gapminder World, www.gapminder.org/world/, a web-service displaying time series of development statistics for all countries by converting numbers into animated and interactive graphics • Infographics by UNDP using Visual.ly, visual.ly/users/undpeuropeandcis

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

ONE Card/ ONE Voucher	ONE Card/ONE Voucher is a contactless E-transfer system [E-vouchers and E-cash] quickly give purchasing power to beneficiaries enabling them to buy essential goods bringing liquidity to local economies and enabling vendors to get back up and running. The ONEcard system is secure and operates both On-line and off-line. Among its key features is a fully integrated M&E component in line with donor standards including; customized surveys with GPS coordinates for each survey, full inventory and e-voucher control capabilities. It can also facilitate data mining to assist in reviewing market trends. See **https://www.redrosecps.com/products#**
Participatory Audio/Video	Audio or video recordings by citizens or program participants. For more information: Insightshare, http://www.insightshare.org
Human Sensors	Using phones, laptops, and cars equipped with sensors to collect geographically tagged data. For more information: Future of Real-Time Information, UN Global Pulse/PSFK, www.unglobalpulse.org/projects/future-real-time-report

Adapted in part from: *UNDP. Innovations in monitoring & evaluating results. 2013.*

11.   ANNEX 11: SAMPLING GUIDANCE NOTE

This annex presents information about sampling for quantitative and qualitative data collection, including: a step-by-step guide to the sampling process, advice for selecting a sampling methodology based on the needs and resources of particular programs, and practical tips to improve data quality when using sampling methods.

1.1 WHAT IS SAMPLING AND WHY DO WE CARE?

Sampling is the **selection of a part of a population to include in a study when including everyone in an entire population is not possible or necessary**. Ideally, sampling should be representative so that analysis about this part of a population can be used to make conclusions about the whole. In designing your sampling methods it is essential to **minimize potential bias** and try to accurately represent the whole population with whom you are concerned.
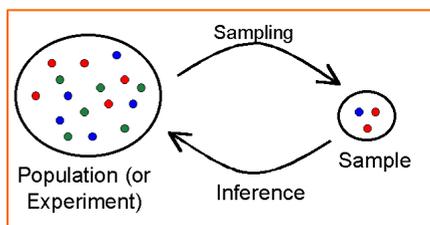
FIGURE 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF SAMPLING IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

The question of sampling is not just academic. The most vulnerable or at-risk sub-set of a population (e.g. women, children, the elderly, disabled, women-headed households, etc.) - who may lack access to social capital or are less mobile - are more likely to be left out of a sampling frame. Since we cannot collect information on the well-being of those outside the sampling frame, we may underestimate the true needs of the population. Advocacy is often another key objective of data collection and analysis. Without a valid and representative sampling framework, though, findings are regularly discounted (see Alexander and Cosgrave, ALNAP Discussion Series Method Note 1: Representative Sampling in Humanitarian Evaluation).

These are just two of many reasons to be concerned with your sampling frame and methodology, and to follow best practices to increase the quality and representativeness of your data. **See Section 4.0: Practical Tips for Improving Data Quality**.

A key question to always keep in mind is: **"Who is being included and who is potentially being excluded in light of our sampling methodology?"**

Choices therefore have to be made about:

1) The appropriate **method** for sample selection;
2) The appropriate **sample size** is (e.g., number of individuals or households), and;
3) Who should be included so that the sample is **representative** of the whole population?

It is important to conduct sampling with best practices in order for our programs to obtain high-quality data that is accurate, trust-worthy, and can be used to inform decision-making. It is also important that the same types of programs follow the same sampling methodology so that data is comparable across programs and missions. We care about sampling correctly because it affects the quality and ethics of our M&E, as well as the way we make and present conclusions based on the information. See Figure 1 for examples.

In data analysis and reporting, it is important to always specify the sampling methods used, e.g.

how you decided to sample the people you did, how many people, etc. You should be transparent about any caveats to your data. For example, you should never claim a project had an effect on the broader population if your data was only collected from a limited sample consisting of the people Action Against Hunger directly supported. You also should not make claims to causality/attribution if your system of evaluation was not designed with an appropriate counterfactual. In short: Avoid the mistakes that are often made in humanitarian research![18]

1.2 KEY SAMPLING TERMINOLOGY

The purpose of sampling is to reduce the time, costs, and challenges of data collection by gathering information from a subset of a population rather than the entire population. For example, when doing a survey, it would be expensive and difficult to survey the entire population being targeted. Sampling allows the selection of a proportion of that total population to give representative answers to questions.

- The **sample or target population** is the total population of interest and should be well defined before determining a sample and undertaking a survey. Common survey examples of sample or target populations include the entire population of a specific geographic area such as a nation, province, region, or town.

- A **sampling frame** is a list of the total population or units or a geographical boundary from which a sample is drawn. In strictly controlled refugee camps or villages with defined boundaries and little in–out migration, camp or village lists may be exhaustive and provide a useful sampling frame. In more fluid situations where populations change or are unknown, geographic areas may serve as the sampling frame.

- **Sampling bias** is a systematic error that can prejudice your findings. It happens when the sample selection consistently excludes some members of the population or over-represents others. A common source of survey bias, especially in emergency and displacement contexts, is when the sampling frame does not include the whole sample population. For example, a survey to assess the household food security of IDP households in a conflict-affected area may be strongly biased if insecure areas where IDPs are found are not sampled or if only camp-based IDPs are sampled, with those living in host families not sampled. In such cases, this systematic error is known as "sampling bias". If sampling bias occurs, this limitation must be clearly noted and interpreted in the report. Sometimes, the sample population may need to be reconsidered and the sampling redone. Again the question to consider is "Who is being included and who is potentially being excluded in light of the sampling methodology?"

- The **sampling unit** is the element or unit selected in sampling, which the data refers to. Each unit is sampled from all units in the sample population. Usually, households are the sampling unit for food security and livelihoods indicators, whereas nutrition surveys, and in particular for anthropometric data collection, may use a type of individual (e.g., children under 2 years of age), as the sampling unit.

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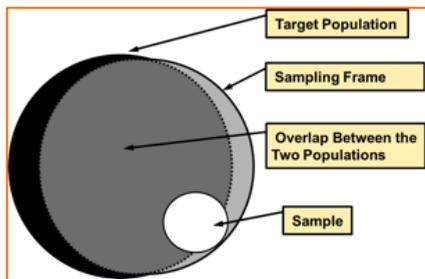
[18] See: "The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration" http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/migration/pubs/rrwp/19_dual.pdf

> ### What is a control group?
>
> *It is a group of households or individuals who are not program or project beneficiaries but who are similar to beneficiaries in regards to their needs and vulnerabilities.* **Action Against Hunger cannot use control groups to establish a comparative analysis of its project impacts on the population in need, due to ethical obligations to respond to identified needs.** *It is hence recommended to use* **comparison groups** *or when possible, a stepped-wedge sampling method (see Advanced M&E Toolkit), which is using several generations of beneficiary groups, using those who are not yet beneficiaries as the comparison group.*

2.0 STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE SAMPLING PROCESS

The sampling process includes the following six steps. For more information and detail consult the ACF FSL Assessment Guidelines (2009).

STEP 1: FORMULATE OBJECTIVES AND DEFINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE MEASURED:

During this step, agreement should be reached about the survey objectives (usually, what progress a target population has made in reaching project objectives), on which population or area it should focus, and what themes or issues will be addressed. This will inform methodological choices. At this stage you should also determine whether it is necessary to consult with the local or national government regarding your surveys and sampling. In Kenya, for example, Kenyan NGOs are often required to coordinate with the local government and must collect data that is representative of the wider population, rather than just data from beneficiaries. This will effect decisions you make regarding the sampling method and sampling frame (see steps below).

STEP 2: SELECT THE APPROPRIATE SAMPLING METHOD:

Three overall approaches to sampling are: a) Probability Sampling, b) Non-Probability Sampling, and c) Exhaustive Sampling (e.g. a census). Some programs (particularly when dealing with dispersed populations and/or a wide geographic area) may undertake sampling in two stages using two distinct methods, e.g. two-stage cluster random sampling. Each sampling approach involves different methods for selecting units:

a) **Probability Sampling:** This is also known as representative sampling, and is possible when every sampling unit has an equal chance of being selected, the probability of being selected is known, or the selection of the sample is made using random methods. Both selection of a geographical area and the households or individuals within a given location should be made randomly. When possible, random sampling tends to be preferred to non-random methods as it is the only one that theoretically has the potential to represent the entire sampling frame and thus minimize sampling bias. Probability sampling is used especially in cases where quantitative data are collected and statistical analysis is called for. Some **key methods of random sampling are covered below: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster or multistage sampling**.

i) Simple Random Sampling: The most commonly used sampling technique, this involves selecting a proportion of the population randomly for interview. Each person has an equal probability of selection; however, those selected may not be representative of the total population. This method is appropriate for our project monitoring and should be standard when the target population is 200 to 500 people and when a complete, up-to-date list of beneficiaries by location is available. When the population is scattered and vulnerability levels within the target area is heterogeneous, consider combining with another method (e.g. forming clusters and randomly sampling within clusters) or an alternative sampling method.

ii) Systematic Sampling: This involves arranging the target population according to some ordering scheme, selecting the first element at random, and then selecting the following elements at regular intervals (e.g., every 10th) through that ordered list. A "sampling interval" is determined by dividing the total number of households by the number needed to give an adequate sample. As a best practice, the enumerator should then walk to the middle of the community, spin a pen or bottle so that it lands in a random direction, and systematically select houses while walking outwards to the border of the community until the household quota is reached. This will prevent the sampling of only households closest to a center or the edge, and ensure a better distribution of types of households. This method is useful where lists are unavailable. If the same features apply at periods through the list however, this method may generate findings that do not represent the whole population. This is appropriate where a list of households does not exist or where the population is geographically concentrated and dwellings are arranged in a regular geometric pattern. This is the most common sampling method used to select households within a cluster, e.g., in a camp, village or urban context.

FIGURE 2: EXAMPLE CALCULATION

For example, if 400 households are on a list, and 20 need to be interviewed, the first step is to choose the first household at random using a random number table or other method – e.g., a choice of # 220. Because 400 divided by 20 equals 20, the sampling interval will be 20. Following, select every 20th household on the list starting from # 220 - 220, 240, 260 etc., continuing at the beginning of the list when the end is reached until arrived at the target number, 20, and the starting point is reached. Often the simple division of total number of households by the number of household to be interviewed, does not result in a whole number. In this case, rounding to the nearest integer is required. For example, if 20 households need to be interviewed and there are 532 households on a list, the sampling interval would be 27 (26.6).

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iii) Stratified Sampling: This is the preferred monitoring method and is most relevant when the population can be divided into a number of homogenous categories, strata, or zones (e.g., categories such as farmers and nomads, or livelihood zones such as coastal fishing versus agricultural). Random samples can then be selected from each category, so that you have a representative sample for each strata. Careful attention must be paid to not create too many strata: ideally no more than 4-6 strata. Dividing the population into distinct strata can allow more in-depth analysis into each group, which would not be possible when looking at the population as a whole. However, identifying strata and implementing such an approach will require a bit of time and preparatory work to stratify and divide the zone of intervention into several strata; the cost, size, and complexity of sample selection and data collection may increase. For our monitoring purposes, this should be the standard method for sampling with larger populations (more than 1,000 individuals), when there are drastically distinct categories within the total population, or when different groups face drastically different conditions and we are interested in that particular difference. This is particularly relevant for zoning, where an area should be zoned by livelihood or other criteria prior to carrying out the sampling, and population data for each identified zone

collected or estimated. The results of the zoning exercise can then serve as the sampling frame for rapid assessments and surveys intended to be representative of the local range of livelihoods.

iv) Cluster Sampling: This is relevant when a population can be divided up into groups or "clusters" (e.g., by area). This can be a very cost effective method as a list of all beneficiaries is not required, but the population size of each cluster (e.g., village) should be known. However if clusters have a bias within them, that can skew findings. This method is appropriate when a detailed list of all beneficiaries is unavailable, when the target population is large (i.e. in our project terms, > 3,000), and when the population is scattered and vulnerability within an area is heterogeneous.

For more information on probability sampling and procedures, see: *MSTK 8 – Data Collection.*

b) NON-RANDOM/NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING: This is any sampling method in which some units have no chance of being selected or if the probability of selection is unknown. This is commonly used in qualitative methodologies including selecting key informant interviews and focus groups, and involves the selective judgment of who to include in the study. It is also commonly used to collect quantitative data in humanitarian settings and/or where programs lack a sampling frame. It has a high potential of introducing bias into the results, but is remains useful when triangulated with other methods. There are also a number of best practices for non-probability sampling that can increase the representativeness of the data (see Figure 3 at right. Some of **the most common non-random sampling methods covered below include: purposive, convenience and snowball sampling**:

FIGURE 3: NON-PROBABILITY APPROACHES IN EMERGENCY SETTINGS TO INCREASE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF DATA

In a rapid assessment of IDP settlements in Somalia, a survey team lacked the time and resources to conduct a proper sample survey. Instead they approached 3 separate authority figures for each of the 17 IDP settlements in question. They asked basis questions about the population of each settlement. Afterwards, they triangulated the information to arrive at a single, more representative response.

Source: UNICEF Rapid Assessment Sampling in Emergency Situations

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i) Purposive Sampling: This is a method in which the researchers decide which groups or individuals to interview rather than selecting sampling sites in a random way. How participants are selected depends on the goal of the sampling and the type of data to be collected. For example, qualitative research often uses purposive sampling to select individuals for key informant interviews. Rather than randomly selecting individuals from the population, they select people who are likely to be experts in the topics in question (e.g. community leaders or hospital administrators may be well-positioned to respond to questions regarding public policies or program sustainability). If representative sampling is the goal and a sampling frame is not available, M&E staff may use purposive sampling to select a population sample instead. Attempts are made to minimize bias and select a sample that best represents the population under study. To reduce bias, it can be used in combination with random sampling approaches in a multi-stage approach. For example, a specific number of communities to be included in the study can be purposively sampled, but then selection of respondents within the communities can be done using one of the random methods. In this method, a particular community or group that project implementers are interested in can be sampled or the majority or all of a population, if small, can be assessed. This method is appropriate where time and/or money are limited, or where the context or M&E

objectives are more appropriate for non-random approaches and/or qualitative approaches. Examples of purposive sampling include selection of community leaders, or parents of school children.

ii) Convenience Sampling: For this method, respondents are chosen because they are accessible or "convenient". Because these respondents are chosen based on their immediate availability, this is typically the easiest, most practical, and quickest solution when surveys need to be done quickly. However, it can have the highest potential for bias due to diverse differences, especially in geographic, political and social isolation, between individuals and communities which are accessible and those who are not. As such, this method for sampling is usually not recommended. This method is appropriate mainly when time is limited or travel to any randomly selected places may not be possible or appropriate given the local context. It is also a good method to use when the specific objectives of the M&E exercise are qualitative in nature, do not require a random sampling approach, or when you do not expect much variance in responses among people who are readily accessible and those who are not. Examples of convenience sampling include administering surveys to people on line at food distributions or waiting at health centers.

iii) Snowball Sampling: This resembles the process of taking a small ball of snow and rolling it to gather more and more snow along the way until it becomes a big ball. First, key informants, non-randomly selected, are chosen due to their specific knowledge of a situation. Second, these initial informants point the researcher to other possible informants, who have experience in the relevant issues. As new informants are found, the snowball grows. Usually, new informants continue to be added until a point of saturation, which means that new information is no longer coming out. With this method, particular respondents of interest to a program or project can be targeted and even if the researchers aren't aware of all relevant actors, theoretically they would eventually be captured in the snowball. A particular constraint of this method is that it is biased towards those individuals who are more well-known versus a random sampling. This method is appropriate when time is quite limited and key informants are already known. This method is often used among hard-to-reach populations, such as urban/non-camp refugees or the homeless.

c) EXHAUSTIVE SAMPLING (E.G. CENSUS): This is when the whole population is surveyed and is only recommended for smaller projects. For example, if a project is targeting a particular community or group of people, all belonging to that community or group will be surveyed. An assessment can be made of a whole population and therefore the margin of error on research is reduced. However, it can be expensive and difficult to survey the entire population being targeted. Thus, this method is typically only relevant when looking at small populations (e.g., up to 200 people). A practical example of this is when your sampling frame consists ONLY of units who have received an ACF intervention and you enumerate each one at baseline and endline.

FIGURE 4: SUMMARY OF SAMPLING METHODS			
Sampling method	**Is a detailed beneficiaries list required?**	**What is the appropriate total No. beneficiaries?**	**Is population distribution an issue?**
Simple Random	YES	> 200 - < 3,000 with a detailed beneficiary list	YES, it can be. If villages are scattered, you can only use this methodology if vulnerability level within the target area is homogeneous
Stratified	NO	> 200 without beneficiary list. Ok for large numbers.	NO. If the population is scattered, and vulnerability level of targeted beneficiaries is heterogeneous, use this methodology
Cluster	NO	> 200 without beneficiary list. Ok for large numbers.	NO. If the population is scattered, and vulnerability level of targeted beneficiaries is heterogeneous, use this methodology
Purposive	NO	< 50	NO
Exhaustive	YES	< 200	NO

STEP 3: SELECT THE SAMPLING UNIT AND THE SAMPLING FRAME (IF APPLICABLE):

First determine the level of measurement (e.g. individuals, communities, health centers, etc) based on the indicator/data involved. Then clearly define your sampling frame and have clear definitions for each type of individual or group to be included in your sample. For example, the sample could include all women, or women of reproductive age (which would still need to be defined), or women with children under a particular age, etc. In general, sampling frames for ACF programs will be limited to members of the population (whether it is at the individual, household, communiy, or health center level) who have actually participated in an ACF program, Wider population sampling frames are generally used for larger research studies or SMART assessments.

The second step once the frame and the definitions are clear, is to pull together the list of every member of the population in the sample group to be surveyed (if a list is available), meeting the definitions. The sampling frame can come from a variety of sources, such as a list of beneficiaries who participate in a program activity, a household list from community leaders, households identified through a GIS map.

For specific indicators, the sampling frame should be uniform across programs to the extent possible. However, this also recognizes that sampling frames (e.g. lists of households or clinics) may not be available in all contexts, particularly in emergencies.

Each program's measurement of indicators should strive to use the same type of sampling frame and unit of measurement. Consult with technical HQ depending on specific activities, but general rules of thumb:

FIGURE 5: SELECTING THE SAMPLING UNIT AND SAMPLING FRAME BY LEVEL OF INTERVENTION

INTERVENTION LEVEL	SAMPLING UNIT	SAMPLE FRAME	PROGRAM EXAMPLE / EXAMPLE INDICATORS
Health Center	Health centers/clinics participating in our program	List of Health Clinics Receiving our Support	CMAM programs/ data on admissions and cure rates
Individual	Individuals participating in our program	Beneficiary list	Farmer-based FSL programs/change in agricultural yield for participating farmers
Household	Households participating in our program	Household beneficiary list	MHCP or WASH behavior change programs / KAP indicators Household-based FSL programs/change in household food security for participating households
Community	Communities/villages participating in our	Community	WASH programs, e.g. communities receiving hand

	program	(cluster) list	pumps, toilets
Population (for research/context monitoring)	Individuals (e.g. children under 5)	All members of the population or sub-set (e.g. population of children under 5)	SMART anthropometric assessment for undernutrition / MUAC Market price monitoring Note: population-based surveys typically require more rigorous probability sampling methods.

Your selection of the sampling frame will depend on the conclusions you want to be able to draw and to whom you want them to apply. For example, if you want to track the prevalence of diarrhoea just among children under 5 who participate in ACF interventions in Juba, South Sudan, then your sampling frame would consist of JUST the children under 5 in Juba who are on ACF beneficiary lists. On the other hand, if you want to estimate the prevalence of diarrhoea for all children under 5 in Juba, your sampling frame would be all children under 5 in Juba because you want to be able to extend your findings (using statistical inference) to the whole population of children under 5 in Juba. This would generally require cluster-based random sampling techniques.

In general, M&E for ACF programs do NOT require population-based sampling (i.e. the population or a sub-set of it as a sampling frame) because this is time- and resource-intensive. Population-based sampling in ACF is mainly limited to the use of the SMART methodology to estimate rates of undernutrition in given geographic areas. For additional guidance and examples of sampling frames based on the type of intervention, see the sector-specific toolkits.

STEP 4: DETERMINE THE SAMPLE SIZE:

Define how many people/households will be selected from the total population for the study. For a quantitative survey, this should be done such that the results of the survey will be representative of the whole targeted population, and thus statistically accurate. A sample can be done through a variety of methods (see above) and the sample size is determined in accordance with acceptable margins of error and confidence. Highlighting these enables the reader to see how representative the results are of the population considered. It is not necessary to collect data from 15%, 30% or 50% of beneficiaries for monitoring exercises but rather it is important to conserve resources by having smaller sample sizes but ensuring that these samples are selected in a way to ensure their representativeness.

As a rule of thumb, sample size will depend on the following factors:

1. *Sampling method used (e.g. convenience sampling would require a larger sample size than purposive sampling to ensure representativeness)*
2. *Number of clusters (better to have more clusters and fewer sampled units within each cluster)*
3. *Variance of data expected*
4. *Population size (N)*
5. *Precision/confidence level required*

- **Confidence Level & Margin of Error:** The margin of error is where your results have an error of no more than X%, while the confidence level is the percentage confidence in the reliability of the estimate to produce similar results over time. These two determine how accurate your sample and survey results are.

  There are a variety of simple sample size calculators on the internet, e.g. http://www.dimensionresearch.com/resources/calculators/conf_prop.html (Just enter 95% as your desired confidence level, then enter your sample size (denominator) for analysis and the result either the % or the numerator and the software will automatically calculate the confidence interval. An alternate website is: http://www.custominsight.com/articles/random-sample-calculator.asp

- **Projects should aim for a 95% level of confidence with a 5% error margin for a high level of accuracy**. This means that if the same survey were to be done 100 times, results would be within +/- 5% the same as the first time, 95 times out of 100. There are a variety of simple sample size calculators easily available and these should be used to determine the exact sample size needed to meet these parameters.

- For **non-random sampling, the size is not as important as the aim is to capture the diversity** of the relevant area and to **select respondents that enable you to obtain the necessary information.** For assessments, an accepted rule is to sample between 50 and 150 households for each reporting domain the assessment wishes to draw conclusions on. The goal in selecting the individuals, groups, or locations to include within the assessment area is to capture the diversity and have enough respondents to gather the necessary information. If the area in question is homogeneous this will require a smaller sample size, while heterogeneous areas demand a larger sample size.

- When using a stratified sampling or zoning approach, the following calculation can be used:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \times e^2}$$

n = sample size
N = population size
e = error level

Source: ACF DRC (2010) Monitoring Guidance Notes

- For qualitative methods, consider the following rules of thumb when selecting sample sizes:

DATA COLLECTION METHOD	RULE OF THUMB
Observation method	Observe at least two episodes for each category (e.g., by gender, location, etc.) of the research question.
Key informant interviews	Select the persons highly recommended by the community and who are knowledgeable about the topic under investigation. Depending on the topic and purpose, interview approximately 3-5 persons for each

	category (e.g., gender, location, etc.).
Focus groups	Interview approximately two groups for each category in the research question. For example, when studying males and females of three different age groups, plan for twelve focus group discussions.

Source: Training manual on basic monitoring and evaluation of social and behaviour change communication health programs. Population Council. 2014. Adapted from a presentation by Dr. Bonnie Nastasi, https://my.laureate.net/Faculty/docs/.../qualit_res__smpl_size_consid.doc

When presenting survey findings, the accuracy level used should be detailed in the methodology section of the report, along with the full sampling methodology. It is important to remember that if sampling procedures cannot be carried out rigorously, the data gathered will not represent the population as a whole but only the population surveyed. **Any factors that may limit the ability of the data to be representative of the population needs to be clearly noted in any final report.**

STEP 5: SELECT THE SAMPLE

The people/households to participate in the survey should be decided on. This should be done in line with what sampling methodology has been decided on (see Step 2: Select the appropriate sampling method). For simple random sampling, each unit should be decided upon in advance by using a random number generator or another method for generating a random sample. For systematic random sampling (e.g. of households in a community), the exact households you will enumerate do not need to be selected in advance. The households should be selected according to the protocol (e.g. every 10th house).

Once the sample has been agreed on, data collection can begin.

STEP 6: TRAIN AND SUPERVISE ENUMERATORS IN THE SAMPLING PROTOCOL

Training of enumerators should also incorporate guidance on the sampling protocol in addition to general data collection techniques. Especially for probability sampling, the manager should back-check to make sure sampling protocol was followed. For more information, see Section 2.4.6.

3.0 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SELECTING A SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

Field teams are advised to consult with technical department in HQ. Key variables to consider when selecting a sampling methodology:

- Availability of sampling frame
- Quality of sampling frame
- Time availability
- Resource/staff availability
- Who will receive the data/reports
- Amount of money available for data collection
- Dispersion and location of population of interest

The major categories of sampling are **1) probability sampling, 2) non-probability sampling, and 3) exhaustive sampling**. More specific types of sampling generally fall under these categories. However, there are additional complementary techniques, such as **stratification**, that may be used when sampling from populations. It is also possible to combine sampling techniques in a single survey, for example in multi-stage sampling. Some of the most common sampling methods and tips for using them are provided in **Figure 6** below.

Figure 6: Major Sampling Types and Methods			
Method	**Pros**	**Cons**	**Examples**
1. PROBABILITY SAMPLING • Any method that uses some form of randomization, whereby each unit has an equal or known probability of being selected. • Can achieve statistically robust results if done correctly. However, more time, planning, and capacity required. Best used when time and resources are available to train staff in sampling protocols. Should always be used when the purpose is to publish (formally or informally) the data and/or use for important program decisions. • **Most key indicators use probability sampling! Probability sampling is required for most outcome-level monitoring, including KAP surveys, prevalence monitoring, and SMART assessments.**			
Simple Random Sampling A type of probability sampling in which each unit is randomly selected and has an equal probability of being selected.	Greatly reduced potential for bias. Gold standard of sampling techniques. Best used when the population is homogenous and not dispersed, and when you want a highly representative sample but do not care who is selected.	Must have a *complete* sampling frame and pre-select sample units in advance. Can be highly expensive and resource intensive to complete.	**May be used for Household/KAP surveys if detailed beneficiary list (and locations) available Follow-up surveys after trainings**
Systematic Random Sampling A type of probability sampling in which you randomly pick the first item or subject from the population, then select each n'th subject from the list.	More efficient than random sampling, no sampling frame needed, and little planning required up front. Useful when you do not have a complete sampling frame so cannot pre-select respondents, but still want to use probability methods.	Must have complete sampling frame or know population size to calculate sample size and sampling interval Difficult if sampling units are widely dispersed	**May be used for Household/KAP surveys, post-distribution monitoring, market price surveillance May be used in conjunction with cluster method for SMART assessments**
Cluster Sampling A type of sampling in which populations are divided into separate groups (clusters), usually followed by simple or systematic random sampling.	More efficient than simple random sampling in large areas. Useful when working in wide geographic areas (dispersed), conducting population-based studies, and/or when lacking a sampling frame.	Requires planning up-front and availability of maps to identify clusters	**SMART assessments, population assessments**
2. NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING • Samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected. • Less planning and M&E capacity required; no sampling frame required. Used for smaller programs with low M&E budget; when no sampling frame is available; and when results do not need to be statistically representative. However, there is a aigher potential for sampling bias, and quantitative data cannot be presented as statistically representative. • **Commonly used in needs assessments, and for qualitative data collection (key informants, focus group selection).**			

• **Useful in high-risk, emergency settings where programming must be prioritized.**			
Purposive Sampling A type of non-probability sampling in which decisions about the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria.	Can select sampled units based on criteria. Useful for quick research using key informants; selecting participants for FGDs, and when statistical representativeness is not important.	Judgment required for selection of respondents Some potential for sampling bias	**In practice often used for post-distribution monitoring, selecting participants for focus groups and key informant interviews**
Convenience Sampling A technique where individuals are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher.	Very little capacity required. Useful when quick research is required needing only general information and when there is little variance expected In respondents' responses.	High potential for sampling bias and lack of representativeness	**Often occurs for beneficiary feedback** **Often used for on-site visits, technical quality audits, and market price surveillance (though preferable to use systematic random sampling)**
Snowball Sampling A technique where sample subjects recruit or refer additional subjects from among their acquaintances.	Low resources and little advanced planning required. Often used when sampling hard-to-reach populations.	Potential for sampling bias and lack of representativeness (sample selected based on social networks)	**Needs assessments of vulnerable groups (urban refugees, post-disaster WASH access, etc.)**

3. EXHAUSTIVE

- Non-use of sampling; the entire population of interest is selected, e.g. a census.
- No need to calculate sample size, little statistical capacity required. May be used when there is a small number of beneficiaries, or when using statistical inference is not sufficient. However, it is impractical with a large number of units to sample.
- **Used in calculating many core indicators involving high intervention level or small number of sampling units – e.g. health center CMAM data; site visits for PQA audits (where all sites are visited)**

4.0 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR IMPROVING DATA QUALITY

Sampling bias can arise **no matter the type of method used**. For example, if you are planning to conduct random sampling using a list of beneficiaries provided by the local government, you will run into sampling bias if the list of beneficiaries *systematically* excludes people based on certain characteristics such as party affiliation or ethnicity.

Particular problems can emerge depending on the type of sampling used, the population you are sampling, and where. However, here are some general rules of thumb to improve the quality of your data and reduce sampling bias.

1. **Check your sampling frame.**
    a. Ensure the list from which you pull your sample is as complete as possible and does not exclude certain groups. Ask questions about the reliability of the records.
    b. Obtain records from various sources if you doubt the reliability of your sampling frame. Triangulate information to arrive at the best list.

2. **Increase the representativeness of your sample.**
    a. For purposive sampling or selection of people for interviews and focus groups, ask multiple (unrelated) sources for recommendations.
    b. For convenience and snowball sampling, you must make additional efforts to include hard-to-reach populations. Increase your sample size as much as possible to make it more representative.

3. **When conducting systematic random sampling, spin a bottle or a pen to choose your direction randomly.** For example, when sampling in a market or community of households, walk to the center of the market/village, spin a bottle/pen to obtain a random direction, and sample at the pre-determined interval while walking in that direction.

4. **When using convenience sampling, don't just talk to the first people you meet or people you already know**. For example, when sampling traders in a market, don't just talk to people on the outskirts of the market. Go further.

5. **If you don't have time to do a probability sample, use purposive sampling rather than convenience sampling when possible.**

6. **Obtain qualitative information to contextualize and triangulate findings with quantitative data.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ACF M&E Guidelines: MSTK 8b - Simplified Sampling
- Sampling Guide, Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project, 1997.
- UNICEF Rapid Assessment Sampling in Emergency Settings: http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Rapid_assessment_sampling_booklet.pdf

12. ANNEX 12: M&E FOR DISTRIBUTIONS

Projects across all our sectors often include distribution activities. Whether it is food, hygiene kits and soap, micronutrient powders, cash, or agricultural tools being distributed, monitoring distributions prior, during, and afterwards ensures that distributions are effectively conducted - reaching the intended target populations and contributing to desired project outcomes. ***MSTK 4 - Thematic Indicators for All Sectors*** provides some commonly used indicators for distribution monitoring.

MONITORING TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Registration list verification (prior to the distribution)	Project staff should visit registered beneficiaries' homes to verify the accuracy of the information provided during registration, especially the presence of the family and its members in the home. Targeting criteria should also be verified. In most cases, it is difficult to carry out an exhaustive verification; thus, a random survey of a sample of the list is usually facilitated. To avoid bias, do not survey a selected part of the list (for example, the first 50 registrations), but rather select the sample of survey respondents from the entire list.
Direct interviews with beneficiaries at the distribution sites (during distribution)	In the event that registration list verification is not feasible, make random checks with the heads of families during distributions to verify information provided during registration. This helps avoid fraudulent activities (buying or swapping of identification cards, using other people's children, etc.)
Onsite Distribution Monitoring (ODM)	When distributing food or NFIs or hygiene kits, beneficiaries' baskets should be monitored at the exit of the distribution point to: a) verify the quantities and quality of items received; b) detect errors of rations/kits by weight/quantity; c) expose any embezzlement by team members; d) identify any discrimination towards a population group; e) determine ineffective aspects of the distribution system (traffic flow, beneficiaries' understanding of the conditions, etc.); and f) allow rapid adjustment of the distribution process to correct detected errors and dysfunctions.
Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) (MSTK 11 – Onsite and Post-Distribution Monitoring)	PDM takes place after each cycle of distribution in all projects to answer questions such as: • Were items distributed to the targeted beneficiaries? What items? Quantity? Quality? • How efficient was the distribution process? Was the distribution method appropriate? Was the distribution point at an appropriate distance and safe location? • Is the frequency of distribution appropriate? • Were there any problems and costs to the beneficiary for travel or transporting distributed items? • Were the items distributed appropriate for people's needs? • How did beneficiaries use the distributed item? Was it used in the intended way? To what extent did this depend upon whether a man or woman received the item? • Which members of the family benefited? Who had control over how the item was used at the household level? Why were some households able to benefit more than others from the grant?

PDM survey interviews are most useful when conducted soon after each distribution or around the estimated duration of usage to ensure people remember how they used the item. A standardized survey is carried out randomly at the household level. Focus group discussions and key-informant interviews can explain and validate findings. Data from PDM should be used to adjust future distributions and assess outcomes of the intervention.

13.   ANNEX 13: M&E FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity refers to the ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.[19] The OECD defines capacity development as "the process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time."

M&E of Capacities & Capacity Building Interventions

ACF projects across all sectors should monitor and evaluate 1) changes in capacity of beneficiaries (individuals, organizations, and systems) and 2) the process of delivery of capacity building activities. Measuring the impact of capacity building activities should be a secondary priority and should be focused on learning.
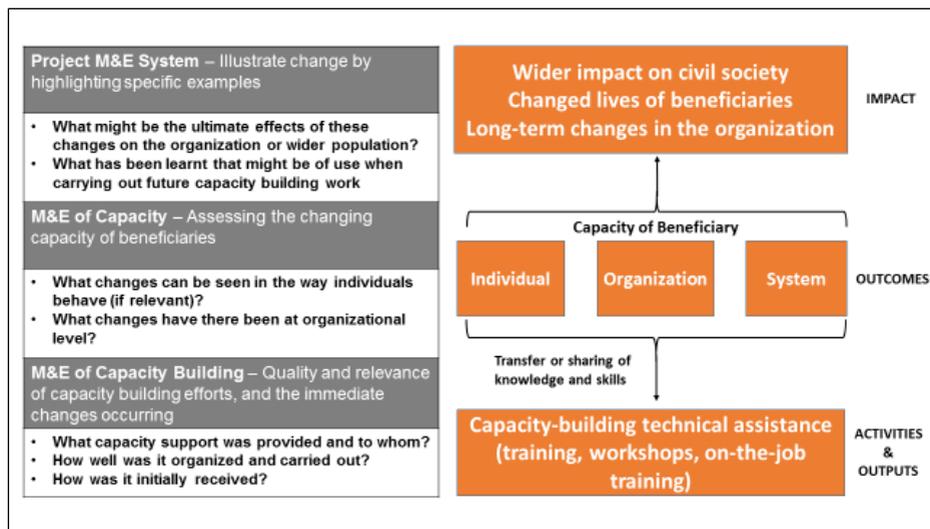
a) Building capacity of individuals is usually understood as imparting knowledge and developing skills through training. It also involves learning-by-doing, participation, ownership, and processes associated with increasing performance through changes in management, motivation, morale, and improving accountability and responsibility.
b) Building capacity of organizations focuses on overall performance and functioning capabilities, such as developing mandates, tools, and guidelines that facilitate organizational change and management.
c) At the systemic level, capacity building focuses on the "enabling environment" i.e., the overall policy, economic, regulatory, and accountability frameworks within which organizations and individuals operate. Relationships and processes between organizations, both formal and informal, as well as their mandates, are important.

Sources: *Key capacity development at three levels of intervention (Lusthaus et al, 2000)* and *Monitoring and evaluating capacity building: is it really that difficult? (INTRAC. 2010).*

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19 OECD/DAC (2006), *The challenge* of capacity development – working towards good practice.

The table below summarizes some key methods that can be used to assess changes in capacity of beneficiaries and the quality and relevance of capacity building efforts. A mixed-methods approach should be used to create a picture over time of what has changed, why it has changed, and how learning can be applied in the future. *MSTK 4 - Thematic Indicators for all Sectors* provides some commonly used indicators for capacity building activities.

M&E OF CAPACITY BUILDING	
METHOD	**DESCRIPTION**
Post Training Assessment (at the end of a training, workshop, etc.); *see MSTK 22 for an example format* **AND** **Periodic or end-of-project satisfaction forms**	Recipients of capacity building should be encouraged to voice if their needs were met or not, and also whether or not the process itself was appropriate or rewarding. Some questions that could be asked in a post training assessment include: • How were you selected to participate? • What did you like most about the training/workshop (e.g. pre-workshop organization, content, presentation style, quality of facilitation/instruction, handouts, duration)? Please be specific. • What would you change about the training/workshop (e.g. see above)? • Which parts of your learning will you apply immediately in your own work? Please be specific.
M&E of Capacity	
Pre and Post Tests (before and after training)	Participants should be asked questions related to the key concepts which will be covered during the training activity. These same questions are asked before and after the activity to measure what has been learned. You can do a 3 months post training test, to see how much learning and knowledge is retained.
SWOT Analysis	Assess capacity of an organization prior, during, or after a project. (**MSTK 9h – SWOT Analysis Guidance Note**)
Most Significant Change	The MSC process involves collecting stories of significant change. Project beneficiaries are asked to share their stories which are then referred to a panel of designated stakeholders or staff who review these and select those demonstrating the most significant change focusing upon project impact. (**MSTK 14 - Most Significant Change Guidance Note**)
In-depth Case Studies	Significant resources may be required to generate enough stories to draw wider conclusions about the results but they may provide a more qualitative complete story of the change process experienced by individuals or groups.

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GLOSSARY OF MONITORING & EVALUATION TERMINOLOGY

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Activity: Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

Appraisal: An overall assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential sustainability of an intervention prior to a decision of funding. Note: In development agencies, banks, etc., the purpose of appraisal is to enable decision-makers to decide whether the activity represents an appropriate use of resources. Related term: ex-ante evaluation

Assumptions: Hypotheses about factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of an intervention.

Attribution: The ascription of a causal link between observed (or expected to be observed) changes and a specific intervention. Note: Attribution refers to that which is to be credited for the observed changes or results achieved. It represents the extent to which observed effects can be attributed to a specific intervention or to the performance of one or more partner taking account of other interventions, (anticipated or unanticipated) confounding factors, or external shocks.

Audit: An independent, objective assurance activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to assess and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. Note: a distinction is made between regularity (financial) auditing, which focuses on compliance with applicable statutes and regulations; and performance auditing, which is concerned with relevance, economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Internal auditing provides an assessment of internal controls undertaken by a unit reporting to management while external auditing is conducted by an independent organization.

Base-line study: An analysis describing the situation prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.

Benchmark: Reference point or standard against which performance or achievements can be assessed. Note: A benchmark refers to the performance that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable organizations, or what can be reasonably inferred to have been achieved in the circumstances.

Beneficiaries: The individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the intervention.

Cluster evaluation: An evaluation of a set of related activities, projects and/or programs

Conclusions: Conclusions point out the factors of success and failure of the intervention, with special attention paid to the intended and unintended results and impacts, and more generally to any other strength or weakness. A conclusion draws on data collection and analyses undertaken, through a transparent chain of arguments.

Economy: Absence of waste for a given output. Note: An activity is economical when the costs of the resources used approximate the minimum needed to achieve planned objectives.

Effect: Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention. Related terms: results, outcome.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Note: Also used as an aggregate measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with a positive institutional development impact. Related term: efficacy.

Efficiency: A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

Evaluation: An evaluation could be defined as the systematic review of the operations and/or outcomes of an intervention, compared to a set of implicit or explicit standards, as a means of contributing to the interventions' improvement. Or simply, as the systematic determination of the quality or value of an intervention or project. In practice, an evaluation could have a range of objectives but in nearly all cases they relate to improvement, learning, and/or accountability.

Ex-ante evaluation: An evaluation that is performed before implementation of an intervention

Ex-post evaluation: Evaluation of an intervention after it has been completed. Note: It may be undertaken directly after or long after completion. The intention is to identify the factors of success or failure, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts, and to draw conclusions that may inform other interventions.

External evaluation: The evaluation of an intervention conducted by entities and/or individuals outside the donor and implementing organizations.

Formative evaluation: Evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs. Note: Formative evaluations may also be conducted for other reasons such as compliance, legal requirements or as part of a larger evaluation initiative.

Goal: The higher-order objective to which an intervention is intended to contribute.

Impacts: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Independent evaluation: An evaluation carried out by entities and persons free of the control of those responsible for the design and implementation of the intervention. Note: The credibility of an evaluation depends in part on how independently it has been carried out. Independence implies freedom from political influence and organizational pressure. It is characterized by full access to information and by full autonomy.

Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Inputs: The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention.

Internal evaluation: Evaluation of an intervention conducted by a unit and/or individuals reporting to the management of the donor, partner, or implementing organization. Related term: self-evaluation.

Joint evaluation: An evaluation to which different partners participate. Note: There are various degrees of "jointness" depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting. Joint evaluations can help overcome attribution problems in assessing the effectiveness of programs and strategies, the complementarity of efforts supported by different partners, the quality of aid coordination, etc.

Lessons learned: Generalizations based on experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.

Logical framework (Logframe): Management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the project level. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development intervention. Related term: results based management.

Meta-evaluation: The term is used for evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators.

Mid-term evaluation: Evaluation performed towards the middle of the period of implementation of the intervention.

Monitoring: A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Related term: performance monitoring, indicator.

Outcome: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Related terms: result, outputs, impacts, effect.

Outputs: The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Participatory evaluation: Evaluation method in which representatives of agencies and stakeholders (including beneficiaries) work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting an evaluation.

Partners: The individuals and/or organizations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives. Note: The concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations. Partners may include governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations, universities, professional and business associations, multilateral organizations, private companies, etc.

Performance: The degree to which an intervention or an implementing agency operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.

Performance indicator: A variable that allows the verification of changes in the intervention or shows results relative to what was planned. Related terms: performance monitoring, performance measurement.

Performance measurement: A system for assessing performance of interventions against stated goals. Related terms: performance monitoring, indicator.

Performance monitoring: A continuous process of collecting and analyzing data to compare how well a project, program, or policy is being implemented against expected results.

Process evaluation: An evaluation of the internal dynamics of implementing organizations, their policy instruments, their service delivery mechanisms, their management practices, and the linkages among these.

Program evaluation: Evaluation of a set of interventions, marshaled to attain specific global, regional, country, or sector development objectives. Note: a program is a time bound intervention involving multiple activities that may cut across sectors, themes and/or geographic areas.

Project evaluation: Evaluation of an individual intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules, often within the framework of a broader program.

Project or program objective: The intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other results to which a project or program is expected to contribute.

Purpose: The stated objectives of the development program or project.

Quality Assurance: Quality assurance encompasses any activity that is concerned with assessing and improving the merit or the worth of an intervention or its compliance with given standards. Note: examples of quality assurance activities include appraisal, RBM, reviews during implementation, evaluations, etc. Quality assurance may also refer to the assessment of the quality of a portfolio and its effectiveness.

Recommendations: Proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of an intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. Recommendations should be linked to conclusions.

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

Reliability: Consistency or dependability of data and evaluation judgements, with reference to the quality of the instruments, procedures and analyses used to collect and interpret data. Note: information is reliable when repeated observations using similar instruments under similar conditions produce similar results.

Results: The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention. Related terms: outcome, effect, impacts.

Results Chain: The causal sequence for an intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback. In some agencies, reach is part of the results chain. Related terms: assumptions, results framework.

Results framework: The program logic that explains how the objective is to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions. Related terms: results chain, logical framework.

Results-Based Management (RBM): A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts. Related term: logical framework.

Review: An assessment of the performance of an intervention, periodically or on an ad hoc basis. Note: Frequently "evaluation" is used for a more comprehensive and/or more indepth assessment than "review". Reviews tend to emphasize operational aspects. Sometimes the terms "review" and "evaluation" are used as synonyms. Related term: evaluation.

Risk analysis: An analysis or an assessment of how factors (called assumptions in the logframe) affect or are likely to affect the successful achievement of an intervention's objectives. A detailed examination of the potential unwanted and negative consequences to human life, health, property, or the environment posed by development interventions; a systematic process to provide information regarding such undesirable consequences; the process of quantification of the probabilities and expected impacts for identified risks.

Self-evaluation: An evaluation by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of an intervention.

Stakeholders: Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the intervention.

Summative evaluation: A study conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. Summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program.

Sustainability: The continuation of benefits from an intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

Target group: The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit the intervention is undertaken.

Terms of reference (ToR): Written document presenting the purpose and scope of the piece of work (e.g. evaluation), the methods to be used, the standard against which performance is to be assessed or analyses are to be conducted, the resources and time allocated, and reporting requirements. Two other expressions sometimes used with the same meaning are "scope of work" and "evaluation mandate".

Triangulation: The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment. Note: combining multiple data sources, methods, analyses or theories, seeks to overcome the bias that comes from single informants, single methods, single observer or single theory studies.

Validity: The extent to which the data collection strategies and instruments measure what they purport to measure.