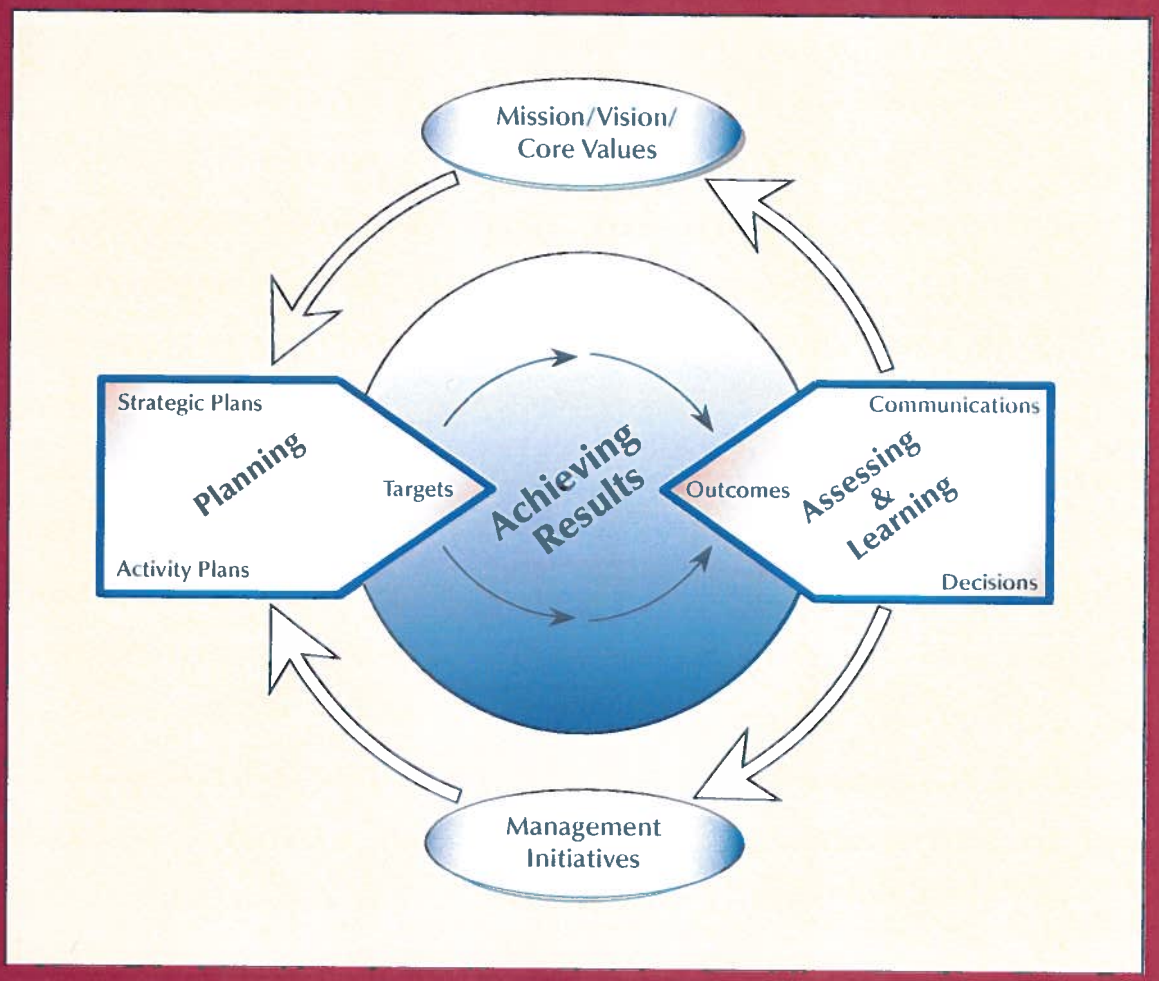
The Performance Management Toolkit



A Guide to Developing and Implementing Performance Monitoring Plans

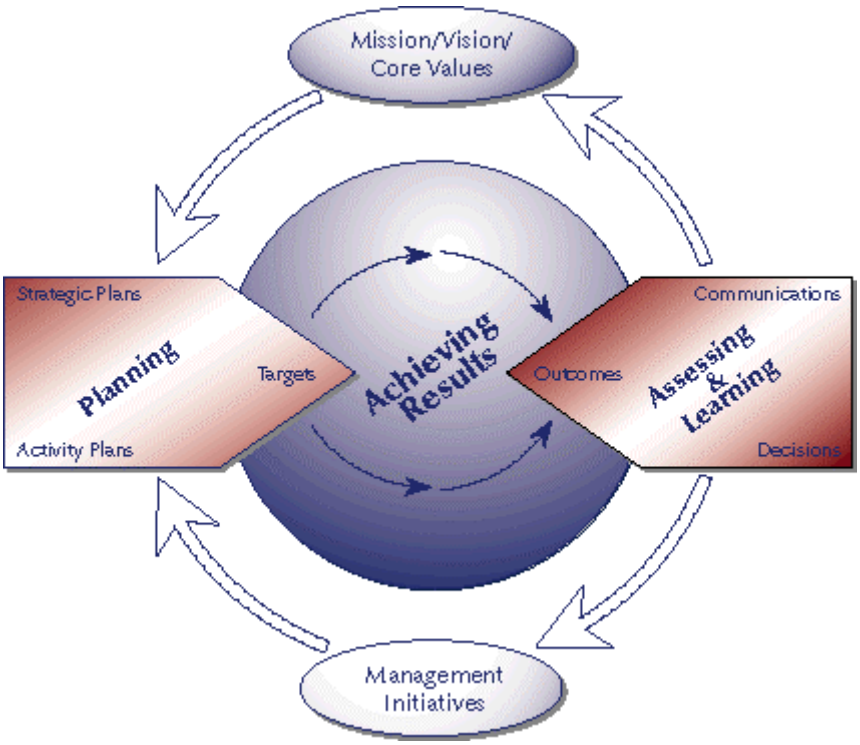
Policy and Program Coordination Bureau
Center for Development, Information & Evaluation
Performance Measurements & Evaluation Division
Contract Number AEP-C-00-99-00034-00

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

Version January 25, 2001

THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLANS



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Foreword

This toolkit was developed in the summer and fall of 2000 to accompany the one-week USAID "Performance Management Workshop". This workshop, designed for USAID staff, is being held15 times during FY 2001 in Washington and all of the USAID regions.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers team would like to acknowledge the technical and administrative support provided by the staff of the USAID Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, especially Dan Blumhagen and John Haecker of the Center for Development Information and Experience.

We would also like to thank the staff of the USAID/Africa Bureau, particularly Kathie Keel and Ruth Buckley from the Office of Development Planning, Shirley Erves from the Regional Economic Development Support Office and Dana Ott from the Office of Sustainable Development. Their contributions, during various iterations of the toolkit and its implementation during the pilot workshop, have been significant. In addition, the participants of the pilot workshop provided valuable insights and comments which contributed to the overall effectiveness of this toolkit.

Also, we would like to thank Rita Owen and her colleagues from the Office of Human Resources/Learning Services for their cooperation and support. They have contributed significantly to the dissemination of these materials to hundreds of USAID staff.

And lastly, our sincere thanks to all of the Operating Units in the field and in Washington who shared their knowledge and experience with us during the development of their Performance Monitoring Plans.

To all those who have contributed to this effort, we hope that this toolkit will further the Agency's Managing for Results efforts and lead to more sustainable and effective programs that improve the lives of the people that USAID staff work so hard to serve.

Integrated Managing for Results Team
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
January 25, 2001

For more information about the Integrated Managing for Results Contract, AEP-C-00-99-00034-00, contact: (1/25/01)

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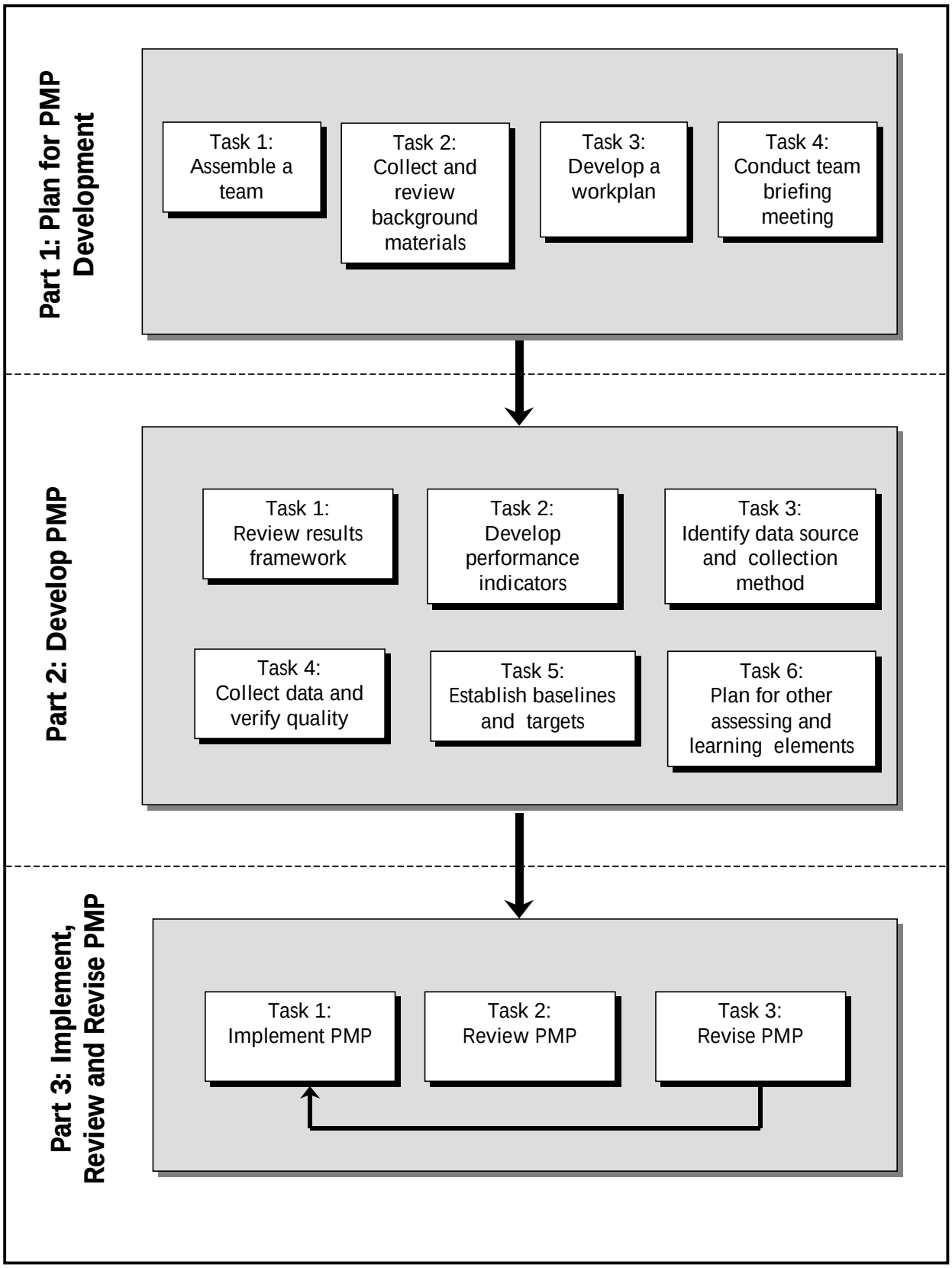
FACING PAGE: *This toolkit is organized around a three-part process for developing and implementing PMPs. Each task is fully detailed with supporting materials, tools, and resources.*

PMP Development and Implementation Process



Toolkit Quick Reference Guide

Use this guide to quickly identify key worksheets, techniques, and helpful hints.

Part 1: Plan for PMP Development

Tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Assemble a PMP development team	Worksheet 1: PMP Development Team Skills Matrix
Collect and review background materials	
Develop a workplan	Worksheet 2: PMP Development Workplan
Conduct a team briefing meeting	

Part 2: Develop PMP

Task 1: Review Results Framework

Sub-tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Assess quality of results statements	Worksheet 3: Results Statement Assessment Worksheet 4: Results Framework Assessment Technique: Assess Framework in a Facilitated Session Helpful Hint 1: Facilitating Group Discussions and Decision-Making
Validate logical consistency	
Verify USAID's manageable interest	
Ensure critical assumptions are identified	

Task 2: Develop Performance Indicators

Sub-tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Develop list of potential indicators	Technique: Use Current Resources to Identify Potential Indicators Technique and Helpful Hint 2: Indicators for Hard-to-Measure Results
Assess potential Indicators	Worksheet 5: Performance Indicator Quality Assessment
Select best indicators	Technique and Helpful Hint 3: Performance Indicator Brainstorming Session
Document indicators in the PMP	Worksheet 6: Performance Indicator Reference Sheet

Task 3: Identify Data Sources and Collection Methods

Sub-tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Identify potential data sources	Technique: Assess Results Framework in a Facilitated Session (also Helpful Hint 1)
Generate data collection options	Helpful Hint 4: Rapid Low-Cost Data Collection Methods
Select data collection option	Technique: Use Decision Chart to Select Best Data Collection Option Worksheet 6: Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Develop data collection tools	

Task 4: Collect Data and Verify Quality

Sub-tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Collect data	Technique: Storing Data in an Information Database, and Helpful Hint 5
Conduct a data quality assessment	Technique: Plan Data Quality Assessments Worksheet 7: Data Quality Assessment Checklist Technique: Assess Data from Data Sources, and Helpful Hint 6 Helpful Hint 7: Tips to Minimize Bias Worksheet 6: Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Build commitment to and capacity for quality	Technique: Foster Organizational Commitment

Task 5: Establish Baselines and Targets

Sub-tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Establish baselines	Technique: How to Establish Baselines when Information is Inadequate
Establish indicators	Technique: Conduct a Target Setting Meeting Helpful Hint 1: Facilitating Group Discussions and Decision-Making Technique: Approaches to Target Setting
Input baselines and targets into performance data table	Worksheet 8: Performance Data Table

Task 6: Plan for Other Assessing and Learning Elements

Sub-tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Plan for data analysis and use	Worksheet 9: Performance Management Task Schedule Worksheet 6: Performance Indicator Reference Sheet Helpful Hint 8: Tips for Communicating Performance Information in Reports Technique: Chart Book Analysis Presentation Approach
Plan for performance reviews	Technique: Portfolio Review Approaches Helpful Hint 9: Questions to Guide Portfolio Reviews
Plan for evaluations and special studies	Technique: Planning for Evaluations (also Helpful Hint 4) Worksheet 10: Evaluations and Special Studies Planning Worksheet 11: Evaluation Scope of Work Planning
Plan for performance reporting	Technique: Plan for R4 Reporting
Plan for ongoing data quality assessments	Technique: On-going Data Quality Assessments Worksheet 7: Data Quality Assessment Checklist

Part 3: Implement, Review and Revise PMP

Tasks	Worksheets, Techniques, Helpful Hints
Implement PMP	Helpful Hint 10: List of Official SO Team Files
Review PMP	Helpful Hint 9: Questions to Guide Portfolio Reviews
Revise PMP	

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Appendix D - Helpful Resources

List of Acronyms

ADS	Automated Directives System
CDIE	USAID Center for Development Information & Evaluations
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DHS	Demographic & Health Survey
GAO	U.S. General Accounting Office
GIS	Geographic Information System
IR	Intermediate Result
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFR	Managing for Results
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PPC	USAID Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
R4	Results Review and Resource Requests
SO	Strategic Objective
TLA	Three-Letter Acronym!

Overview

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide USAID staff and partners with practical resources for a critical aspect of managing for results – developing and implementing a ***performance monitoring plan (PMP***). The emphasis of this toolkit is on the *how to* of developing a PMP rather than a discussion of *what is* performance management, which is contained in the official programming policies—the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 200 series.

The primary target audience for this toolkit is the ***Strategic Objective (SO) teams*** who are responsible for developing the PMP. The objectives of this toolkit are to help you (the team):

- Understand the purpose of a PMP
- Carry out preparations to develop a PMP
- Review results statements
- Develop performance indicators
- Collect performance data
- Verify performance data quality
- Analyze, evaluate and use performance information
- Implement and continuously improve the PMP

The toolkit describes key performance management processes and provides tools and techniques that can be used to implement them. It provides examples to illustrate key points and identifies reference sources where additional information can be sought. Lastly, the toolkit emphasizes the importance of *documenting* performance data and analysis. Documentation helps you:

- Ensure the availability of information you need to analyze and improve program performance
- Tell your story with confidence in the information you provide
- Explain your procedures to stakeholders who seek assurance that quality standards are being maintained in the collection and reporting of performance data.

Introduction to the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)

What is a PMP?

A PMP is a performance management tool used by an Operating Unit and Strategic Objective (SO) team to help plan and manage the process of assessing and reporting progress towards achieving a Strategic Objective. It is a critical tool for *planning, managing, and documenting* how performance data is collected and used. A PMP serves to:

- Define specific performance indicators for each SO and IR, determine baselines and set targets
- Plan and manage the R4 data collection process to meet quality standards for R4 reporting
- Incorporate relevant data collection requirements into activities and obligation agreements
- Plan potential related evaluative work to supplement R4 indicator data
- Estimate costs related to data collection and plan how these will be financed

- Communicate expectations to partner institutions responsible for producing the outputs intended to cause measurable changes in performance

A PMP contributes to the effectiveness of the performance monitoring system by assuring that **comparable** data will be collected on a **regular and timely** basis. Using the PMP to sufficiently document indicator definitions, sources, and methods of data collection increases the likelihood that you will collect comparable data over time - even when key personnel change. PMPs also support reliable data collection by documenting the frequency and schedule of data collection and assigning responsibilities.

What is contained in a PMP?

A PMP contains full documentation of the indicators used to track progress toward the Strategic Objective, their data sources, the quality of data available and responsibilities for collection and analysis of the data. There is no standard PMP format, however, you are encouraged to develop a comprehensive PMP that goes beyond the one-page matrix often encountered. Your PMP should help the team establish systems to monitor, evaluate, analyze, review, and report performance data. Agency guidance identifies required and recommended PMP elements.

ADS Guidance on PMP Elements (ADS 201.3.4.13)

Required Elements

- Detailed description of performance indicators to be tracked
- Source, method and schedule for data collection and assigned responsibility for data collection to a specific office, team or individual
- Description of known data limitations, the significance of the limitations for judging the extent to which goals have been achieved, and completed or planned actions to address these limitations
- Description of quality assessment procedures that will be used to verify and validate the measured values of actual performance

Additional Recommended Elements

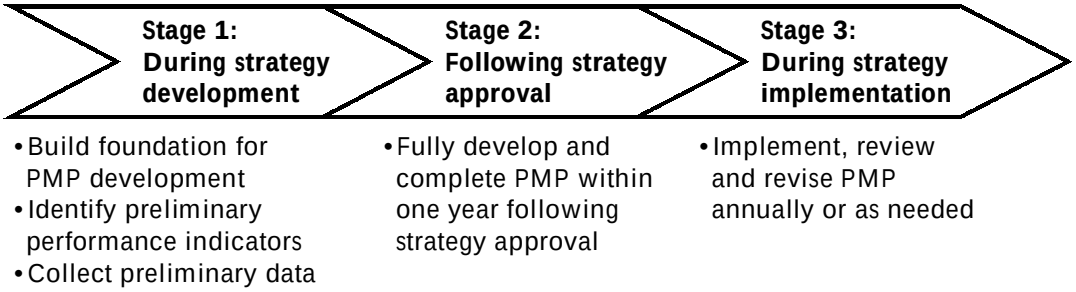
- Explanation or justification for the selection of each particular indicator
- Description of plans for data analysis, report, review and use
- Possible evaluation efforts identified to complement the performance management effort and circumstances that require evaluations or other special studies
- Estimated costs of collecting, analyzing and reporting performance data
- Actual vs. planned expenditures as an indicator to track the relationship between inputs and outcomes
- Plans for monitoring the underlying development hypothesis, critical assumptions and context affecting the results framework

When is a PMP prepared?

You should begin planning for performance management early in the strategic planning phase. ADS guidance requires that you prepare a written PMP within one year of strategy approval. The PMP must be reviewed and approved by the Operating Unit director. You should review and update your PMP at least annually as part of the Portfolio Review and R4 preparation.

Usually, Operating Units and SO teams develop the PMP in three main stages as strategic planning and implementation proceed. Figure 0-1 illustrates the relationship between PMP development and the strategic planning process.

Figure 0-1. PMP Development within the Strategic Planning Process



What should the SO team monitor, and when?

You will use the PMP to plan to collect and analyze data that measures the performance of programs, processes, and activities against expected results at the activity, intermediate result (IR), and SO level. Information will also be collected to monitor the development hypothesis, critical assumptions, and the development context/environment. Table 0-1 provides a summary of these responsibilities.

Table 0-1. SO Team Responsibility for Performance Monitoring

SO teams should monitor…	By collecting and reviewing comparable data at least…	Additional Considerations
SOs	Annually*	Monitor indicators at each level to ensure that they continue to measure progress towards the desired result
USAID-funded IRs	Annually*	Annual collection is not required until progress towards the IR is anticipated to begin
IRs supported by other development partners/donors	Appropriate frequency of data collection, level of detail, and degree of comparability varies	Collect information at a sufficient level of detail and quality to ensure an accurate understanding of the progress being made toward each IR
Activities	Annually*	Monitor inputs, outputs, and processes to ensure activities are proceeding as expected and are contributing to IRs and SOs as anticipated
Critical Assumptions	Appropriate frequency of data collection, level of detail, and degree of comparability varies	Collect information at a sufficient level of detail and quality to ensure an accurate understanding of whether critical assumptions continue to hold

** In order to make better informed management decisions, SO teams may wish to collect data more frequently—such as quarterly or semi-annually—where possible.*

How to Use This Toolkit

The toolkit is divided into three parts.

- **Part 1** focuses on how to begin preparing for PMP development
- **Part 2** focuses on how to develop a comprehensive PMP
- **Part 3** focuses on how to implement and continually improve the PMP.

Each part includes information essential for establishing a system of using performance information to make program decisions. These icons can help you quickly navigate through the toolkit:

KEY DEFINITIONS: Indicates key definitions for the relevant PMP development phase.

WORKSHEET: Indicates that a tool is available to help you document PMP elements and analysis throughout the PMP development process. Examples of completed worksheets are frequently presented in the text. Blank copies of the worksheets can be found in the ***WORKSHEET*** appendix of the toolkit.

TECHNIQUE: Indicates a technique (e.g., facilitating a brainstorming session, questions to ask) that you might consider using in order to complete a performance management process. Some of these techniques will refer you to additional information in the ***HELPFUL HINTS*** appendix.

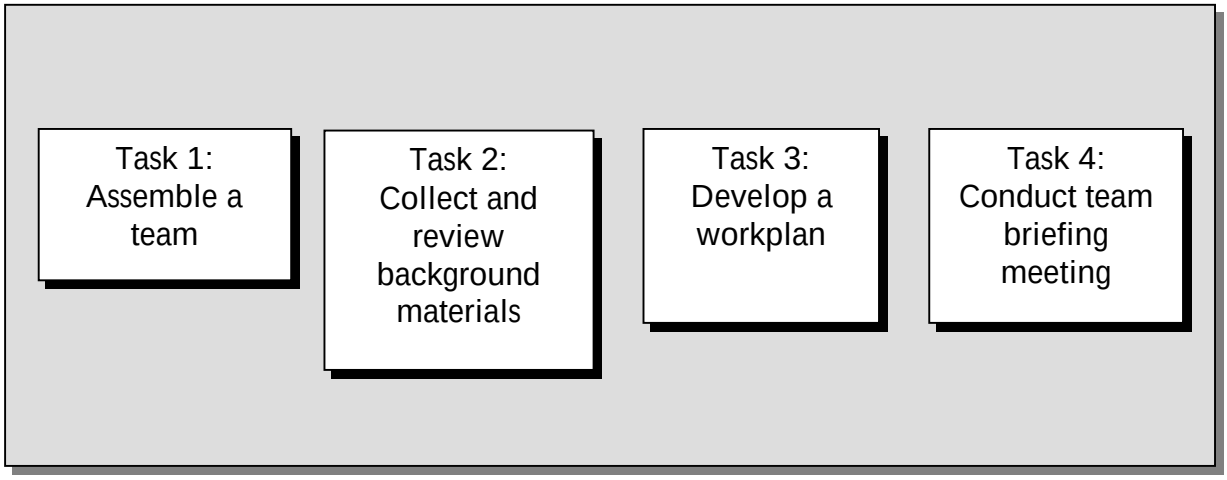
CONSIDER THIS: Indicates questions or principles that you should consider in developing the PMP.

INFORMATION SERVICE: Indicates a contracted service available to USAID employees for procuring and analyzing data and information. More information about these resources, and others, are contained in the *RESOURCES* appendix.

The toolkit also contains ***ADS EXCERPTS*** from relevant sections of the ADS, lists of helpful resources, and practical examples. The tools, techniques, and tips in this toolkit provide a general approach to PMP development and implementation. You can and should consider tailoring toolkit elements to meet the specific needs of the your program.

Part 1: Plan for PMP Development

Developing a useful PMP requires the time and attention of the entire SO team and many of your partners. Because it is a team effort, you will save time and effort during the development process by first conducting these four key preparation tasks:



Task 1 – Assemble a PMP development team

A team approach to PMP development will help facilitate a shared sense of ownership among those who use the PMP, and bring creativity and innovation to developing each PMP element. The first step in the process is to designate a team leader. Designate leadership to one, or at most two, team members. The team leader will ensure the coordination of team meetings, collection and distribution of background materials, facilitation of discussions, and documentation of the PMP.

Once the team leader is identified, assemble the PMP development team. An effective team will have a balanced set of skills that include:

- Knowledge of USAID "managing for results" approach
- Experience in the relevant sector/sub-sector
- Educational background/training in the relevant sector/sub-sector
- In-depth knowledge of the target country and understanding of local conditions
- General knowledge of USAID structures, processes and culture
- Knowledge of performance measurement methodologies and best practices
- Strong facilitation, analytical and report writing skills

In most cases, these skills will be available within the SO team. In other cases, external help from another operating unit or contractor will supplement the existing skill sets. When you bring in external help, it is critical to maintain a team approach to PMP development. This means that external team members help fill in gaps in the PMP development team skill set, rather than

duplicate skills that already exist on the SO team. This will ensure that the best possible PMP is produced at the conclusion of the exercise.

WORKSHEET 1 - PMP Development Team Skills Matrix: Use Worksheet 1 to help assemble the PMP development team. Table 1-1 presents a sample matrix to help you assess if you have assembled the team that you need.

Table 1-1. PMP Development Teams Skills Matrix

Name	Role	Knows USAID MFR approach	Has sector experience	Has sector training or education	Knows local conditions in-depth	Knows USAID structure, processes, culture	Knows PM methods and best practices	Has facilitation, analytical and report writing skills
1. Jane Smith	Team Leader	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Sara Jones	Data collection			✓	✓	✓		✓
3. Fred Wilson	Data collection		✓		✓	✓	✓	
4. Kate Thomas	Data analysis			✓	✓	✓	✓	
5. T. Consultant	Data analysis	✓	✓				✓	✓

Task 2 – Collect and review background materials

You may want to gather and review some of the materials listed in Table 1-2. Having these materials available from the beginning will save time during the PMP development process.

Table 1-2. Other Resources for PMP Preparation (See Helpful Resources appendix for resource locations)

Agency Guidance	Operating Unit Specific Materials	Background Materials
➢ ADS 200 series ➢ TIPS Series (titles abbreviated): 6: Performance Indicators 7: The PMP 8: Performance Targets 12: Indicator and Data Quality 13: Results Framework	➢ Most recent Country Strategic Plan (CSP) ➢ Most recent R4 ➢ Relevant diagnostic studies, assessments or evaluations relating to the SO ➢ Draft PMP, if any ➢ Information/reports prepared by partners ➢ Strategic Plan approval cable from USAID/W ➢ Background information on likely data sources ➢ Other performance management information, e.g., IG reports, data quality assessments, mission level guidance.	➢ Lists of indicators from R4 data base or SO-relevant handbook ➢ GAO, 1998, The Results Act – An Evaluator's Guide to Assessing Agency Annual Performance Plans ➢ Harry Hatry, 1999, Performance Measurement – Getting Results

If your SO contains elements of policy reform or institutional capacity building, you may want to include TIPS 14: Monitoring the Policy Reform Process or TIPS 15: Building Institutional Capacity, with your background materials. (RESOURCES provides their location).

INFORMATION SERVICES:

- **Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS):** ESDS staff specialize in selecting the most appropriate quantitative data for specific research purposes. Access ESDS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Statistics' at the top of the homepage)
- **Research and Reference Services (R&RS):** R&RS staff help development practitioners clarify their information needs after which they identify, analyze and deliver appropriate information in a useful form. R&RS also manages the USAID Library and Learning Resources Center. Access R&RS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Research' or 'Library' at the top of the homepage)
- **USAID Results Website:** This service is designed to help USAID staff and partners navigate the performance monitoring process. The site allows you to ask questions about any aspect of the process, ask for clarification of ADS guidance, post or review examples of monitoring tools developed by Operating Units, and establish a group site for an SO team. You can access the site at [http://www.usaidresults.org]

Task 3 – Develop a workplan

WORKSHEET 2 – PMP Development Workplan: As you read through this task, refer to Worksheet 2 to help assemble the PMP development workplan. Project management software, such as MS Project, can also be used to develop the PMP workplan.

A workplan will help guide the team through the PMP development process. The workplan should document what needs to be done, due dates, and persons responsible for achieving each task. It is usually prepared by the team leader and one/two other team members. Developing a detailed work plan involves the following steps:

- **Identify the major PMP development tasks:** Often, the tasks of PMP development are defined by major deliverables that you will produce or major tasks that contribute to a deliverable. For example, major tasks may include:
    - Review results framework
    - Develop indicators and collection methods
    - Collect data and verify quality
    - Establish baselines and targets
    - Plan for other assessing and learning elements
    - Assemble draft PMP
    - Review and revise the PMP

- **Identify the sub-tasks:** For each major task, identify the sub-tasks you will need to accomplish. For example, within "Plan for other assessing and learning elements" the sub-tasks may be:

  - Plan for data analysis and use
  - Plan for performance reviews,
  - Plan for evaluations and special studies, etc.

- **Estimate the time duration and the appropriate timing of each task or sub-task:** Determine how long each sub-task will take to complete and when the task should commence. Base the projected duration of that task on reasonable expectations, weighing the workload and other responsibilities of the team against the need to assemble the plan in a reasonable timeframe. Make sure to leave adequate time for management reviews and check to be sure that outside reviewers are available during the time you want them to review the document. Also plan for the time needed to handle administrative matters such as contracting for services, etc.

  Note, too, that in most cases developing a PMP from start to finish may not be possible over a period of consecutive days, and thus may have to be done in phases. For example, you may decide to proceed with reviewing the results framework and developing the performance indicators soon after the Strategic Plan has been approved. However, you may recognize that it would be better to collect baseline data and establish targets once a new contractor is in place in a couple of months. In this case the timing of these events should be reflected in the workplan.

- **Assign resources to each sub-task:** Identify which team members will work on each sub-task and any financial resources that will be needed to complete it.

- **Validate the workplan with the SO team:** Usually the workplan is developed by the team leader and one/two other team members. At this point, review the workplan informally with all SO team members to verify that the assumptions regarding tasks, timing and responsibilities are reasonable. Revise the workplan as needed.

- **Complete any contracting plans as needed:** Lastly, if you need to contract out for services to help develop the PMP, prepare a detailed scope of work specifying the final product, schedule, skill needs and expectations. Complete the contracting process in time for additional team members to be present at the Team Briefing Meeting (see Task 4).

Task 4 – Conduct team briefing meeting

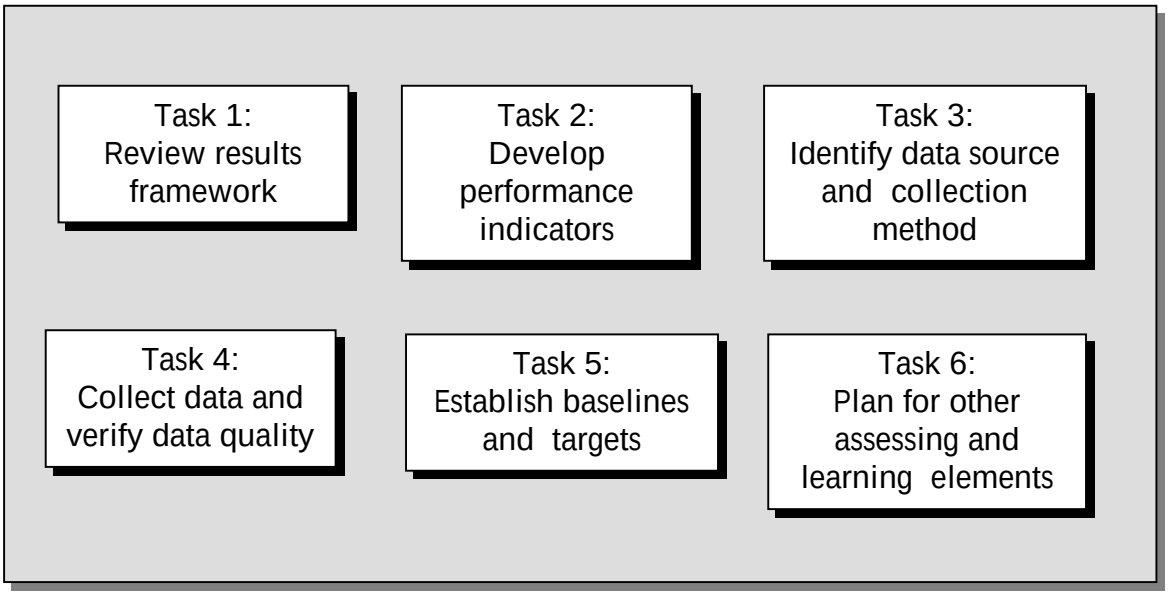
Figure 1-1. Meeting Agenda Items

- ❑ Purpose of the meeting
- ❑ Introductions
- ❑ Discuss the workplan and timeline
- ❑ Discuss expectations
- ❑ Discuss roles and responsibilities
- ❑ Questions and answers

Once the first three steps are completed, the team leader usually conducts a team briefing meeting to get the team on the same page, particularly in terms of the final product, the workplan, and assigned responsibilities. Focus on explaining the team leader's expectations and clarifying team members concerns and questions. Also take the opportunity to introduce team members not familiar with one another. The team leader should bring copies of the materials to be discussed at the meeting. Figure 1-1 presents elements of a meeting agenda.

Part 2: Develop the PMP

Part 2 of the toolkit focuses on how to develop a comprehensive PMP. Each of the six tasks below have a number of sub-tasks associated with them. These will be explored in detail in the following pages.



Before discussing the PMP development process in detail, keep in mind some guiding principles for PMP development.

CONSIDER THIS – Guiding Principles of PMP Development:

- **The PMP is the foundation for a sound performance management system.** A good PMP is a useful tool for management and organizational learning - it provides intelligence for decision-makers, and thus serves as a constant desk reference to guide the assessment of results. A good PMP is updated annually to ensure maximum use for decision-making. The PMP is NOT something developed only to satisfy Washington and then left to collect dust.

- **An effective monitoring system also yields performance information that helps "tell your story" better.** Your ability to communicate the achievement of development results and share lessons learned is dependent on your ability to collect useful performance information.

- **Performance indicators are the basis of the PMP.** Effective performance monitoring starts with indicators that are direct, objective, practical, and adequate. Indicators are useful for timely management decisions and credibly reflect the actual performance of USAID-sponsored activities.

- **Performance monitoring is based on access to and use of data that is of reasonable quality given the reality of the situation**. Your team's management decisions should be based on data that is reasonably valid, reliable, and timely. Good performance monitoring systems include regular data quality assessments.

- **A good PMP helps the SO team focus on what's important.** The PMP provides the conceptual framework around which the SO team prioritizes and carries out its work. A PMP helps clearly assign accountability for results. It also outlines the mechanisms through which these results are shared both internally with employees and externally with partners and other stakeholders.

- **Effective leadership makes for a smoother process.** Every SO team member is responsible for the success of the SO. However, teams who work in Operating Units where the leaders of the unit (e.g., mission directors, SO team leaders, program officers) agree on the importance of a sound performance management system, and demonstrate its value by using it, will generally be more enthusiastic about participating in the process and using the information that results from it. Effective leadership also means creating a learning environment for results reporting that is seen by the staff as positive, not punitive.

CONSIDER THIS – Involve Customers, Partners and Stakeholders: Your customers, stakeholders, and partners will play an important role in performance monitoring. As such, their participation deserves special mention as a guiding principal. Where appropriate, you should:

- Include stakeholders when developing performance monitoring plans and collecting, interpreting, and sharing information and experience

- Communicate results framework indicators to implementing partners and explain how their performance data feeds into the Mission's performance indicators

- Encourage implementing partners to use common definitions and descriptors of performance indicators

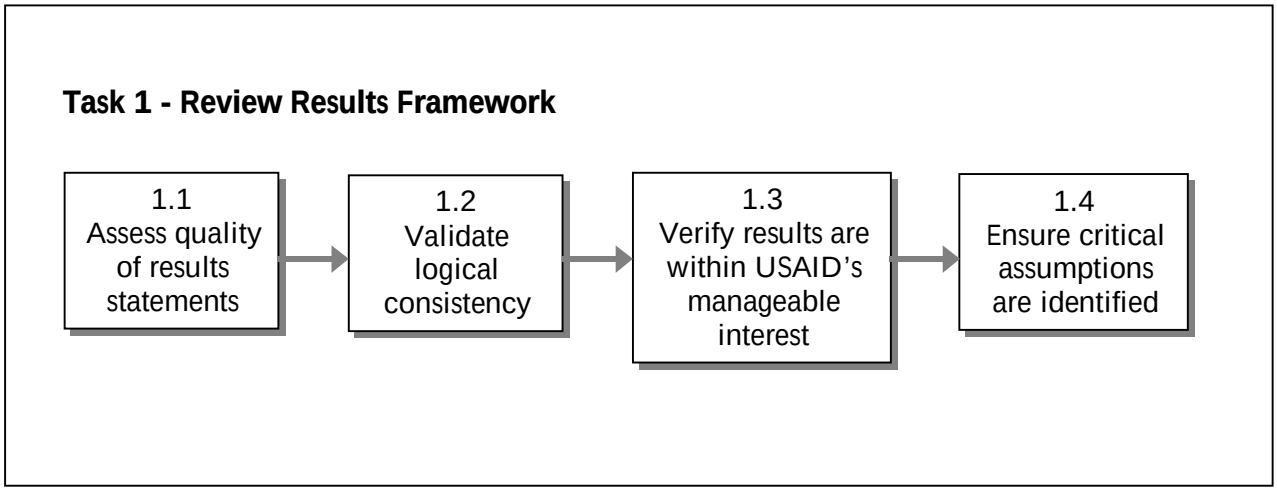
- Consider the special information needs of partners. Wherever feasible, integrate your performance monitoring and evaluation activities with similar processes of your partners

- Help partners develop their own performance monitoring and evaluation capacity

- Consider the financial and technical assistance resources needed to ensure stakeholder participation in performance monitoring and evaluation

Task 1 - Review Results Framework

The purpose of this task *is not* to develop a results framework from scratch. This would already have been done during the strategy development phase. In preparation for a PMP, however, it is often useful to conduct a quick review of results framework to validate the implied cause-effect relationships and ensure that all results are within USAID's manageable interest. The process of reviewing results statements can be broken down into four sub-steps.



Key Definitions, ADS Guidance and Helpful Resources

KEY DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are relevant to this PMP development task:

- **Result:** A significant, intended, and measurable change in the condition of a customer or a change in the host country, institutions or other entities that will affect the customer directly or indirectly. Results are often broader than USAID-funded outputs, with support from other donors and partners not within USAID's control.

- **Results Framework:** A planning, communications and management tool. It includes the strategic objective and all intermediate results, whether funded by USAID or its partners, necessary to achieve it. The framework also conveys the development hypothesis implicit in the strategy and the cause and effect linkages between the intermediate results and the objective. It includes any critical assumptions that must hold for the development hypothesis to lead to achieving the relevant objective. Typically it is laid out in graphic form supplemented by a narrative.

- **Strategic Objective (SO):** The most ambitious result that a USAID Operating Unit, along with its partners, can materially affect, and for which it is willing to be held accountable within the time period of the Strategic Objective.

- **Intermediate Result (IR):** An important result that is seen as an essential step to achieving a strategic objective. IRs are measurable results that may capture a number of discrete and more specific results.

- **Causal Linkage:** A plausible cause and effect relationship, i.e., the logical connection between the achievement of related, interdependent results.

- **Manageable Interest:** The achievement of results requires joint action on the part of many other actors such as host country governments, institutions, other donors, civil society, and the private sector. When an objective is within our manageable interest, it means we have reason to believe that our ability to influence, organize, and support others around commonly shared goals can lead to the achievement of desired results, and that the probability of success is high enough to warrant expending program and staff resources. An outcome is within the USAID's manageable interest when there is sufficient reason to believe that its achievement can be significantly and critically influenced by interventions of USAID and its partners.

ADS Guidance for Results Frameworks (ADS 201.3.3.10)

A results framework should illustrate the:

- Operating Unit's strategy and underlying development hypothesis for achieving a particular strategic or special objective.
- Development hypothesis that underlies the strategy
- Critical assumptions that must hold if the SO is to be achieved

Helpful Resources to Learn More about Reviewing Results Frameworks

- ADS Chapter 201 - Planning [http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/]
- TIPS13: Building a Results Framework [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators [http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACC390.pdf]

Ideally, all of the tasks below can be best accomplished through a facilitated session of your entire SO team. The techniques and tools to help guide you through this process are:

TECHNIQUE – Assess Results Framework in a Facilitated Session: Conducting the quality assessment of a results framework in a facilitated session of your entire team ensures that all team members understand the logic and reasoning behind each result statement. ***Helpful Hint 1: Facilitating Group Discussions and Decision-Making*** provides some tips and techniques for facilitating group sessions.

WORKSHEETS 3 and 4– Results Statements Assessment and **Results Framework Assessment:** Refer to Worksheets 3 and 4 as you read through each of the tasks below. These worksheets can be useful for guiding the team through the facilitated discussion of each results framework element.

1.1 Assess quality of results statements

Good performance indicators start with good results statements that people can understand and agree on. Therefore, begin the PMP development process by reviewing SOs and IRs to make sure that each individual results statement is of good quality. Using Worksheet 3, you can determine if your results statement is:

- Measurable and objectively verifiable
- Meaningful and realistic
- Focused on USAID's strategic commitments
- Customer or stakeholder driven
- Can be materially affected by the mission and its partners (within manageable interest)
- Statement of results – not an activity or process
- Uni-dimensional – not a combination of results

CONSIDER THIS – Rules of Thumb for Results Statement Review: Some rules of thumb to keep in mind when reviewing results statements are:

- **Avoid overly broad statements**. Which specific aspects of the result will program activities emphasize?

- **State results as future completed actions.** The statement should describe the end state that is desired as result of the activity.

- **Use strong action verbs.** This makes results easier to implement. Examples of strong action verbs are: constructed, eradicated, or reduced. Examples of weak action verbs are: enhanced, liaised, or coordinated.

- **Be clear about what type of change is implied.** What is expected to change -- a situation, a condition, the level of knowledge, an attitude, or a behavior? Is the expected change an absolute change, relative change, or no change?

- **Identify more precisely the specific targets for change.** Who or what are the specific targets for the change? Is change expected to occur among individuals, families, groups, communities, regions?

- **Study the activities and strategies directed at achieving change.** Is the expected relationship between activities and their intended results direct or indirect?

1.2 Validate logical consistency

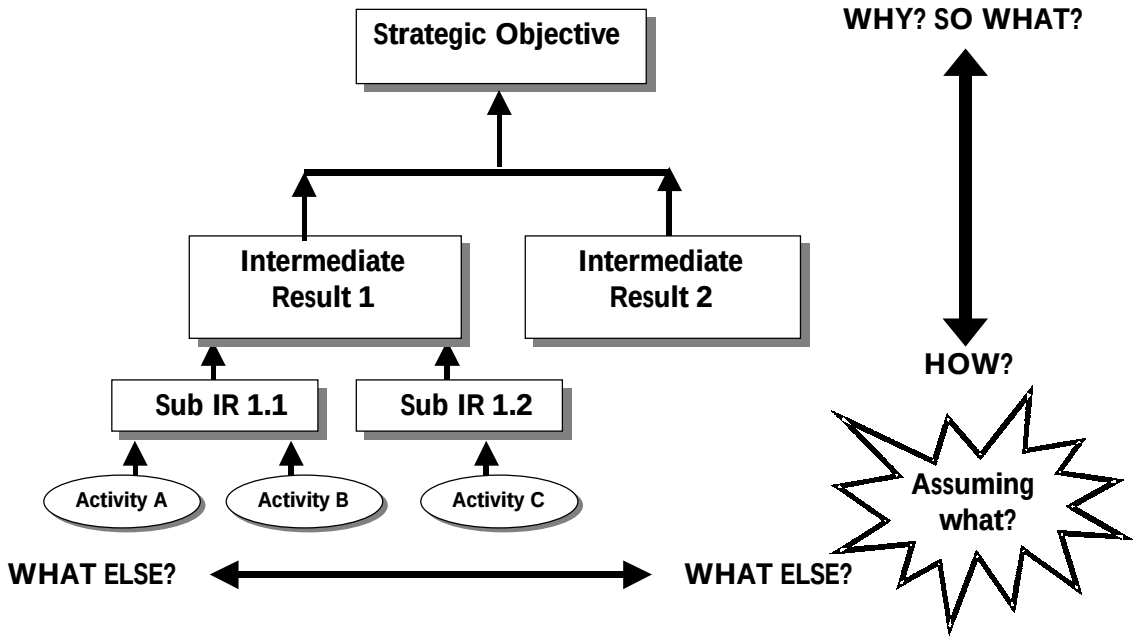
Causality

The linkages up the results framework must be **causal** -- achievement of one result is necessary for, and contributes to, achievement of the other. The causal connection between two IRs or between an IR and a SO in a results framework should also be **direct**. You should not need to infer

additional IRs to understand the linkage between two results, or accept many or broad assumptions to move from a "lower" result to a "higher" result or SO.

Figure 2-1 illustrates this requirement for causal linkages within the results framework.

Figure 2-1. Causal Linkages



As you move up the framework, you should be able to answer the questions "w*hy* does this matter?" and "*So what* if we do this?" The result that emerges in response to those questions is the SO statement.

As you moves down the framework, you should be able to answer the question "*how* do we cause this effect?" This question does *not* refer to the activities needed to achieve the result but to other intermediate results needed to achieve the higher level result.

The relationship between results should not be categorical, definitional, or chronological. In other words, lower level results should not merely describe component parts of a related "higher" level result. For example:

Definitional Linkage	Causal Linkage
SO: Strengthened institution IR: Improved institutional capacity for delivering goods and services	SO: Institutional performance improved IR: Improved institutional capacity for delivering goods and service

Categorical Linkage	Causal Linkage
SO: More effective management of the natural resource base IR 1: More effective management of forest resources IR 2: More effective management of coastal resources IR 3: More effective management of agricultural resources	SO: More effective management of the natural resource base IR 1: Increased institutional capacity of the ministry of environment IR 2: National environmental action plan implemented IR 3: Selected laws governing private sector practices with respect to natural resources adopted and enforced

Chronological Linkage	Why this is a poor example
IR 1.1: Sustainable NRM methodologies implemented in pilot areas IR 1.1.1: Improved NRM methodologies identified and tested in pilot areas IR 1.1.1.1: Current practices (sustainable and non-sustainable) identified and analyzed	The example does not make it clear what specific problems or constraints the planners are trying to address to get to the key IR. The two lower IRs are important steps in the process of arriving at IR 1.1, but they do not describe the specific causes that lead to this final effect.

USAID partner results

As one moves across the IRs and sub-IRs of the framework, one should be able to answer the question "*what else* is required to achieve the above result?" The logic of the development hypothesis is strengthened when the intermediate results of other USAID partners have been considered. However, while it is essential to consider USAID partner results, it is not necessary that all of the intermediate results be reflected in the results framework itself. In fact, only the results that are most relevant and critical to achieving the SO may be included.

However, since SO teams are encouraged to document USAID partner results in the accompanying narrative to the Results Framework, you may want to refer to this documentation if there are any questions as to whether all of the critical results have been considered. In general, the more thoroughly and specifically the contributing intermediate results are determined, the stronger the logic of the hypothesis and the greater the chances of being able to manage activities for the achievement of the strategic objective.

1.3 Verify results are within USAID's manageable interest

ADS 200.3.2.1 states that a result is within an entity's manageable interest "when there is sufficient reason to believe that its achievement can be significantly and critically influenced by interventions of that entity." Even though USAID recognizes that development outcomes require joint action on the part of many other actors than itself (e.g., host country governments, other donors, civil society), the Agency seeks to ensure that the objectives it sets for itself are within its own manageable interest. Manageable interest gives USAID reason to believe that its ability to

influence, organize, and support others around commonly shared goals can lead to the achievement of desired results, and that the probability of success is high enough to warrant expending program and staff resources.

Verifying that all results within an Operating Unit's results framework are within the Agency's manageable interest holds managers accountable for the results stated in the results framework. Good results statements will reflect a realistic level of accountability. The SO is the highest result which the Operating Unit, working with its partners, can expect to materially affect and for which it is willing to be held accountable.

Poor Examples	Good Examples
SO: Broad-based sustainable economic growth	SO: Increased employment in the formal, off-farm private sector
SO: Reduced population growth	SO: Reduced fertility

As earlier discussed, the causal connections between the IRs and SO must also be reasonable.

Poor Examples	Good Examples
SO: Increased use of modern contraception IR: Improved training of health care providers	SO: Increased use of modern contraception IR: Increased availability of contraceptive services and commodities
SO: Increased off-farm employment IR: Increased citizen's skills for private sector development	SO: Increased-off farm employment IR: Increased number of formal private sector enterprises

1.4 Ensure critical assumptions are identified

Every result involves risks (e.g., events, conditions, or decisions) that could cause it to fail. Risks outside the direct control of the SO team are called assumptions.

A *critical assumption* is defined as a general condition under which the development hypothesis or strategy for achieving the objective will hold true. Assumptions complete the "if/then" logic (describing the necessary conditions between each level) by adding the "if/AND/then" logic (describing the necessary and sufficient conditions between each level). You can determine the assumptions by asking the question "what conditions must exist in addition to my objectives in order to achieve the next level?'

CONSIDER THIS – Importance of Clarifying Critical Assumptions: As you identify critical assumptions that underpin your development hypothesis, keep in mind why clarifying critical assumptions is important to the PMP development process:

- Identifies what is beyond the program/activity manager's control

- Provides shared judgment of the probability of success
- Promotes realistic program and activity design
- Improves communication between the program/activity manager and the SO team

At the planning stage, assumptions help identify risks that can be avoided by incorporating additional components into the results framework itself. In activity execution, assumptions indicate the factors that SO teams should anticipate, try to influence, and develop contingency plans for in case things go wrong.

Do not confuse critical assumptions which are outside the control of USAID and its partners, with results. Critical assumptions reflect conditions likely to affect the achievement of results in the results framework - such as the level of political commitment to women's empowerment or the openness of export markets. A critical assumption differs from an IR in that the IR represents a focused and discrete outcome which specifically contributes to the achievement of the SO.

Be realistic when identifying critical assumptions and avoid defining critical assumptions that have a comparatively low chance of holding over the duration of the strategy. For example, an assumption such as no outbreak of war is surely an important condition, however, it does not help the design of the results framework. If a war were to occur, it is probably self evident that the program would suffer.

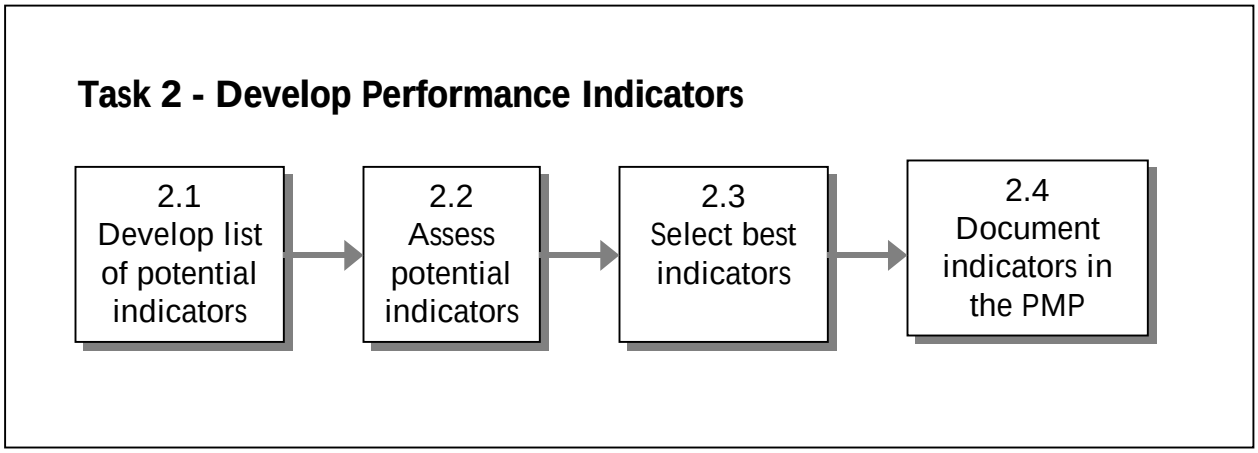
Finally, recognize that critical **assumptions can be found at every level** within the results framework. And remember that they must be **continuously monitored** to ensure that development hypothesis is built around valid assumptions.

Task 2 – Develop Performance Indicators

To manage for results, you need reliable and timely data. Performance indicators specify the data that the SO team will collect in order to measure program progress and compare actual results over time against what was planned. Performance indicators can also be used to:

- Orient and motivate operating staff toward achieving results
- Better communicate USAID achievements to host country counterparts, other partners and customers
- Clearly and consistently report results achieved to USAID stakeholders, including Congress, Office of Management and Budget, and citizens.

The process of developing performance indicators can be broken down into four sub-steps.



Key Definitions, ADS Guidance and Helpful Resources

KEY DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are relevant to this PMP task:

- **Performance Indicator:** A particular characteristic or dimension used to measure intended changes defined by an Operating Unit's results framework. Performance indicators are used to observe progress and to measure actual results compared to expected results. Performance indicators serve to answer "how" and "whether" an Operating Unit is progressing towards its objective, rather than "why" or "why not" such progress is being made. Performance indicators are usually expressed in quantifiable terms and should be objective and measurable (numeric values, percentages, scores and indices).

- **Outcome:** The expected, desired or actual result to which outputs of activities of an agency have an intended effect. IRs, SOs and goals are examples of outcomes. Outcomes are developmentally significant events that impact customers.

- **Output:** A tangible, immediate and intended product or consequence of an activity within USAID's manageable interest. Examples of outputs include a strengthened institution, people fed, or personnel trained. Outputs are not developmentally significant in

themselves but are essential to achieve results. They may impact ultimate customers but in a much more limited way than IRs and SOs. The link between IRs and outputs should always be direct. However, it may take many outputs from several activities over time to create measurable change at the IR or SO level.

ADS Recommended Standards for Indicator Selection (ADS203.3.6.3 and 203.3.3.6.5)

Good performance data strive to meet the following quality standards:

- **Direct:** An indicator should closely track the result it is intended to measure. When direct indicators cannot be used because of costs or other factors, a reasonable proxy indicator maybe used.
- **Objective:** Objective indicators are operationally precise and uni-dimensional. They should be unambiguous about what is being measured and what data are being collected.
- **Practical:** An indicator is practical if data can be obtained in a timely way and at reasonable cost.
- **Adequate:** Taken as a group, a performance indicator and its companion indicators should be the minimum necessary to ensure that progress toward the given results is sufficiently captured.
- **Management Useful:** Indicators should be useful for management purposes at the Operating Unit or SO team level.
- **Reflect Progress toward Achieving Results:** Indicators reported in the R4 should reflect progress at the SO and IR level. However, when useful data at these levels is limited in quality, unavailable or not meaningful (e.g., early in the life of an SO) output level indicators may be reported.
- **Attributable to USAID:** Performance indicators should measure change that is clearly and reasonably attributable to the efforts of USAID and its development partners. That is, indicators should credibly reflect the actual *performance* of the strategy.

Helpful Resources to Learn More about Developing Performance Indicators

- ADS Chapter 203 [http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/]
- TIPS 6: Selecting Performance Indicators [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 12: Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 14: Monitoring the Policy Reform Process [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 15: Measuring Institutional Capacity [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators [http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACC390.pdf]

2.1 Develop list of potential indicators

Each result usually has many possible indicators, some of which will be more appropriate and useful than others. Start with a list of potential indicators and then narrow down the list to a final set based on a set of criteria.

TECHNIQUE – Use Current Resources to Identify Potential Indicators: Tap information from some of these resources to help identify potential indicators.

- Your portfolio of activities

- USAID R4 Database [http://www.dec.org/partners/pmdb/]
- USAID sector expertise (Central and Regional Bureaus; other Missions)
- Internal brainstorming by SO team
- Experience of other operating units with similar indicators
- External sector/regional experts
- Handbooks of sector indicators
- The Internet (for indicators used by other organizations)

The key to creating a useful list of potential indicators is to view the desired result in all its aspects and from all perspectives. Another best practice is to use a participatory approach in selecting performance indicators. Collaborating closely with development partners, host country counterparts, and customers at each step of the indicator selection process has many benefits. It makes good sense to draw on the experience of others and obtain their consensus throughout the process.

2.2 Assess potential indicators

Once the list of potential indicators is developed, assess each potential indicator. The quality of a potential indicator can be assessed to determine if it is:

- Direct
- Objective
- Adequate
- Practical
- Attributable to USAID and its partners
- Useful for management
- Reflecting progress toward achieving results
- Disaggregated, where appropriate

WORKSHEET 5 – Performance Indicator Quality Assessment: In the following discussion, use Worksheet to help document your assessment of each potential indicator.

DIRECT
Definition: The performance indicator closely tracks the result it is intended to measure.

Poor Example (Direct)	Good Example (Direct)
Result: Increased conservation of natural habitats Indicator: Number of park visitors	Result: Increased transfer of environmentally sustainable farming practices Indicator: Number of farmers using X number of specific environmentally sustainable practices

If direct indicators are not feasible, then use credible proxy measures. **Proxy indicators** are an indirect measure of a given result.

Poor Example (Proxy Indicator)	Good Example (Proxy Indicator)
Result: Increased conservation of natural habitats Direct Indicator: Number of park visitors Proxy Indicator: Percent of park costs met from private sources	Result: Increased transfer of environmentally sustainable farming practices Direct Indicator: Percent of farmers using X number of specific environmentally sustainable practices Proxy Indicator: Number of farmers *trained* to use X number of specific environmentally sustainable practices.

OBJECTIVE

Definition: The indicator is operationally precise and uni-dimensional. Operationally precise indicators are unambiguous about what is being measured and what data are being collected. An indicator that is uni-dimensional measures only *one* phenomenon at a time.

Example (Operationally Precise)	Example (Uni-dimensional)
Result: Improved performance of export firms Precise Indicator: % of export firms experiencing an annual increase in revenues of at least 5% Imprecise Indicator: Number of successful export firms	Result: Improved literacy Uni-dimensional Indicator: Primary school enrollment Multi-dimensional Indicator: Primary school enrollment and literacy rates

ADEQUATE

Definition: The number of performance indicators tracked per result should be the minimum necessary to ensure that progress toward the result is sufficiently captured. Strike a balance between having too many indicators which can increase the cost of collecting and analyzing the data and too few indicators which are insufficient to assess progress. The general rule of thumb is two to three indicators per result, but this may differ depending on the:

- Complexity of the result being measured
- Level of resources available for monitoring performance
- Amount of information needed to make reasonably confident decisions

Poor Example (Adequate)	Good Example (Adequate)
Result: Increased use of child survival services Indicator: Vaccination rate	Result: Increased use of child survival services Indicator: Vaccination rate Indicator: Oral rehydration therapy use rate Indicator: Acute respiratory infection case management rate

PRACTICAL

Definition: Indicator data can be collected on timely basis and at a reasonable cost. Timely availability of data is important because performance indicators need to be useful for management purposes. Performance information should be available when management decisions need to be made. Decisions are usually most effective when made on the basis of timely data regularly collected as part of program implementation. The necessary timeliness of the data depends upon the nature of the decision to be made.

In extreme cases—humanitarian crises, for example—daily information may be required. This, however, is unusual. For most routine SO team level decisions, data should be regularly available from performance monitoring systems. Even data that are available on an annual basis may not be as useful for addressing routine management issues as data that are available more frequently.

Data that are collected infrequently (every 2-5 years), or with a substantial lag time (longer than a year), may be useful for tracking long-term trends and confirming the accuracy of lower-level data. Infrequently-collected data, such as that reported by the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), are more useful for planning and reporting than for program management.

Data that are very costly to procure are also of limited use. Data collection costs, in terms of both human and financial resources, is an important consideration. In general, the cost of collecting data for an indicator should not exceed the management utility of the data. The rule of thumb provided in the ADS is that costs to an Operating Unit for performance monitoring and evaluations should normally range between three to ten percent of the total budget for the Strategic Objective.

ATTRIBUTABLE TO USAID AND ITS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Definition: The extent to which a result is caused by USAID activities. Attribution exists when the links between the outputs produced by USAID financed activities and the results being measured are clear and significant. Attribution is based upon a solid and credible development hypothesis that is reflected in the results framework, combined with a strong causal link between outputs of activities and the intermediate results measured.

Indicators Attributable to USAID
A simple way to assess attribution is to ask the question: ➢ If there had been no USAID activity, would the result have been different? If the answer is “no,” then there is likely an attribution issue and a more suitable indicator should be sought.

MANAGEMENT USEFUL

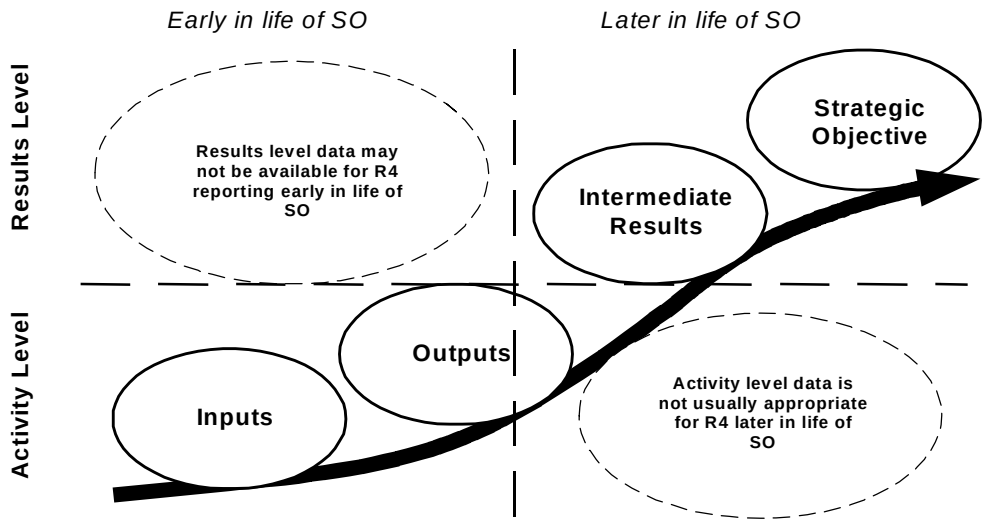
Definition: Indicators should be management useful at the Operating Unit and SO team level. Avoid collecting and reporting information that is not used to support program management decisions. This criteria is intended to reduce the cost of reporting by encouraging units to limit reporting to data truly needed to manage for results.

REFLECT PROGRESS AT THE SO/IR LEVEL

Definition: Indicators should reflect progress at the SO or IR level. However, when useful data at these levels is limited in quality, or unavailable, output-level indicators may be used. This may be the case early in the life of an SO when outputs are beginning to be produced, but little measurable change is observable at the IR and SO levels. Generally, output-level indicators should be replaced with IR and SO-level indicators by the third year of the life of the SO. Figure 2.2 illustrates this concept.

Figure 2.2

Reaching Results: The Strategic Process



* From ADS 203.3.2.3

DISAGGREGATED (where appropriate)

Definition: Disaggregating people-level program results by gender, age, location, or other dimensions is often important from a management point of view. Strategies can impact population groups differently due to societal factors. Disaggregated data help track whether or not specific groups participate in and benefit from activities intended to include them. For example:

- Do the local governance indicators apply to selected municipalities or all municipalities?
- Do the indicators gauging democratic attitudes refer to the entire adult population or only groups receiving civic education?

Agency guidance (ADS 201.3.3.13b) also requires that performance management systems and evaluations at the SO and IR levels include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the technical analysis conducted during the planning stage demonstrates:

- The activity or its anticipated results involve or affect women and men differently
- This difference is potentially significant for managing towards sustainable program impact.

Examples of such activities include humanitarian programs, microenterprise grants, and training programs.

Poor Example (Disaggregated)	Good Example (Disaggregated)
SO: Increase foreign exchange revenues IR: Increased tourism receipts ➢ Number of male tourists ➢ Number of female tourists	SO: Increased agricultural production IR: Increased adoption of improved production technologies ➢ Number or % of male-headed farm households adopting improved technology ➢ Number or % of female-headed farm household adopting improved technologies

Table 2-1 demonstrates how indicator data can be disaggregated.

Table 2-1. Data Disaggregation and Analysis, by Indicator

Performance Indicator:	Analyze by:				Additional Analysis by:
	Aggregate	Activity	Gender	Youth / Adult	
IR 3.1.1 Vulnerable Communities Better Able to Meet Their Own Needs					
- Value of external contributions to community development projects, by source	✓	✓			Cash, Material, Labor, Source
- Number of community development projects completed	✓	✓			Project Type, Region
- Number of direct beneficiaries under IR 3.1.1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Intervention Type

CONSIDER THIS – Quantitative v. Qualitative Indicators: The concept of quantitative v. qualitative indicators has been a subject of frequent discussion over the past few years. New Agency guidance indicates a shift away from the approach that indicators should be quantitative rather than qualitative. Because quantitative indicators are numerical (e.g., number or percentage of dollar value, tonnage) versus the descriptive, qualitative indicators (e.g., description of the status of an intended result, analysis of documents, documented observations, representative case descriptions), their numerical precision tends to lead to more agreement on the interpretation of results. However, qualitative indicators can supplement the numbers and percentages with a richness of information that brings a program's results to life.

Current Agency guidance (ADS 201.3.4.13b) states that you may use qualitative indicators if they are the most appropriate and effective way of measuring an intended resulted. If a qualitative indicator is most appropriate, you should:

- Clearly define each term used in the measure
- Make sure to document all definitions

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Indicators

When selecting indicators, ask yourself:

- Can we get meaningful information by using quantitative indicators?
- Can we get objective, convincing information by using qualitative indicators?
- Can we quantify our qualitative indicators without losing important information?
- Do we need a mix of the two?

TECHNIQUE – Use Scales, Indexes, and Scorecards for Hard-to-Measure Results: ***Helpful Hint 2: Indicators for Hard-to-Measure Results*** describes several methods that can be used to develop indicators that quantify complex results. The methods are: rating scales, milestone scales, indexes, and scorecards. These tools help to introduce a measure of objectivity to inherently subjective measures. When using scales, indexes, and scorecards, keep in mind validity and reliability. Figure 2.3 presents an example of rating system that converts a qualitative assessment to a quantitative indicator.

Figure 2-3. Transforming Qualitative Data into Quantitative Performance Measures

To measure an IR that emphasizes improvements in quality of maternal and child health services, USAID/Yemen devised a scale that transforms qualitative information about services into a rating system against which targets can be set:

0 points = Service not offered
1 point = Offers routine antenatal care
1 point = Offers recognition and appropriate management of high risk pregnancies
1 point = Offers routine deliveries
1 point = Offers appropriate management of complicated deliveries
1 point = Offers post partum care
1 point = Offers neonatal care

$$\text{Score: } \frac{\text{Total actual service delivery points}}{\text{Total possible service delivery points}}$$

(Adapted from TIPS 8 – Establishing Performance Targets)

Another interesting example of how to document progress towards results is the approach used by USAID/Mozambique in the early 1990's. This approach is presented in Figure 2.4.

Lastly, TIPS 14: Monitoring the Policy Reform Process, and TIPS 15: Measuring Institutional Capacity, provide detailed guidance for selecting indicators that measure progress in the areas of policy reform and institutional capacity building. They can be found in the USAID Development Experience Website Clearinghouse at [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004].

Figure 2.4 Performance Monitoring Challenge: War-to-Peace Transition
USAID/Mozambique, 1992-1995

Our Problem
How to monitor an array of people-level changes across a vast territory, in the absence of transport and communications infrastructure, data sources, and security?

Our Solution

- ✓ **Select a small number of sites** that can be visited safely
  (we chose six providing a range of "baseline" conditions: north/center/south; isolated/accessible; more or less affected by war/drought)
- ✓ **Mobilize existing Mission staff** to form a small team for each site that crosses all technical/ sectoral lines; schedule regular visits; arrange logistics so trips are short and easy as possible
  (3-person teams worked well; only 2 of the 3 ever needed to travel at one time; Americans were balanced with FSN/TCN staff; tried not to put two ag or two health staff on the same team; quarterly visits worked best)
- ✓ **Develop a simple site visit guide**, covering all topics of interest, to be used systematically by teams visiting all sites to "tell the story"
  (ours included (i) questions to ask a key informant about the overall situation in the site, (ii) questions to ask a "typical" person about his own circumstances/perceptions, and (iii) observations for the monitors to make during each visit; together these addressed food security, health and nutrition, crops, access/transport, water, resettlement of displaced persons, perceptions of security, openness of political activity, schools, market development, land mines, demobilization/reintegration of combatants, intention to vote, etc.)
- ✓ **Take lots of photographs** -- gave each team an easy-to-use camera and lots of film/data disks; gave monitors ideas of what to photograph - encouraged them not to be shy; developed film/downloaded images and captioned them immediately after the trip; used pictures in as many ways as possible
  ("before and after" times series proved extremely important to our tracking, e.g. in one site a crossroads sign photographed quarterly was isolated and overgrown at the first visit but the center of a bustling truck/bus stop 18 months later, and our photographs showed every phase in this transformation; anything that strikes the monitor's eye should be snapped, our high-impact images included beaming women showing off voter registration cards, food-for-work crews clearing 15-year-old trees from the middle of long-disused roads, etc.)
- ✓ **Insist on prompt reports** on each visit, but allow lots of latitude for report format
  (ours ranged from 12-page narratives to bulleted phrases in an email, but all were useful; the key is to get the report within a day of the team's return and circulate it widely; encourage monitors to report statistics when they find them, but also to report and use qualitative information, since "the plural of anecdote is data")
- ✓ **Organize occasional "all-Mission" meetings** to talk about the trends and implications of what the teams are reporting from the different sites
  (such sessions proved crucial as the transition period advanced and decisions needed to be made about moving from emergency relief approaches to "development" approaches; they also gave us a head start on developing our post-transition strategic plan)

The photographs and qualitative information we collected proved useful well beyond our Mission-level program management and results reporting. CDIE and other Agency units used our photographs and anecdotes to illustrate reports, evaluations, etc. We've now digitized the 1400-images and created a set of three CDs, retiring the photos while still accessing the images easily.

It didn't work perfectly. Some monitoring teams fell apart at various points, especially as staff changed. Their performance varied considerably over the three years. It was difficult to shift gears from this approach to the formal "statistical" PMPs as we began our post-transition strategy in 1996. An investment in costly household surveys was needed to establish baselines. But overall this proved to be a richly rewarding approach to monitoring.

Prepared 3 October 2000; for more information contact Juliet Born at USAID/Mozambique (juborn@usaid.gov)

2.3 Select best indicators

The next step is to narrow the list to the final indicators that will be used in the performance monitoring system. They should be the optimum set that meets the need for management-useful information at a reasonable cost.

TECHNIQUE – Select Best Indicators in a Brainstorming Session: Involve all SO team members in selecting indicators using a facilitated approach . ***Helpful Hint 3: Performance Indicator Brainstorming Session*** has tips on facilitating the performance indicator selection session. Use your completed copies of Worksheet 4 to guide the team's discussions. Continue to use a collaborative approach when selecting the best indicators. Obtain input from all members of the SO team, your partners, sector experts and data collection experts.

Be selective. Remember the costs associated with data collection and analysis. Limit the number of indicators used to track each objective or result to a few (two or three). Select only those that represent the most basic and important dimensions of project aims.

If you find that a performance indicator does not meet all the criteria earlier discussed, you may revisit the indicator and revise it to meet the criteria. Otherwise, you will need to identify alternative indicators.

2.4 Document indicators in the PMP

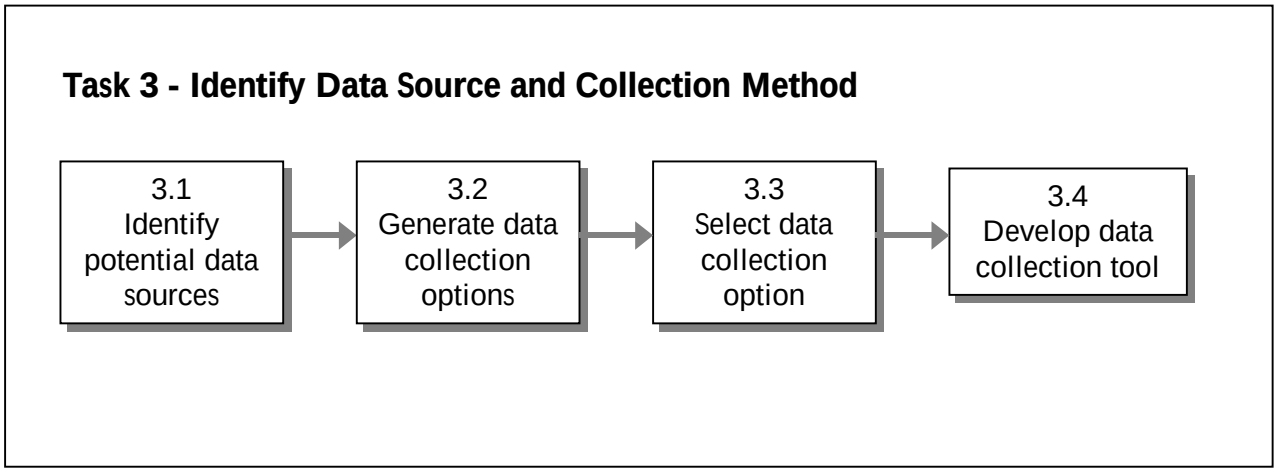
Proper documentation will facilitate the maintenance of quality performance indicators and data.

WORKSHEET 6 – Performance Indicator Reference Sheet: Use Worksheet 6 to complete the SO/IR/Indicator section and the "Description" section. By the end of Part 2 you will have completed the remaining sections of the worksheet. Table 2-2 presents an example of a completed performance indicator reference sheet.

Table 2-2: Example of a completed Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (Worksheet 6)
Strategic Objective 5: Increased Opportunities for Domestic and Foreign Investment **Intermediate Result 5.2:** Strengthened capacity of selected institutions to foster private enterprise **Indicator 5.2c:** Revenues of targeted associations from services to members.
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): *Revenues from services to members* refers to revenue from special services (e.g., training and workshops, publications, internet based services, etc) offered to the association's entire membership or segments of its membership and for which a fee is levied. General membership fees cannot be counted. *Targeted associations* are AAA, BBB, and CCC. *Members* can be individuals and/or associations (and their members) that are members of the targeted association. **Unit of Measure:** Insert Local Currency **Disaggregated by:** *association* **Justification/Management Utility:** An increase in revenues from services to members is a direct measure of improved capability of the association to offer services that are valued (demonstrated by willingness of members to pay for the service) by its membership.
PLAN FOR DATA ACQUISITION BY USAID
Data Collection Method: Implementing partner conducts *document review* of internal records of targeted associations **Method of Acquisition by USAID:** Semi-annual monitoring reports from implementing partners submitted to USAID activity manager, with the above information, brief analysis, and detailed back up. **Data Source(s):** Implementing partners XXX and YYY **Frequency/Timing of Data Acquisition:** Semi-annually, January 31 and July 31. **Estimated Cost of Data Acquisition:** Low cost – part of ongoing data collection by targeted associations and implementing partners **Responsible Individual(s) at USAID:** .....(insert name)
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Date of Initial Data Quality Assessment: PricewaterhouseCoopers, November 2000. See Report Annex IV, "Data Quality Assessments for R4 Indicators," for details. **Known Data Limitations and Significance (if any):** For association BBB, initial data quality assessment revealed that revenue from services had been erroneously included with fee revenue in the baseline data. Transcription error was not material but was corrected immediately. **Actions Taken or Planned to Address Data Limitations:** Error in data was corrected. **Date of Future Data Quality Assessments:** Q2 FY 2003 **Procedures for Future Data Quality Assessments:** Incorporate into normal activity monitoring; schedule with activity monitoring field visit; review partner back-up data; interview responsible individuals in targeted associations.
PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS, REVIEW, & REPORTING
Data Analysis: Summary data for all associations analyzed and summarized by USAID **Presentation of Data:** Bar or line graphs showing targets and actuals as well as disaggregation as noted above. **Review of Data:** Annual review of data by EG SO team during portfolio review; annual review by .....(insert name of activity manager) with target associations. **Reporting of Data:** R4 data tables and narrative; Activity Implementation Reviews (AIRs), Annual Portfolio Review.
OTHER NOTES
Note on Baselines/Targets: Baseline collected was not for entire CY2000. It is recommended that baseline data be collected in January 2001 and replace data collected in November 2000. Targets will need to be set with partners. **Data Storage:** MS Excel File (C:\mydoc\EG PMP\EG Performance data table.xls) **Other Notes:** None.
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 12/08/00

Task 3 – Identify Data Source and Collection Method

Data can be gathered and collected from a variety of sources using a variety of methods. Some methods are hands-on and highly participatory, while others are more exclusive and rely on the opinion of one or two specialists. In most cases, it is best to use more than one data collection method per SO. The process of identifying quality data sources and developing data collection methods can be broken down into four sub-steps (see Task 3).



ADS Guidance and Helpful Resources

ADS Guidance on Collecting Performance Data (ADS 203.3.6.5b)

- Data are collected using methods to address and minimize sampling and non-sampling errors
- Written procedures are in place for data collection
- Data are collected by qualified personnel, and personnel are properly supervised
- Data are collected using a consistent collection process from year to year
- Safeguards are in place to prevent unauthorized changes to the data
- Source documents are maintained and readily available
- Duplicate data are detected

Helpful Resources to Learn More about Data Collection

- ADS 203 [http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/]
- TIPS 1: Conducting a Participatory Evaluation [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 2: Conducting Key Informant Interviews [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 3: Preparing an Evaluation Scope of Work [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 4: Using Direct Observation Techniques [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 5: Using Rapid Appraisal Methods [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 10: Conducting Focus Group Interviews [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 11: The Role of Evaluation in USAID [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 12: Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]

- Department of Energy, "The Performance-Based Management Handbook, Volume 4: Collecting Data to Assess Performance" [http://www.orau.gov/pbm/pbmhandbook/pbmhandbook.html]
- Kumar, Krishna, "Rapid, Low-Cost Data Collection Methods for USAID," December 1987 [http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNAAL100.pdf]
- CDIE Resource Book on Strategic Planning and Performance Monitoring Under Re-engineering, "Common Problems/Issues with Using Secondary Data," April 1997 [PN-ACH-632]

3.1 Identify potential data sources

For each selected performance indicator, SO teams should explore what data sources are available (or might be available if the indicators are conceptualized in different ways). Only indicators for which it is feasible to collect data in a given country should be used.

TECHNIQUE – Identify Potential Data Sources in a Facilitated Session: Facilitate a brainstorming session (see ***Helpful Hint 1: Facilitating Group Discussions and Decision-Making)*** or hold individual discussions with the following resources in order to help identify potential data sources:

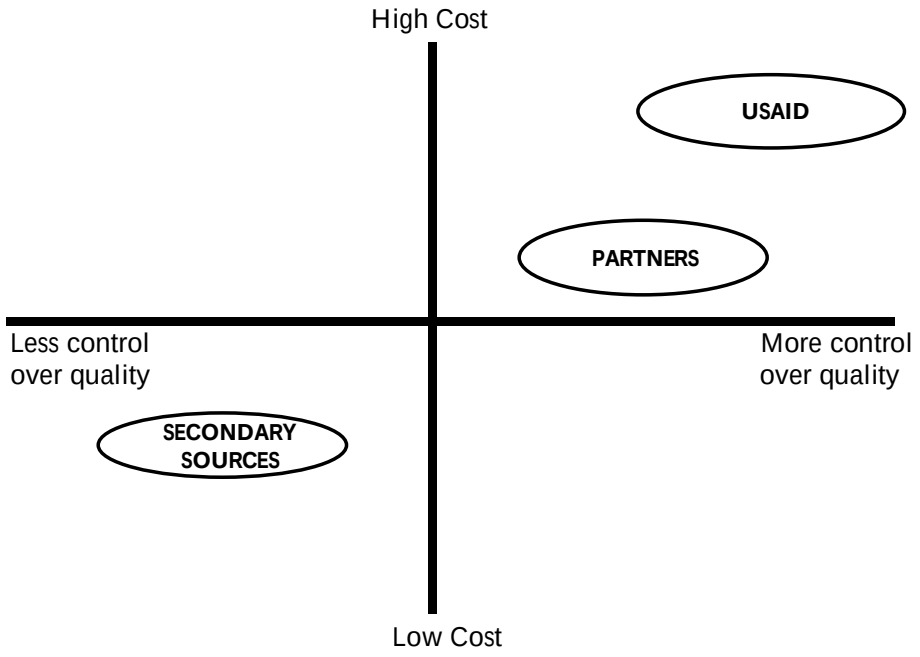
- **USAID:** Use primary data collected by the SO team or through independent entities contracted for this purpose.
- **Implementing partners:** Data often come from management information such as periodic reports, service statistics, etc.
- **Secondary sources**: Includes government ministries, the United Nations, and international agencies, and are usually not under USAID control. This means that USAID does not have the right to audit the data or investigate data quality in depth.

INFORMATION SERVICES: The following services may be useful for identifying potential secondary sources of data.

- **Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS):** ESDS staff specialize in selecting the most appropriate quantitative data for specific research purposes. Access ESDS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Statistics' at the top of the homepage)
- **Research and Reference Services (R&RS):** R&RS staff help development practitioners clarify their information needs after which they identify, analyze and deliver appropriate information in a useful form. R&RS also manages the USAID Library and Learning Resources Center. Access R&RS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Research' or 'Library' at the top of the homepage)

SO teams often rely on data collected by implementing partners and secondary sources. Figure 2-5 illustrates these three sources of performance data and their relationships to cost and USAID control over quality.

Figure 2-5. Sources of Performance Information



Determining appropriate potential sources of data will require conversations with people knowledgeable about various data sources (e.g., partners, government statistical or service agencies, public opinion survey organizations, university social science research centers, etc.). These contacts will help you to understand:

- What data are already being collected
- Whether existing data would be appropriate for a candidate indicator
- Whether the candidate indicators are relevant and feasible for the situation
- What alternatives may work

Grantee and contractor programs often also include data collection to monitor their activities, which may provide potential data sources for the result's indicators. If there are no feasible or reliable sources available, then consider proxy indicators for which good data will be available.

3.2 Generate data collection options

There are a number of data collection methods available. Some of the most commonly used methods are known as **Rapid Low-Cost Data Collection Methods**. These methods are often the preferred choice for SO teams when cost and timeliness are important. These methods are usually conducted by third party interviewers and/or observers who are skilled in conducting and facilitating various types of interviews and meetings. These methods include:

- **Focus group interviews:** Small-group, facilitated session designed to quickly gather in-depth information while offering stakeholders a forum for direct participation.

- **Key informant interviews:** In-depth discussions with person(s) who are knowledgeable on a specific topic.

- **Community interviews:** Meetings conducted on a specific topic that are open to all members of a village/community.

- **Direct observations:** Intensive and systematic observations of a phenomenon or process in its natural setting. May also include interviews with key informants.

- **Informal surveys:** Informal surveys differ from formal, or sample, surveys in that they: focus on few variables, use a small sample size, use non-probability sampling, and thus typically permit more flexibility to interviewers in the field.

Helpful Hint 4: Rapid Low-Cost Data Collection Methods provides some additional insights into these data collection methods.

Other data collection methods you may want to consider are:

- **File review:** Reviewing data that has been previously collected and is present in the program files, or other program documentation. This type of review offers a relatively quick method to discover what data has already been collected with an eye toward minimizing the need for additional data collection and the costs associated with that data collection effort.

- **Case study:** A research method that uses extensive description and analysis of a complex situation studied in its context to answer questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of current programs.

- **Content analysis:** Refers to the codification and analysis of qualitative data. By coding and classifying qualitative information, this method attempts to develop an understanding of the larger volumes of qualitative analysis.

- **Peer review/expert panel:** Involves review and assessment of program results by those with expertise in the field.

- **Survey:** Provides a rigorous and detailed sample survey method of gathering information from stakeholders and others by directly questioning them.

3.3 Select data collection option

The best data collection systems are designed to be as simple as possible – not too time-consuming, not unreasonably costly, but able to provide you with good information at a frequency that meets your management needs.

Therefore, take **practicality** into account when selecting a data collection tool. Consider the level of effort and resources required to develop the data collection tool and analyze the data. Also think about how often and at what point during the management cycle the data will be available for use, and the conditions in the country environment in which you operate.

For example, if data of adequate quality are already collected routinely by a secondary source, costs may be minimal. If primary data must be collected at the your expense, costs will be higher – how much higher will depend on the scope, method, and frequency of the data collection. A survey, for example, may cost several hundred thousand dollars, whereas a rapid appraisal would be much less expensive. Table 2.3 lists some of the factors and related questions to consider in selecting an appropriate method.

Table 2.3 Factors to Consider in Selecting a Data Collection Method

Factor	Questions to Consider
Cost	What is a reasonable cost for the team to incur for collecting the data? Some low-cost data collection methods limit the type of information that can be collected
Speed	How much time is available and reasonable for data collection and processing? How will shorter collection times impact other data characteristics - accuracy/level of detail?
Geographic Diversity	What is the geographic area impacted by the program? How can data be effectively collected in hard-to-reach or widely-dispersed geographic areas?
Demographic Diversity	How much diversity is present in the target audience (e.g., income, size of organization, ethnicity)? A diverse population whose target audience is non-homogeneous on one or more factors may require a bigger sample size to capture impact accurately.
Level of Accuracy	How accurate should the data be? How accurate are the local government statistics? How do you balance level of accuracy against the cost of collecting data?
Reliability	Can comparable data be collected using this same method in the future?
Frequency	How often are the data to be collected? How does this impact data collection in terms of staff/partner resources and costs associated with collecting the data?

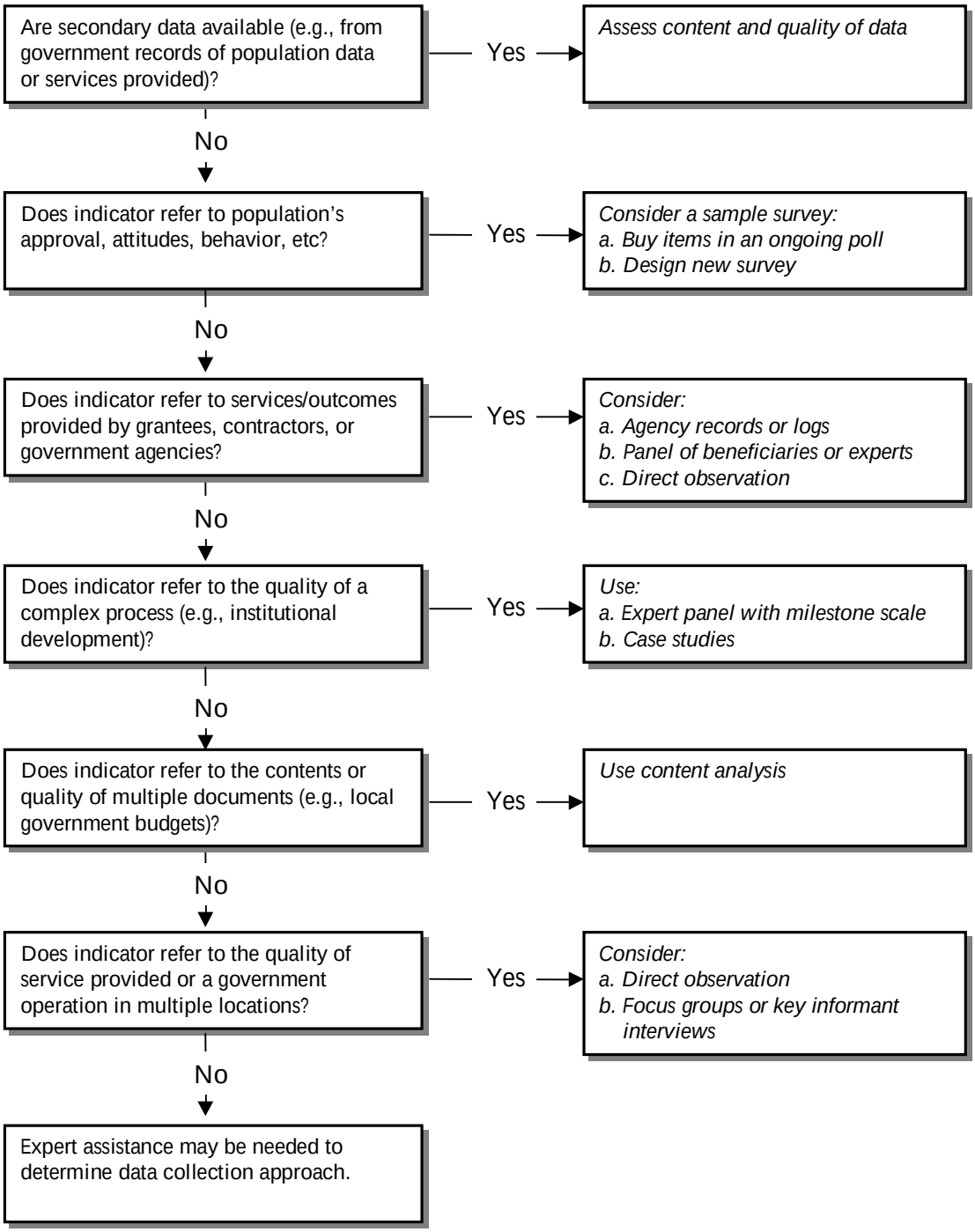
CONSIDER THIS – Limitations to Collecting Data: Your ability to use certain data collection methods will vary by:

- Data collection capacity and tradition in the host country
- Access to government information
- Local government unit capacity
- Capacity of implementing partners, think tanks and academic institutions
- Public attitudes toward social data and surveys
- Available data documentation
- Sector and sub-sector
- USAID resources
- Confidentiality and requirements such as parental consent to survey their children. Such requirements can add considerably to the effort required to obtain the data

TECHNIQUE – Use a Decision Chart to Select Best Data Collection Option: Figure 2-6 presents a sample decision flow that SO teams can also use to guide selection of data collection methods for indicators.

WORKSHEET 6 – Performance Indicator Reference Sheet: Once you've completed Tasks 3.1-3.3, refer to the copies of Worksheet 6 that you completed in Task 2. Update the section called "Plan for Data Acquisition by USAID."

Figure 2-6. Decision Chart for Selecting Data Collection Approaches for Indicators



3.4 Develop data collection tools

Once data collection methods are chosen, you may need to develop tools to collect the data. Table 2-4 presents some guidelines for developing and using several of these tools.

Table 2-4. Guidelines for Developing and Using Data Collection Tools

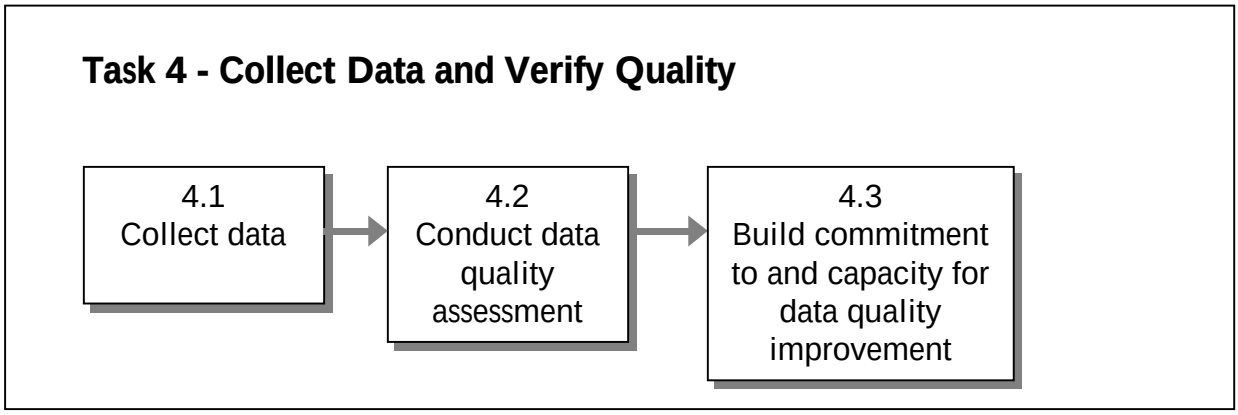
Collection Method	Guidelines
Rapid Low-Cost (focus groups, community interviews, informal surveys, etc)	❑ Define the problem and formulate the research question ❑ Identify the sample population for the study ❑ Carefully choose a facilitator ❑ Generate and pre-test the interview guide ❑ Recruit the sample ❑ Conduct the interviews, meetings, focus groups, survey, etc. ❑ Analyze data and share the results with stakeholders
Case study	❑ Define the problem and formulate the scope and objective of the query with specific attention toward the nature and context of subject ❑ Identify samples to be used in the study. They should address the representational needs of the range of data being evaluated and show the relevance of the study ❑ Select the type of case most appropriate to the needs of the program ❑ Collect the data to be analyzed through a combination of sources ❑ Analyze the data, accounting for rival explanations, reproduction of findings, internal validity, plausibility, ability to generalize, and overall coherence ❑ Evaluate the results regarding ability to generalize and internal data validity ❑ Write the report and share the findings
Content analysis	❑ Determine the data source ❑ Establish the coding categories and code the text ❑ Analyze category frequencies, correlation, and patterns ❑ Write the report
Peer review/ expert panel evaluation	❑ Use peer review in conjunction with other evaluation techniques ❑ Use peer review for research and development activities that are public domain ❑ Peers must be readily identifiable ❑ Avoid internal peers ❑ Guard against dysfunctional group dynamics ❑ If scales are used, test the validity and reliability of those scales ❑ Provide a bias statement for reviewers
File review in evaluation	❑ Review authorizing legislation, congressional testimony, and comments from legislators ❑ Review documents related to the regulatory implementation of the legislation ❑ Review budget documents, administrative documents, and meeting minutes ❑ Review program participant data collected as part of their interaction with the program
Surveys	❑ Define the areas of evaluation and develop applicable questions ❑ Establish a survey plan ❑ Develop a sampling protocol that includes a well thought out method of data collection, sampling techniques and method of analysis ❑ Develop the questionnaire ❑ Field test the questionnaire, individual questions and the time it takes to administer the test ❑ Distribute the questionnaire to respondents with a return date. ❑ Provide a follow-up contact with non-respondents ❑ Analyze data and share the results with stakeholders

Task 4 – Collect Data and Verify Quality

In order to manage for results, you need to gather and analyze data that is valid, reliable, and timely. Poor quality data can lead to incorrect inferences, e.g., USAID interventions had a given impact when they did not or vice versa. You should take steps to understand the appropriateness and use of different kinds of data collected, understand data limitations, correct these limitations where cost effective, and learn to manage for results when data are known to be imperfect.

In addition, the public is carefully scrutinizing the performance of government agencies. With the advent of the Government Performance Results Act and other government requirements, agencies are moving from accountability for inputs to accountability for results. The public, Congress, and OMB are increasingly taking a more "results oriented" and "cost-effective" look at agency programs. In an era of shrinking Federal budgets, demonstrating effective performance and sustainable program impacts helps justify programs and their costs.

Knowing that demonstrating performance rests on the quality of performance data, you can act effectively to improve activity design and performance and revise strategies appropriately. The process of verifying performance data quality can be broken down into three sub-steps.



Key Definitions, ADS Guidance and Helpful Resources

KEY DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are relevant to this task:

- **Verification:** Checking or testing performance data to reduce the risk of using data that contain significant errors.
- **Validation:** Testing of data to ensure that no error creates significant bias.
- **Bias:** Refers to the likelihood that data collected may reflect only a portion of the spectrum of relevant opinion. Bias often occurs as the result of the collection of an incomplete or inaccurately weighted sample of data.
- **Significant error (including bias):** An error that affects conclusions about the extent to which performance goals have been achieved.

- **Measurement error:** Results primarily from weaknesses in design of a data collection instrument; inadequate controls for biases in responses or reporting; or inadequately trained or supervised enumerators.

ADS Requirements for Data Quality (ADS 203.3.6.5)

Performance data should be as complete, accurate, and consistent as management needs and resources permit. To be useful in managing for results and credible for reporting, performance data should also meet reasonable standards of validity, reliability, timely, precision, and integrity.

- **Validity:** Data are valid to the extent that they clearly, directly, and adequately represent the result that was intended to be measured. Measurement errors, unrepresentative sampling, and simple transcription errors may adversely affect data validity.
- **Reliability:** Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods over time. Managers should be confident that progress toward performance targets reflects real changes rather than variations in data collection methods. Reliability can be affected by threats to validity and changes in the process of data collection.
- **Timeliness:** Data should be available with enough frequency and should be sufficiently current to inform management decision-making at the appropriate levels. Effective management decisions depend upon regular collection of up-to-date performance information.
- **Precision:** Data should be sufficiently accurate to present a fair picture of performance and enable the SO Team to make confident management decisions. The expected change being measured should be greater than the margin of error.
- **Integrity:** Data that are collected, analyzed, and reported should have mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that they are manipulated for political or personal reasons.

Helpful Resources to Learn More about Data Quality

- ADS Chapter 203 – Assessing and Learning [http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/]
- TIPS 12: Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators [http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACC390.pdf]
- U.S. General Accounting Office, "The Results Act: An Evaluator's Guide to Assessing Agency Performance Plans" [http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/mgmt-gpra/gplaw2m.html]
- U.S. General Accounting Office, "Performance Plans: Selected Approaches for Verification and Validation of Agency Performance Information"
- U.S. General Accounting Office, Standards for Internal Controls [http://www.gao.gov/]

4.1 Collect data

Completing Task 3 led your team through the process of determining what data to collect and the method and tools that should be used to collect data. Now is the time to execute your data collection plan and begin collecting the initial data for each indicator.

As you start collecting data, you may find that you're amassing a pile of forms, papers and other documents that must be organized and compiled before any real analysis can begin. When this scenario is multiplied by all the SO teams in an Operating Unit, many units begin to consider the use of an information database as a more effective way to store and analyze data. The technique below addresses the database issue.

TECHNIQUE – Storing Data in an Information Database: Traditional data collection involves manually collecting performance data on forms, looking for trends in the data, and summarizing the results in a printed management report. However, this traditional method of reporting is rapidly being replaced by automated software systems that rely on a computer's processing power to help analyze, process, and communicate information in real-time and in both visual and printed form. As data is collected, you may want to use an information database to store performance data.

Before jumping into a discussion of the pros and cons of certain databases, it may be useful to figure out if a database is needed by asking some basic questions:

- How many people will need to work with the database at the same time? Are they in the same building and/or are they on the same computer system?
- Does the data currently exist in any system?
- Does data exist in well-organized hard-copy reports?
- If the data does not exist in a centralized location, designing a database is only half the job; the other half is determining the process for identifying and entering data into the database. *NOTE:* Many database projects fail not because of the design of the database but because the organization using it has no established process for putting information into it.

The sophistication of the data collection system should be matched to the needs of the operating unit. The investment in technology must return benefits to the organization that exceeds the costs. These benefits will typically accrue in terms of improved information accuracy, security, accessibility, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness.

Helpful Hint 5: Information Systems for Data Collection and Performance Monitoring provides additional information on data collection and performance monitoring systems.

4.2 Conduct a data quality assessment

You need to know if you can trust your data to use it for making decisions. Performance data should be as complete, accurate and consistent as management needs and resources permit. A data quality assessment of each selected performance indicator will help you validate the usefulness of your data. ADS 203.3.6.6 states that when conducting these assessments, you must:

- Verify and validate performance information to ensure that data are of reasonable quality
- Review data collection, maintenance, and processing procedures for consistent application
- Take steps to address identified data quality limitations
- Document the assessment and retain the documents and subsequent actions in the SO team's performance management files

Recognize that no data are perfect, but they should be good enough to document performance and support decision-making. Use your professional judgment, and back it up by documenting your decisions and supporting information. Judgments about sufficient quality levels should reflect:

- Uses of the data
- Management judgments about what level of quality is needed for confident decisions.

- Technical assessments about what degree of quality is possible (e.g., professional judgment about acceptable levels of error; implications of data collection methodology, sampling strategy)
- Practical considerations. Trade-off between accuracy and cost or between dimensions of quality (e.g., timeliness and completeness).

TECHNIQUE – Plan Data Quality Assessments: A practical approach to planning data quality assessments includes the following:

- Develop and implement in overall data quality assurance plan that includes initial data quality assessment periodic quality reviews, partner and USAID capacity development
- Maintain written policies and procedures for data collection, maintenance, and process
- Maintain an audit trail – document the assessment, decisions concerning data quality problems, and the steps taken to address them
- Decide who should be involved in the data quality assessment (SO team members, partners, sector specialists, specialists in data quality)
- Decide when data quality assessments will be done

WORKSHEET 7: Data Quality Assessment Checklist: Table 2-5 identifies five criteria for assessing the performance data quality. These five criteria are covered in more detail in Worksheet 7, which you can use to assess the quality of your selected performance data:

Table 2-5. Key Criteria for Assessing Performance Data Quality

Criteria	Answers the question:	Affected by:
Validity	Do data clearly and directly measure what we intend?	**Measurement error.** Can result from weak design of data collection instrument, inadequate control for biases in responses or reporting, or inadequately trained or supervised enumerators. **Sampling error.** Sample may not be representative, too small for statistical extrapolation or contain sample units based on supposition rather than statistical representation. **Transcription error.** Data entries may occur when transcribing data from one source to another. Formulae must be applied consistently, and final numbers reported accurately.
Reliability	Using the same measurement procedures, can the same results be obtained?	**Changes in the data collection process.** Ensuring that data are reliable requires that the collection process be consistent from year to year.
Timeliness	Are data sufficiently current and available enough to inform decision-making at the appropriate level?	**Frequency.** Performance data are available on a frequent enough basis to regularly inform program management decisions **Currency.** Data are sufficiently up to date to guide decision-making (e.g., quarterly). Data collected infrequently (every 2-5 years), or with a substantial lag time (>1 year), can help track long-term trends and confirm lower level data accuracy.
Precision	What margin of error is acceptable given the management decisions to be affected?	**Acceptable margin of error.** The expected change being measured should be greater than the margin of error
Integrity	Are mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that data are manipulated for political or personal reasons?	**Risk.** Data is at greatest risk during data collection and analysis **Objectivity and independence.** Needed in key data collection, management, and assessment procedures. **Confidence in data.** Need for confidence in data from secondary sources. May require an independent review of secondary source data.

Before you begin assessing all of the data, take into consideration the source of the data, and the impact this might have on the assessment process.

TECHNIQUE – Assess Data from Different Sources: The rigor to which a data quality assessment is applied to a data source (i.e., USAID, implementing partner, secondary source) will differ for each source. The goal to assessing data from implementing partners and secondary sources is for you to be aware of data strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which data can be trusted when making management decisions and reporting. Table 2-6 presents a practical approach for assessing data from different data sources. ***Helpful Hint 6: Key Features of Quality Data Sources*** provides some additional insight.

Table 2-6. Approaches to Assessing Data from Different Sources

Data Source	Quality Assessment Approach
USAID	❑ Conduct a detailed, initial assessment of data quality for each indicator at the start of an activity, using the data quality checklist ❑ Document the findings of the data quality assessment. If a judgment is made that data are of "good" quality, that judgment needs to be justified ❑ Be sure partners understand the data quality standards. In consultation with the SO team, have the partner develop written procedures for data collection, maintenance and processing. Retain copies of these procedures in the SO team files. ❑ If performance indicators use financial information, provide for independent audits or other established procedures to ensure quality of financial information is maintained ❑ If data quality problems or limitations are identified, take steps to address them. Document any problems as they arise and steps taken to address them
Implementing partner	❑ Periodically sample and review data for completeness, accuracy and consistency ❑ Review partner reports to determine if they are sufficiently consistent to be reliable ❑ Conduct field visits to compare central office records with field site records ❑ Audit financial information when performance indicators use financial information
Secondary source	❑ Periodically sample and review data for completeness, accuracy and consistency ❑ Review partner reports to determine if the are sufficiently consistent to be reliable ❑ Conduct field visits to compare central office records with field site records ❑ Audit financial information when performance indicators use financial information *Some special considerations:* ❑ USAID does not have the right to audit or investigate data quality in depth ❑ USAID should arrange for briefings on the data collection, analysis, and quality control procedures ❑ USAID should review the data with other development partners to gain an appreciation of accuracy and credibility

While conducting the assessment, you may find evidence that points to bias in the data collection process that is affecting the quality of the data. Bias can come in many forms.

CONSIDER THIS – Types of Data Bias:

- **Interviewer bias:** Interviewers who gather program performance data through surveys or focus groups (for example) with program beneficiaries may inject their own bias, either intentionally or not, into the way they conduct the interviews. Likewise, different interviewers may not ask questions in the same way.

- **Instrument or measurement bias:** Instruments can be biased, for example, if a different instrument is used for the beneficiaries and for the control group. Also, instruments may be written in a way that sways people to give one response over another.

- **Response bias:** For example, if a sufficiently large group of beneficiaries who share common characteristics or opinions choose not to answer a survey question, they can bias the results by not having their responses included.

- **Recall bias:** For instance, respondents to data collection instruments are asked to respond to questions that require them to think back and comment on conditions they lived in several years ago. The passing of time may lead people to recall the conditions differently from the reality of the time.

- **Time or seasonal bias:** Some data may be biased if they are collected at different times of the day or different seasons of the year.

Helpful Hint 7: Tips to Minimize Bias presents some helpful hints to reduce bias.

The assessment process is not over when the worksheet has been completed. The results may indicate that you need to develop and implement a plan that will improve the quality of the data and your ability to use it for performance management. The steps in your plan may include:

- Ensure transparency – report data limitations and their implications for assessing performance
- Improve an indicator by using another source or new methods of measurement
- Adjust, supplement, or replace problematic data
- Triangulate – use multiple data sources with offsetting strengths and limitations.

4.3 Build commitment to and capacity for quality

Management needs to create a climate that encourages coordination, resource allocation, and attention to data quality issues that enable improvements in data quality. The following techniques may help encourage organizational commitment. Figure 2-7 describes the data quality assessment used by the USAID/Bangladesh mission.

TECHNIQUE – Foster Organizational Commitment: Some approaches that can be used to foster organizational commitment to and capacity for quality include:

- Have Agency executives provide confidence that they value and use good quality data by communicating its importance, making data quality an organizational goal, creating a climate of managing for results, and providing technical and financial support.
- Review organizational capacities and procedures for data collection and use. Review the designation of responsibilities for integrating and coordinating data; sufficient staff and expertise to fulfill responsibilities, appropriate hardware and software, and resources for building, upgrading, and maintaining data systems.
- Assign clear responsibilities for data creation and maintenance, training and supervision of those who enter data, transferring data from initial to final formats, and appropriately analyzing and reporting performance measures.
- Adopt audit and independence review mechanisms that encourage objectivity and independence in collecting and managing data
- Provide responsible staff with training and guidance for needed skills and knowledge in performance management
- Share Agency data quality standards with partners (including need for baselines, targets, and disaggregated data)
- Support partners in the development of written activity-level PMPs

Figure 2-7. Data Quality Improvement in Action: USAID/Bangladesh Democracy Partnership

Data Quality Challenges:

- Indicator definitions, measurement criteria and data collection methods were not uniformly understood
- Data collection process was time consuming, decreasing time available to implement program activities
- Data collection and use were not well matched
- Insufficient clarity concerning roles and responsibilities among the Partners for data design, collection, analysis and reporting
- Defining target populations and maintaining baseline values for indicators had become problematic
- Qualitative data did not complement the other data provided
- Intended comprehensive picture was not clearly drawn

Actions Taken:

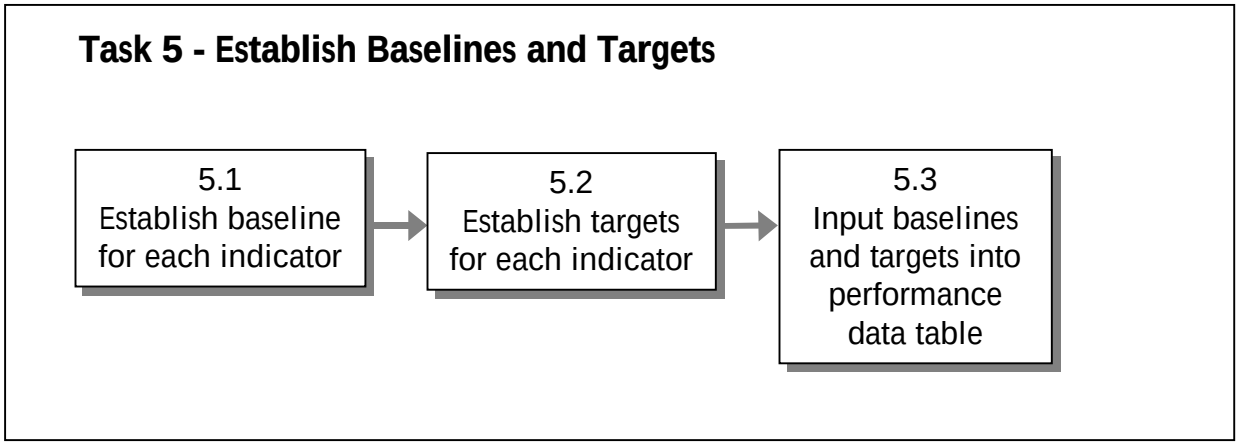
- Conducted a data quality review in a fully collaborative fashion
  - --Active participation by the implementing NGOs in each critical step along the way
  - --Three complementary forums: meetings of three partner institutions, consultative sessions with partner organizations and implementing NGOs, plenary workshops
  - --Decisions were obtained by consensus at these sessions
- Took a fresh look at the results framework, including indicators
  - --Clarified indicator definitions, approaches to data collection for these indicators and roles of the various partners and the NGOs in data collection
- Drafted a new Performance Monitoring Plan to communicate adjustments
- Made improvements in clarity of measurement
  - --Efficiency of data collection and usefulness of performance reporting were key priorities
- Developed a "Data Collection and Reporting Funnel"
  - --Information needs begin with the grassroots NGOs (broad array/relatively frequent)
  - --Subset needed by TAF to synthesize results of NGO efforts and to report periodically to USAID/Bangladesh
  - --Subset needed by USAID/Bangladesh to meet its own program management and reporting needs
  - --Helped to clarify the commonalties and differences in data needs among various data users

Lessons Learned:

- Plenty of experience with largely uninformative numerical data
- High level of need for NGOs to report on the substance of their activities and accomplishments
- A mix of data collection approaches: formal surveys, community interviews and NGO-based counts accompanied by interpretive narratives.
- Performance monitoring system
  - --Training plan for NGOs in data collection and reporting
  - --Data collection instruments have been designed and are being pre-tested in the field
- Bangladesh consulting firm has been contracted to collect, analyze and report data for a few selected indicators through probability surveys
- The demand for data use should determine the frequency of reporting
- The more "internal" the expected use of the data, the more frequently we expect reporting to take place
- Data collection activities are the minimum necessary to support managing for results at all levels
  - --Annual for USAID/W, via the R4
  - --DP has needs for more frequent reporting (The Asia Foundation needs NGO reports on a semi-annual basis for its program management and reporting purposes.)
- NGOs are likely to analyze their own data on approximately a monthly basis

Task 5 – Establish Baselines and Targets

Baseline data and performance targets are critical to managing for results because they are key reference points for assessing program performance. Baseline data establishes a reference point for the start of the program period. When the team establishes performance targets, it commits itself to specific intended results to be achieved within explicit timeframes. Each year, the team assesses its performance by comparing actual results against these targets. The process of establishing baselines and targets can be broken down into three sub-steps.



Key Definitions, ADS Guidance and Helpful Resources

KEY DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are relevant to this PMP task:

- **Performance Baseline:** The value of a performance indicator at a point in time that is relevant to tracking performance. Ideally, this is just prior to the implementation of USAID-supported activities that contribute to the achievement of the relevant strategic element.
- **Performance Targets:** Specific, planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit time frame.
- **Final Target:** The planned value of a performance indicator at the end of the planning period. For SOs, final targets are often set at five to eight years away. For IRs, final targets are usually set three to five years away.
- **Interim Target:** Targets set for years in between the baseline and final target year (e.g., for years in which change is expected and data collection is possible).

ADS Requirements for Performance Baselines and Targets (ADS 201.3.4.13c)

- SO teams should establish performance baselines and targets for each indicator.
- For any indicator reported in the R4, SO teams must report the baseline and target at least one year in advance in the preceding R4.

Helpful Resources to Learn More about Establishing Baselines and Targets

- TIPS 8, "Establishing Performance Targets" [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators [http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACC390.pdf]

5.1 Establish indicator baselines

The baseline measure establishes the reference point for the start of the program period. In some cases, planners may want to go back several years to correctly portray the context in which progress will be made. It is preferable if the baseline immediately precedes the start of a new strategy because we are trying to gauge the progress of a particular strategy. It will not always be possible to secure baseline data for the chosen year. In that instance, the baseline may be the most recent past year for which the relevant information exists or can be acquired.

CONSIDER THIS – Examine the Performance Trendline: When selecting a baseline year or years, examine the trendline of past performance. There could be unexpected spikes or dips in the trend and a year in which one or the other occurs would be a poor year to select as the baseline year.

TECHNIQUE – How to Establish Baseline When Information is Inadequate: Where baseline information is inadequate, many USAID operating units initiate a data collection effort as soon as their strategy is approved and the performance indicators they will use to judge progress are selected. The first set of data collected on these indicators becomes the formal baseline against which targets are set and future progress is assessed. For people-specific indicators, baselines should disaggregate data by gender and/or other relevant customer groups.

5.2 Establish indicator targets

Once performance indicators have been developed and baseline data collected, establish final (usually end of SO date) and interim (usually annual) performance targets. Targets should be optimistic, but realistic. A common practice is to set targets that will force you to "stretch" to exceed your past performance. However, special care should be taken not to set the target outside of reasonable expectations. Setting a target too high, or allowing zero tolerance for human error, undermines morale and makes targets appear unattainable. Instead, set targets that excite team members' and partners' interest and elicit commitment.

TECHNIQUE – Conduct a Target Setting Meeting: Conduct a target setting meeting to identify potential performance targets. ***Helpful Hint 1: Facilitating Group Discussions and Decision-Making*** has tips on facilitating decision-making meetings. Have at least one target setting session for each indicator. Involve your implementing partners in the meetings, whenever possible. Collaborating with others who are knowledgeable about the local situation and about reasonable expectations for accomplishments is key to target setting. Other USAID operating units, other development agencies, host country counterparts, partners, customers

and experts can all be invaluable in helping to determine the progress that might be expected.

TECHNIQUE – Approaches to Target Setting: Determining appropriate targets for each indicator can be accomplished in several ways. Much will depend on the information available or readily gathered. Target setting approaches include:

- **Project future trend, then add the "value added" by USAID activities.** This approach involves estimating the future trend without USAID's program, and then adding whatever gains can be expected as a result of USAID's efforts. Projecting the future can be very difficult, but can be made somewhat easier if historical data are available to establish a trend line.

- **Establish a final performance target for the end of the planning period, then plan progress from the baseline level.** This approach involves deciding on the program's performance target for the final year, and then defining a path of progress for the years in between. Final targets may be based on benchmarking techniques or on judgments of experts, program staff, customers or partners.

- **Set annual performance targets.** This approach is based on judgments about what can be achieved each year, instead of starting with a final performance level and working backwards.

- **Benchmarking.** Look at other organizations or institutions that use the same types of indicators to demonstrate progress and set targets accordingly. For example, if you are tracking the number of days for an institution to register new enterprises, research the length of time it takes for other countries and use those data points as benchmarks for setting your indicator targets.

CONSIDER THIS – Principles of Target Setting: As you apply the target setting approaches described above, keep in mind some basic principles for setting targets.

- Think about what the trend has been in the past for any given indicator
- Consider parallel experience from other countries
- Think through *when* program activities will have an impact on indicator values
- Think about external conditions which may affect indicator values over time
- Consider setting a *target range* rather than a single numerical target
- Consider how clearly the target or the actual will communicate and how the trendline will move when deciding on an indicator's unit of measurement
- When indicators are disaggregated, targets should be disaggregated as well

5.3 Input baselines and targets into performance data table

WORKSHEET 8 – Performance Data Table: Now that you have completed the baseline and target information for each indicator, you may want to use Worksheet 8 to consolidate the performance data into a single table. Table 2-7 is an example of a completed data table.

Table 2-7. Example of Worksheet 8: Performance Data Table

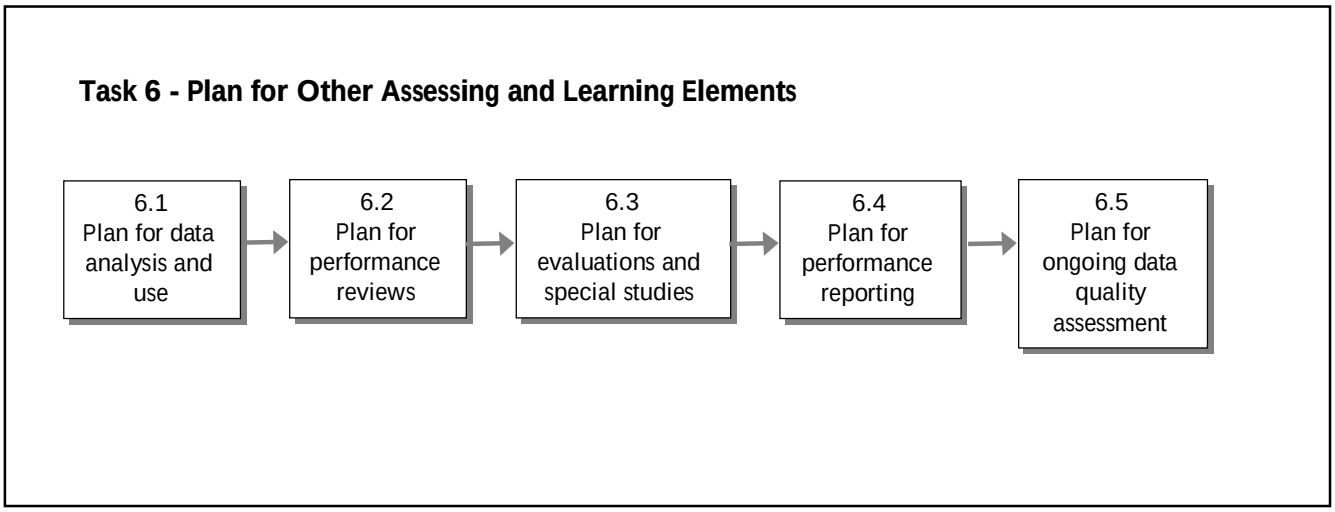
SO or IR	Results Statement	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	Baseline Year	Baseline Value	2001 Target	2001 Actual	2002 Target	2002 Actual	2003 Target	2003 Actual
IR 3.1.1	Vulnerable communities better able to meet own needs	Number of community groups organized	# groups		May-Nov 2000	0	12		36		48	
		Value and percent of community contributions to community projects	a) Dollars b) % per project	Source of contribution	May-Nov 2000	a) 0 b) 0	a) $5K b) 5%	a) b)	a) $20K b) 10%	a) b)	a) $40K b) 20%	a) b)
IR 3.1.1.1	Increased access to economic opportunities and support services	Number of loans disbursed	# loans	Recipients: Male Female	May-Nov 2000	M 15 F 10	M 25 F 20	M F	M 30 F 30	M F	M 35 F 40	M F
		Number of jobs created	# jobs	Male Female	May-Nov 2000	M 75 F 50	M 125 F 100	M F	M 150 F 150	M F	M 175 F 200	M F
IR 3.1.1.2	Communities organized to address self-defined needs	Number of community development projects developed	# projects	Project Type	May-Nov 2000	0	6		18		24	

Task 6 – Plan for Other Assessing and Learning Elements

Assessing and learning is the process of systematically obtaining useful feedback and applying it to move programs forward and report progress to others. Therefore, think about supplementing performance monitoring with planned evaluations, special studies, and other formal and informal information sources as needed. This comprehensive approach to planning for assessment and learning will yield useful performance information that will help you:

- Make informed management decisions regarding the best use of resources to achieve desired objectives over time
- Improve the performance, effectiveness, and design of existing development assistance
- Document findings on the impact of development assistance

The process of planning for these other elements can be broken down into five sub-tasks.



Key Definitions, ADS Guidance and Helpful Resources

KEY DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are relevant to this PMP development task:

- **Evaluation:** A relatively structured, analytical effort undertaken to answer specific program management questions. An evaluation can provide a systematic way to gain insights and reach judgments about the effectiveness of specific activities, validity of a development hypothesis, utility of performance monitoring efforts, or impact of other changes in the development setting on achievement of results.

- **Portfolio review:** A required periodic review of all aspects of an Operating Unit or SO team's programs. It focuses on both strategic and operational issues and examines the robustness of the underlying development hypothesis and the impact of activities on results. It is often held in preparation for submission of the annual R4 report.

- **Results Review and Resource Request (R4):** The Agency's principal tool for assessing program progress on an annual basis and communicating progress information to higher management levels. The Resource Request portion of the R4 is the standard mechanism used by Operating Units to request annual funding increments. The R4 reports also provide core information for Agency reports to Congress, OMB, and the broader public.

Principles for Assessing and Learning (ADS 203.3.2.2)

The following overarching principles guide the Agency's work in assessing and learning:

- **Self-assessment:** SO teams and other management units are responsible for actively and systematically assessing their contribution to program results on a continuing basis, and taking corrective action when necessary, within the scope of their authority and responsibility.

- **Performance-informed decision-making:** The Agency seeks to ensure that management decisions at all levels are informed by the best available performance information. The Agency seeks to anticipate information needs for future decision and put in place the mechanisms to obtain the best and most timely information from a variety of sources.

- **Candor and transparency in reporting progress:** This involves three interrelated efforts – (a) conveying clearly and accurately the problems that impede progress and the Agency's efforts to address them; (b) assessing the quality of data used to report progress and stating known limitations; and (c) avoiding the appearance of claiming those results achieved with others as the Agency's own.

- **Information sharing:** The Agency makes available to others the most important and useful insights and knowledge from experience gained in pursuing one SO so that others may apply it to improve success elsewhere. Dissemination of R4s, evaluations and SO close-out reports through PPC/CDIE and provision of related program information and experience on external and internal USAID web pages are intended to promote learning.

- **Economy of effort:** Data collection and reporting should be limited to what is most directly useful for managing performance at the Operating Unit level. When partner organizations work with several Operating Units on the same activity, the Agency seeks to minimize reporting burdens by coordinating and agreeing on a manageable and reasonable set of reporting information.

- **Participation:** The Agency seeks to involve its customers, partners, and other stakeholders in its assessing and learning processes in order to improve the likelihood of obtaining useful information and strengthening overall assessing and learning process.

Helpful Resources to Learn More about Analysis and Evaluation

- ADS 203 series [http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/]
- TIPS 1: Conducting a Participatory Evaluation [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 2: Conducting Key Informant Interviews [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 3: Preparing an Evaluation Scope of Work [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 4: Using Direct Observation Techniques [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 5: Using Rapid Appraisal Methods [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 10: Conducting Focus Group Interviews [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]
- TIPS 11: The Role of Evaluation in USAID [http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004]

Figure 2-8 presents a summary of the assessing and learning practices for USAID/Mali.

Figure 2-8. Assessing and Learning Put into Practice: USAID/Mali's Experience

USAID/Mali has developed an extensive system for measuring programmatic performance and for monitoring/evaluating that performance. The following is a summary of the key documents that are generated and the mechanisms through which data are collected and analyzed.

Key Documents:

- **Results Frameworks and Performance Indicator Table:** A separate table for each SO serves as the core instruments for documenting performance.
- **System of Performance Measurement (SPM):** A data set which contains all the detailed information that goes into the Results Frameworks and Performance Indicators tables. The SP contains additional "lower level" results data on individual activities, generates various reports, and tabulates information through a customized ACCESS-based management information system.
- **Results Reporting and Resource Request (R4):** The Mission's major reporting document which also serves as background information for the Mission and USAID/Washington program reviews.
- **Policy Agenda Matrix:** Consolidates, in summary form, all the major policy agenda items being tackled through SO programs and quantifies progress to date.
- **Contractor and PVO progress reports:** Contain basic data and performance indicators submitted by contractors and are incorporated into the SPM and Results Frameworks.
- **Government of Mali (GM) national statistics:** Statistics collected and compiled by GM are used to measure progress
- **Geographic Information System (GIS):** An Arc/View software used to show the geographic location of different activities/facilities of interest.

Key Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:

- **Contractor, PVO and GM data collection systems:** USAID/Mali specifies appropriate measures of performance, benchmarks/targets for achievement at various stages or dates, and the system for reporting accomplishments with contractors and PVO partners.
- **Surveys and field visits:** Numerous surveys/studies are done annually to either collect or verify information provided by partners
- **Program Implementation Reviews (PIR):** Bi-annual sessions used to review progress activity-by-activity, not just overall SO or program.
- **PVO Continuation Application Reviews:** Formal, annual reviews held with partner PVOs to assess progress, plans for the next phase, and financial requirements
- **Mission and partner retreats:** Use retreats as a mechanism to look at overall performance – both of the Mission and its partners
- **R4 reviews:** USAID/Mali prepares and reviews an interim R4 to determine whether there are areas of concern in performance, particular data requirements, and to assess progress to date.

CONSIDER THIS – Budget for Performance Monitoring: As you plan to assess and use performance data, consider the costs of collecting, analyzing and using that data. Sufficient funding and personnel resources must be made available for performance monitoring work. The Agency recommends (ADS 201.3.4.13d) that three to ten percent of total program resources should be allocated, though factors unique to each activity or strategic element will influence this decision. Strive for cost-effective performance monitoring. If anticipated costs appear prohibitive, consider:

- Modifying performance indicators to permit less expensive approaches to regular data collection
- Modifying the approach/design of evaluative activities, considering rapid, low cost alternatives
- Modifying the relevant strategic objective or intermediate result, since it is not possible otherwise to judge progress at reasonable costs

WORKSHEET 9 – Performance Management Task Schedule: As you go through Task 6, use Worksheet 9 to schedule all your team's assessing and learning activities—data acquisition and analysis, portfolio reviews performance reporting, data quality assessment, evaluation plans, etc.

Table 2-8 is an excerpt from a performance management task schedule completed for one of the USAID missions.

Table 2-8. Example of Worksheet 9: Performance Management Task Schedule ("☑" = scheduled task "E" = episodic task)

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TASKS	Episodic	FY 2001				FY 2002				FY 2003				NOTES
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
COLLECT PERFORMANCE DATA: RESULTS-LEVEL INDICATORS														
SO 5: Increased opportunities for domestic and foreign investment														
Cumulative number of micro-loans by USAID-assisted micro-finance intermediaries		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
IR 5.1: Improved legal, administrative, regulatory and policy environment for private sector development														
Milestone scale rating of progress in reengineering selected administrative processes			☑				☑							The reengineering activity will be concluded in 12 months.
COLLECT PERFORMANCE DATA: ACTIVITY-LEVEL & CONTEXT INDICATORS														
Gather activity data/partner progress reports		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	Activity level information collected mo/qrtly depending on the activity.
Gather contextual data	E		☑				☑				☑			Mostly collected prior to R4 exercise.
CONDUCT EVALUATIONS & SPECIAL STUDIES														
Estimation of increased investment attributable to reengineering key business processes	E													Evaluation to assess USAID impact. Most useful towards end of period.
SO 5 Strategic Review					☑									External assessment to feed into mid-course CSP review) – Aug 2001
REVIEW PERFORMANCE INFORMATION														
Partner Activity Progress Review		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	Informal review of partner reports.
Annual Activity Implementation Review					☑				☑				☑	Operational level assessment
Annual R4 Review			☑				☑				☑			Strategic/result level assessment
REPORT PERFORMANCE RESULTS														
Budget Justification														
R4 Report			☑				☑				☑			
ASSESS DATA QUALITY														
Assess quality of partner data	E													Mandatory: all R4 indicators at activity start and every three years.
REVIEW & UPDATE PMP														
Review PMP and update if necessary	E													

6.1 Plan for data analysis and use

Everyone needs information, but not everyone knows what to do with raw data. Data must be processed and synthesized before reporting and using. Sound analysis of performance data will provide you with useful information about what happened (against expected results) and why progress is or is not on track. Properly planning how performance data will be analyzed, used and presented is at the heart of performance management. To plan for this, ask these key questions:

- How will the data be analyzed?
- Who will be involved in the analysis?
- Who will use the data and for what purpose?
- How will the data be presented?

Table 2-9 presents some approaches to apply in planning for performance data analysis and use:

Table 2-9. Data Analysis Approaches

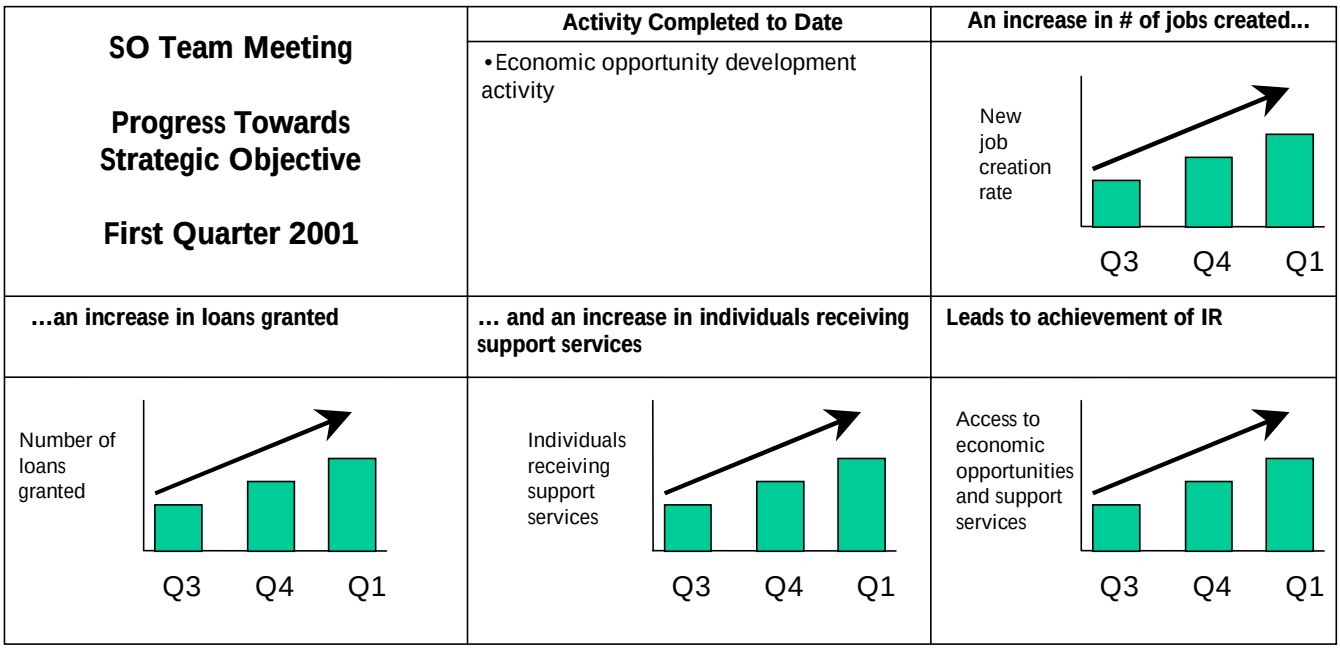
Analysis Approach	Analysis Technique	Questions to Consider
Analyze data for a single result	❑ Compare actual performance against targets ❑ Compare current performance to prior year ❑ Compare current performance to baseline ❑ Analyze trends in performance	❑ Did we meet our targets? Why or why not? ❑ How does this period's performance compare to last period? Are we on track for our ultimate target? ❑ Did our critical assumptions hold during the performance period? ❑ What happened that we did not expect? ❑ What improvements are needed? ❑ Are new results statements, indicators, or targets needed?
Analyze data across the results framework	❑ Examine performance of lower results in relation to higher results ❑ Examine data from critical assumptions to help interpret results	
Analyze the contribution of USAID's activities to the achievement of results	❑ Examine timing of results in relation to timing of USAID program efforts ❑ Compare movement in results trends to movement in level of USAID program efforts ❑ Compare performance to control group in similar environment	

WORKSHEET 5 – Performance Indicator Quality Assessment: Once you have determined your data analysis approach, refer to your completed indicator worksheets and input your plan for each indicator.

The key to presenting data analysis is to tell a compelling story. Be candid. Users of performance information will want to know how you plan to address performance problems and limitations. Visual displays such as tables, boxes, and figures can condense information, present it in a clear format, and highlight underlying relationships and trends. This helps communicate findings to decision-makers more clearly and quickly. ***Helpful Hint 8: Tips for Communicating Performance Information in Reports*** will provide you with some guidelines in presenting data analysis in report format.

TECHNIQUE – Chart Book Analysis Presentation Approach: Figure 2-9 provides an example of a creative storyboard technique for presenting performance data analysis. The slides in the presentation are designed in such a way that the audience can clearly understand how the data are supporting the program results. The presenter is telling a story that is easy to follow without getting lost in all the data contained in the graphics. Presentations that simply show one complicated graphic after another, with little/no text to make the points that should be taken from the analysis, have less impact on the audience. The same can also be said about the opposite approach – avoid reports with overly long text and too few graphic presentations that could help the reader easily understand program results.

Figure 2-9. Chart Book Example



6.2 Plan for portfolio reviews

The ADS requires SO teams to regularly review performance information in order to continuously improve performance. You should use information from the reviews to identify and analyze the implications for the achievement of results. When you identify significant deficiencies or problems, you may need to alter, increase, or discontinue activities, or rethink the logic behind the original expectations.

Specific guidance on conducting portfolio reviews can be found in ADS 203.3.3. The guidance states that the structure, process and timing of a portfolio review is left up to you, but requires that, during the course of the fiscal year, you review:

- Progress towards the achievement of the SO during the past year and expectations regarding future results achievement
- Evidence that outputs of activities are adequately supporting the relevant IRs and ultimately contributing to the achievement of the SO
- Adequacy of inputs for producing activity outputs and efficiency of processes leading to outputs
- Status and timeliness of input mobilization efforts
- Status of critical assumptions and causal relationships defined in the Results Framework along with the related implications for performance towards SOs and IRs
- Status of related partner efforts that contribute to the achievement of IRs and SOs
- Status of the Operating Unit's management agreement and need for any changes to the approved Strategic Plan
- Pipeline levels and future resource requirements
- SO team effectiveness and adequacy of staffing
- Vulnerability issues and related corrective efforts

TECHNIQUE – Portfolio Review Approach: There is no one prescribed structure or process for conducting portfolio reviews. One of the most common approaches is for designated staff to analyze a variety of program-related information and prepare issues for discussion in a larger group forum that may include SO team members, other members of the Operating Unit, and partners. Operating Units may choose to define standard procedures that are judged useful for their programs. Many units also will find it particularly useful to conduct a portfolio review as part of the preparation process for annual R4 reporting.

HELPFUL HINT 9: Questions to Guide Portfolio Reviews: Use Helpful Hint 9 to help plan and carry out portfolio reviews. The questions listed will help you to address key issues that affect the management of your portfolio. These issues can be categorized into three broad areas as follows:

- *Strategy and activity issues*: results, outputs, inputs, development hypothesis, critical assumptions, non-USAID circumstances, and interface between tactics and strategy
- *Process issues*: indicators and targets, evaluations, teamwork, and customer/partner perceptions
- *Vulnerability issues*: financial vulnerability, other vulnerability, and audit readiness

6.3 Plan for evaluations and special studies

Evaluation is a relatively structured analytical effort undertaken selectively to answer specific management questions regarding USAID-funded assistance programs or activities. Evaluation is also a management tool that plays a vital role in Agency decision-making, accountability reporting, and learning. It is an important source of information about the performance of USAID activities, programs and strategies.

Determine in advance if special studies can be identified (e.g., DHS, intermittent surveys) or if evaluation issues can be predicted. Plan to determine, at the time of the portfolio review, if there are performance deviations (positive or negative) that show need for evaluations or studies. Near the end of the SO life, plan to determine if something happened that requires a study to better document the results.

INFORMATION SERVICES:

Research and Reference Services (R&RS): R&RS staff can help you determine if other evaluations or special studies have been conducted on similar topics. Access R&RS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Research' or 'Library' at the top of the homepage)

CONSIDER THIS – Situations that Prompt a Need for Evaluation: To complement ongoing performance monitoring, consider planning an evaluation when there is a distinct and clear management need, as in the following situations:

- A key management decision must be made and there is inadequate information
- Performance information indicates an unexpected result (positive or negative) that should be explained
- Customer, partner, or other informed feedback suggests that there are implementation problems, unmet needs, or unintended consequences or impacts
- Issues of sustainability, cost-effectiveness, or relevance arise
- Validity of results framework hypotheses or critical assumptions is questioned
- Periodic portfolio reviews have identified key questions that need to be answered or on which consensus should be developed
- Extracting lessons is important for the benefit of other operating units or future programming

TECHNIQUE – Planning for Evaluations: Take into account the following key steps and questions, as listed in Table 2-11, when planning evaluations and special studies.

Table 2-11. Key Steps and Questions for Planning Evaluations

KEY STEPS	KEY QUESTIONS
❑ Decide if and when to evaluate ❑ Clarify the evaluation purpose ❑ Use R&RS for research support ❑ Identify the research questions ❑ Select appropriate evaluation methods ❑ Plan for data collection and analysis ❑ Form an evaluation team ❑ Plan procedures (e.g., schedule, logistics,	❑ Who is likely to need information from or about the program? ❑ What do they need to know? ❑ How would they use the information if they had it? ❑ When do they need it? ❑ How accurate must it be? ❑ When and how should the data be collected

reporting needs, budget)	and analyzed? ❑ Who is responsible for data collection and analysis?

If an evaluation is likely, plan to select an evaluation method from among several options. Table 2-12 presents some evaluation method options. ***Helpful Hint 4: Rapid Low-Cost Data Collection Methods*** provides supplemental information on the appropriateness, advantages, and limitations of rapid appraisal techniques.

Table 2-12. Evaluation Methods and Key Considerations

EVALUATION METHOD
➢ Short workshops to reflect on whether the development hypothesis is valid ➢ Community interview or customer focus groups ➢ Large scale surveys ➢ Rapid appraisal or participatory techniques ➢ Traditional, formal impact evaluations
KEY CONSIDERATIONS
➢ Nature of the information, analysis, or feedback needed ➢ Trade-off between quality/validity and cost ➢ Cultural considerations ➢ Time-frame of the management need for information ➢ Time and resources available ➢ Level of accuracy required

CONSIDER THIS – Special Studies: In some cases, you may need to conduct special studies that go beyond the scope of program monitoring or evaluation. One example is the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) that are conducted approximately every five years to inform health sector programming.

As discussed in ADS 203.3.5.1, an important role of special studies is to examine whether the needs of vulnerable groups are being met. Special studies need to be designed with the same care as evaluations. When collecting data for analysis, take particular care to design and implement the study in order to minimize error and ensure good data quality.

WORKSHEET 10 – Evaluations and Special Studies Planning: Use Worksheet 10 to help document the possible evaluations and special studies identified to complement performance monitoring. This worksheet will help you identify the subject, timing, and any special research considerations. Table 2-13 presents an example of how an evaluation or special study may be planned.

Table 2-13. Evaluations and Special Studies Planning

Evaluation/Study Subject	When	Key Research Question(s)
Reproductive Health Survey	On-going	What is the status of reproductive health in the country? What is the nature of citizen's knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and practices?
Community Assessment for the Social Development Fund	April – May, 2000	Which communities should be targeted? How should funds be programmed?
World Vision Feeding Program	April – May, 2000	How effective and efficient has the program been? What are the opportunities for improvement?
Community Development Approaches	April – May, 2000	What are the merits of various approaches? What lessons can be learned from community development efforts in the country? How can sustainability be ensured?
Mission's Value-Added in the Health Sector	June – Sept, 2000	Should USAID continue to fund these programs?

Although the timing of the PMP development process may be such that the evaluation will not take place in the immediate future, you may want to consider the types of questions found in Worksheet 11 when the time comes to develop the evaluation scope of work.

WORKSHEET 11 – Evaluation Scope of Work Planning: Use Worksheet 11 to help develop the scope of work for planned evaluations. An evaluation scope of work (SOW) is a plan for conducting evaluations or special studies. It conveys clear directions to the evaluation team. A good SOW usually:

- Identifies the activity, results package or strategy to be evaluated
- Provides a brief background on implementation
- Identifies existing performance information sources
- States the purpose, audience and use of the evaluation
- Identifies the evaluation method to answer the questions
- Clarifies the evaluation questions
- Identifies the evaluation method(s) to answer the questions
- Discusses evaluation team composition and participation of customers, partners and stakeholders
- Covers procedures such as schedule and logistics
- Clarifies requirements for reporting and dissemination
- Includes a budget

6.4 Plan for performance reporting

To enhance learning opportunities within the Agency and among partners and other stakeholders, plan to report and share progress toward expected results. Base your reporting upon quantitative and qualitative performance information gathered through your performance monitoring systems, evaluations, and other relevant sources. Make every effort to be open and direct and to share both successes and failures.

To support the Agency in its learning processes, share copies of annual performance reports, evaluation reports, and other useful information that may be of broad interest to other teams and units. Furthermore, copies of these reports are required to be sent to the DEC in electronic format for uploading onto their web site (see Resources appendix).

The annual R4 report will serve as the primary document for reporting performance information. You may also want to develop your own internal reports to guide management decisions. For example, consider a periodic *Activity Manager's Monitoring Report*, which can be revised to be more clearly linked with performance indicators at the SO and IR levels.

TECHNIQUE – Plan for R4 Reporting: Each spring you must submit an R4 report to Washington that complies with the annual R4 guidance cable. The annual portfolio review will provide much of the analytical basis for this report. In the R4 report, plan to discuss:

- Progress towards the achievement of the SO over the past fiscal year, as well as expectations for future results
- Evidence that activities are supporting the relevant intermediate result(s), and ultimately contributing to the achievement of the SO
- Status of critical assumptions (i.e. whether they continue to hold) and causal relationships defined in the results framework, and the related implications for performance towards the SO and IRs
- Future resource requirements

- **HELPFUL HINT 8 – Tips for Communicating Performance Information in Reports:** Use Helpful Hint 8 to plan for more effectively reporting performance information. Such reports include the R4, but may also include other reports internal or external to the Operating Unit or Agency.

6.5 Plan for on-going data quality assessments

Do not stop reviewing data quality once the performance data is reported in the R4. Plan to regularly review data quality to ensure that it continues to support the needs of the SO and IRs in performance monitoring.

TECHNIQUE – On-going Data Quality Assurance: Over the course of strategy implementation, plan to:

- Build data quality assessment into normal work processes, including ongoing reviews and site visits
- Use software checks and edits of data on computer systems and review their implementation
- Use feedback from data users and other stakeholders
- Compare performance information with other sources of similar data or program evaluation
- Obtain verification by independent parties, including other donors and the Office of the Inspector General

For each indicator reported in the R4, reassess data quality as necessary, but at intervals of no greater than three years. These assessments will ensure that performance information is sufficiently complete, accurate, and consistent. Conduct these assessments consistent with Agency and external guidance. In particular:

- Verify and validate performance information to ensure that data are of reasonable quality
- Review data collection, maintenance, and processing procedures to ensure that they are consistently applied and continue to be adequate
- Document this assessment in the R4 Report and keep a complete report on file

WORKSHEET 7 – Data Quality Assessment Checklist: As you did during the initial data quality assessment, use Worksheet 7 to conduct periodic or on-going assessments of reported performance data.

TECHNIQUE – Set up a "data quality file": A good way to maintain adequate documentation of data quality and assessment is to set up a simple data quality file. Use this file to store copies of data collection instruments, source documents, raw figures or worksheets used to calculate R4 indicators, data quality assessment memos and reports, etc. Refer to ***Helpful Hint 10: Maintaining Official SO Team Files*** for additional ideas.

CONSIDER THIS – Collection of Other Useful Data: In addition to collecting data on *performance*, consider seeking out other useful data to track goal-level progress or illustrate the development context or environment, status of critical assumptions, and validity of the development hypothesis.

- **Aspirations, or "goal-level" indicators:** An SO team may wish to track progress toward results that are beyond USAID's manageable interest, or results that are of a higher level than the Strategic Objective. For example, a hypothetical USAID economic growth program may aspire to achieve significant macro or national-level results within, say, twenty years. However, within the five year timeframe of the current strategy, such results may be beyond what the Operating Unit and its partners are willing to be held accountable for achieving. In this case, the SO team may choose to informally track such *aspirational indicators* in order to keep the team aware of progress toward long-term, sustainable development.

- **Development context/environment:** Information about *trends* within the larger context of the current environment may be useful in understanding the progress of the SO. Many factors affect progress, not the least of which are the national social, health, and economic conditions. Consider taking these factors into account when analyzing and reporting data on performance indicators. Examples of *context indicators* relevant to the health sector, for instance, include poverty rates (aggregate and by region) and mortality rates (maternal, infant, child, and gross). These and other relevant macro or research-driven statistics can be tracked *informally*. Several data sources may be helpful in this larger analysis, including studies by UNICEF, the World Bank, national health and economic statistics, and reviews of current social, business, and government trends.

- **Status of critical assumptions:** Gather data *informally* to test critical assumptions. Data sources may include studies, reports, conferences, and other communications from government institutions, other donors, NGOs and PVOs, and other key stakeholders. Review critical assumptions regularly and as part of the annual portfolio review to determine whether they continue to hold and their implications for strategy readjustment.

- **Validity of the development hypothesis:** Validate and reassess the development hypothesis as activities progress and the environment evolves. Key tools for this assessment can include: empirical evidence of the development context and validity of critical assumptions, evaluations, special studies, and other information sources to include reports of activity impact.

INFORMATION SERVICES:

- **Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS):** ESDS can help identify and deliver relevant contextual data. Access ESDS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Statistics' at the top of the homepage)
- **Research and Reference Services (R&RS):** R&RS staff can help identify, analyze and deliver relevant contextual data, evaluations, studies, reports, conferences, and other communications from government institutions, other donors, NGOs and PVOs, and other key stakeholders. Access R&RS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (click 'Research' or 'Library' at the top of the homepage)

Conclusion

Congratulations! By completing Tasks in Parts 1 and 2 of the toolkit, you have addressed all of the required and recommended elements listed in the ADS and referenced in the Overview of this toolkit. If you were to compile three of the toolkit worksheets into your PMP, you will have documented all of the required and most of the recommended PMP elements. Table 2.14 shows the elements covered in each of the toolkit worksheets.

Table 2.14 PMP Elements By Toolkit Worksheet

Worksheet	ADS Required Elements	ADS Recommended Elements
Worksheet 6: Performance Indicator Reference Sheet	❑ Detailed description of performance indicators to be tracked ❑ Source, method and schedule for data collection and assigned responsibility for data collection to a specific office, team or individual ❑ Description of known data limitations, significance of the limitations for judging the extent to which goals have been achieved, and completed or planned actions to address these limitations ❑ Description of quality assessment procedures that will be used to verify and validate the measured values of actual performance	❑ Description of plans for data analysis, report, review and use ❑ Estimated costs of collecting, analyzing and reporting performance data
Worksheet 8: Performance Data Table	❑ Baselines and targets by indicator	
Worksheet 9: Performance Management Task Schedule		❑ Description of plans for data analysis, report, review and use ❑ Possible evaluation efforts identified to complement the performance management effort and circumstances that require evaluations or other special studies ❑ Plans for monitoring the underlying development hypothesis, critical assumptions and context affecting the results framework

While the ADS does contain a list of PMP requirements, it does not go so far as to prescribe the contents or organization of a PMP. In general, these are left to the discretion of the SO team and the approval of the Operating Unit Director. However, there are standards specified in the ADS for maintaining performance management files. Refer to ***Helpful Hint 10: Maintaining Official SO Team Files*** for additional information.

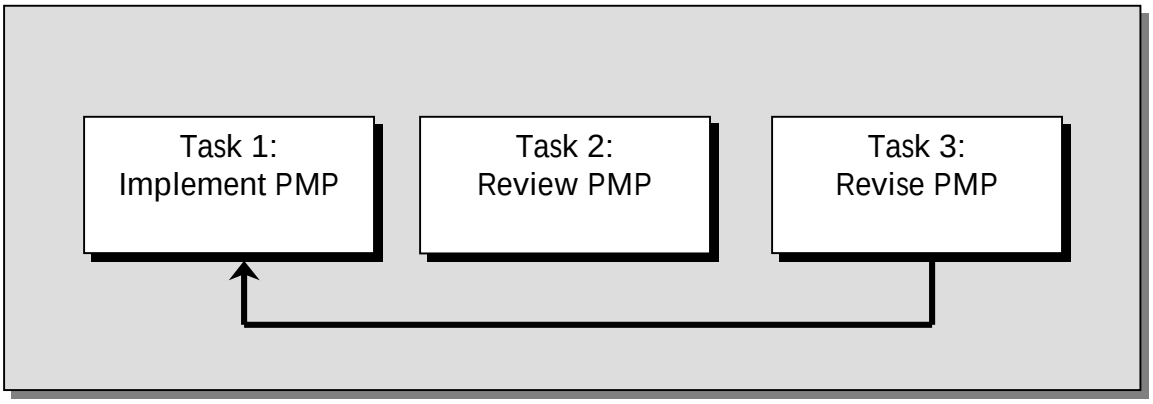
Once you have assembled the initial PMP, communicate the assembled plan to all relevant stakeholders and begin implementation.

Part 3: Implement, Review and Revise the PMP

Once developed, the PMP serves as a living document that you can use to guide the implementation of performance monitoring. As emphasized at the beginning of this toolkit, one of the key guiding principles of the PMP is:

> ***The PMP is the foundation for a sound performance management system.*** *A good PMP is a useful tool for management and organizational learning - it provides intelligence for decision-makers, and thus serves as a constant desk reference to guide the assessment of results. A good PMP is updated annually to ensure maximum use for decision-making. The PMP is NOT something developed only to satisfy Washington and then left to collect dust.*

Use the PMP continuously to make informed management decisions, improve tactics and organizational processes, identify performance gaps, and set goals for improvements.



CONSIDER THIS – Create a Results-Oriented Culture: *Planning* for performance data analysis and use will not, by itself, create a result-oriented culture. If you do not actually *use* the results, then no one will take performance measurement seriously. SO teams should strive to:

- Encourage and emphasize activities that contribute to results
- Continually assess activities to improve performance
- Use a mix of measures – consider effectiveness and efficiency
- Display current performance information and targets in the work environment
- Hold individuals and teams responsible for managing for results

Task 1 – Implement the PMP

Implementation of the PMP is not a one-time occurrence, but rather a process of on-going review, revision and re-implementation the PMP. Through this process, you will be able to:

- Determine whether the development hypothesis is valid
- Determine whether the critical assumptions continue to hold
- Determine whether performance indicators and data collected continue to support objectives and results
- Make informed decisions on whether to abandon or modify Agency program strategies, strategic objectives, or activities that are not achieving intended results
- Plan new strategies, strategic objectives, and/or activities

As you begin the implementation process, you may also want to ensure that the team is maintaining adequate documentation to support the performance management process***. Helpful Hint 10: Maintaining Official SO Team Files*** provides guidance in this area.

Task 2 – Review the PMP

Plan to review and revise the PMP at least annually and more often if necessary. This can be done during the portfolio review or R4 preparation. Consider the following questions:

- Are our indicators working?
- Are we getting the information that we need?
- How can we improve the PMP?

During the different phases of strategy implementation, occasionally take a critical look at performance indicators and data sources to make sure the indicators are still measuring what they were intended to measure and that data are being collected. Include an assessment of all performance indicators (at both SO and IR levels) and cover each data source.

Through the review of PMP data, you may find that different performance indicators would be more appropriate or that alternative data sources should be used to improve data quality. When changes are made to performance indicators or data, the rationale for the changes needs to be documented. This is critical if the PMP is to be a useful management tool. In addition, this prepares the team to answer questions for other stakeholders who want to know why changes were made and to what degree performance indicators and data were reviewed.

Task 3 – Revise the PMP

If upon review, PMP elements such as indicator definition or responsible individual are changed, the PMP also needs to be updated to reflect those changes. Implement the revised PMP and continue the cycle of review, revision and implementation until the results and objectives are achieved.

Appendix A - Worksheets

Worksheet 1: PMP Development Team Skills Matrix A-2

Worksheet 2: PMP Development Workplan..... A-3

Worksheet 3: Results Statement Assessment A-4

Worksheet 4: Results Framework Assessment A-5

Worksheet 5: Performance Indicator Quality Assessment..... A-6

Worksheet 6: Performance Indicator Reference Sheet A-8

Worksheet 7: Data Quality Assessment Checklist A-10

Worksheet 8: Performance Data Table A-18

Worksheet 9: Performance Management Task Schedule..... A-19

Worksheet 10: Evaluations and Special Studies Planning A-20

Worksheet 11: Evaluation Scope of Work (SOW) Planning..... A-21

WORKSHEET 1: PMP DEVELOPMENT TEAM SKILLS MATRIX

List all of the proposed team members of the PMP development team and their proposed roles. Check-mark each skill that the team members have. Use this worksheet to ensure that you have a good cross-section of skills represented on the team. An example of the completed matrix can be found in Part 1, Task 1 of the toolkit.

Name	*Role*	*Knows USAID MFR approach*	*Has sector experience*	*Has sector training or education*	*Knows local conditions in-depth*	*Knows USAID structure, processes, culture*	*Knows PM methods and best practices*	*Has facilitation, analytical and report writing skills*
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

WORKSHEET 2: PMP DEVELOPMENT WORKPLAN

Use this worksheet to list all of the major tasks and sub-tasks needed to prepare the PMP. Expand the worksheet by including additional rows in the table as needed. Another approach would be to use Microsoft Project to develop the workplan if someone on the team is familiar with it.

DESRIPTION	START DATE	END DATE	LEVEL OF EFFORT	STAFF
Phase 1:				
Task 1:				
Sub-task 1:				
Sub-task 2:				
Task 2:				
Sub-task 1:				
Sub-task 2:				
Phase 2:				
Task 1:				
Sub-task 1:				
Sub-task 2:				
Task 2:				
Sub-task 1:				
Sub-task 2:				

WORKSHEET 3: RESULTS STATEMENT ASSESSMENT

Sector: _____

Strategic Objective: _____

Results Statement (Name/Number): _____

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE RESULTS STATEMENT	***Yes***	***No***	***Unsure***	***COMMENTS***
Is the results statement MEASURABLE?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the results statement MEANINGFUL?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the results statement REALISTIC?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the results statement focused on USAID's STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the results statement CUSTOMER or STAKEHOLDER DRIVEN?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the results statement within the MANAGEABLE INTEREST of the Operating Unit and its development partners?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the results statement focused on RESULTS, e.g., impact, quality, cost/efficiency, or timeliness - (focused on the RESULTS or outcomes of activities rather than a description of activities themselves)?	❑	❑	❑	
Is the statement UNI-DIMENSIONAL (focused on one result rather than a combination of results)?	❑	❑	❑	

OTHER COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION:

___ ***Accept results statement***
___ ***Revise results statement and then accept***
___ ***Reject results statement***

WORKSHEET 4: RESULTS FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENT

Sector: _____

Strategic Objective: _____

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK	Yes	No	Unsure	COMMENTS
CAUSAL LINKAGE: At each level of the results framework, does achievement of one result cause the achievement of the other? Is the linkage direct?	❑	❑	❑	
CONTRIBUTIONS OF USAID PARTNERS: At each level of the results framework, have activities been identified (regardless of whether they will be conducted by USAID or its partners) to cause the result at the next level? [Note: not all results from USAID partners need to be identified in the framework but there may at least be mention of them in the narrative that accompanies the framework.]	❑	❑	❑	
MANAGEABLE INTEREST (A): Is the SO level result one that the team, working with its partners, can materially affect?	❑	❑	❑	
MANAGEABLE INTEREST (B): Is the team willing to be held accountable for all results within the results framework, including the SO level result?	❑	❑	❑	
CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS: Have all the critical assumptions been identified at each level of the results framework?	❑	❑	❑	

OTHER COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION:

___ *Accept results framework*
___ *Revise results framework and then accept*
___ *Reject results framework*

NOTE: Refer to TIPS 13: Building a Results Framework for additional information and examples of quality results frameworks.

WORKSHEET 5: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Indicator: _____

Relevant Result: _____

CRITERIA	***COMMENTS***
Is the indicator DIRECT? ▪ ***Does it closely measure the result it is intended to measure?*** ▪ ***Is it grounded in theory and practice?*** ▪ ***Does it represent an acceptable measure to both proponents and skeptics?*** ▪ ***If it is a proxy, is it as directly related to the relevant result as possible?***	
Is the indicator OBJECTIVE? ▪ ***Is it unambiguous about what is being measured?*** ▪ ***Is there general agreement over the interpretation of the results?*** ▪ ***Is it unidimensional (i.e., does it measure only one phenomenon at a time)?*** ▪ ***Is it operationally precise (i.e., is there no ambiguity over what kind of data should be collected)?***	
Is the indicator PRACTICAL? ▪ ***Are timely data available (i.e., is data current and available on regular basis)?*** ▪ ***Can the data be collected frequently enough to inform management decisions?*** ▪ ***Are data valid and reliable?*** ▪ ***Are the costs of data collection reasonable?***	

CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Is the indicator ADEQUATE? ▪ ***Does it merely indicate progress rather than attempt to fully describe everything an activity accomplishes?*** ▪ ***Taken as a group, are the indicator and its companion indicators the minimum necessary to ensure that progress toward the given result is sufficiently captured?***	
Is the indicator DISAGGREGATED, if appropriate?	
Is the indicator a RESULTS measure? ▪ ***Does it reflect an outcome of the program, not completion of an activity or process? Outcomes can include:*** - *Impact of services* - *Quality of services* - *Customer satisfaction* - *Timeliness* - *Costs/Efficiency*	
Is the indicator within USAID's MANAGEABLE INTEREST? ▪ ***Can changes in the value of the indicator be reasonably attributed to the efforts of USAID and its partners?***	
Is the indicator USEFUL for management?	
Is the indicator EASY to understand, communicate, and use?	
Is the indicator CREDIBLE?	

OTHER COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION:

WORKSHEET 6: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEET

Use this comprehensive reference sheet to record and update all relevant specifications and details for a particular indicator. Modify the sheet to meet Operating Unit requirements as needed. For suggestions on how to complete this form, see following page. Also, an example of a completed performance indicator reference sheet can be found in Part 2, Task 2.4 of the toolkit.

Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Strategic Objective: **Intermediate Result:** **Indicator:**
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): **Unit of Measure:** **Disaggregated by:** **Justification/Management Utility:**
PLAN FOR DATA ACQUISITION BY USAID
Data Collection Method: **Method of Acquisition by USAID:** **Data Source(s):** **Frequency/Timing of Data Acquisition:** **Estimated Cost of Data Acquisition:** **Responsible Individual(s) at USAID:**
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Date of Initial Data Quality Assessment: **Known Data Limitations and Significance (if any):** **Actions Taken or Planned to Address Data Limitations:** **Date of Future Data Quality Assessments:** **Procedures for Future Data Quality Assessments:**
PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS, REVIEW, & REPORTING
Data Analysis: **Presentation of Data:** **Review of Data:** **Reporting of Data:**
OTHER NOTES
Notes on Baselines/Targets: **Location of Data Storage:** **Other Notes:**
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: / /

Instructions for Completing the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet

Strategic Objective: Enter the title of the SO.

Intermediate Result: Enter the tile of the relevant IR, if any.

Indicator: Enter the full title of the indicator.

DESCRIPTION (Refer to Toolkit Part 2, Task 2)

Precise Definition(s): Define the indicator more precisely, if necessary. Define specific words or elements within the indicator as necessary.

Unit of Measure: Enter the unit of measure (e.g., number of…, percent of…, US dollars, etc.).

Disaggregated by: List planned data disaggregations (male/female, youth/adult, urban/rural, region, etc.)

Justification/Management Utility: Briefly describe why this particular indicator was selected and how it will be useful for managing performance of the SO team's portfolio.

PLAN FOR DATA ACQUISITION BY USAID (Refer to Toolkit Part 2, Task 3)

Data Collection Method: Describe the tools and methods through with the data will be collected.

Method of Acquisition by USAID: Describe the form in which the SO team will receive the data (e.g., periodic monitoring report, compiled survey analysis report, etc.)

Data Source(s): Identify who is responsible for providing the data to USAID (e.g., implementing partners, M&E contractor, specific SO team member, etc.).

Frequency/Timing of Data Acquisition: Describe how often data will be received by Operating Unit, and when.

Estimated Cost of Data Acquisition: Estimate the cost (in dollars and/or level of effort) of collecting the data.

Responsible Individual(s) at USAID: Identify the specific SO team member who will be directly responsible for acquiring the data.

DATA QUALITY ISSUES (Refer to Toolkit Part 2, Task 4)

Date of Initial Data Quality Assessment: Enter the date of initial data quality assessment and the responsible party.

Known Data Limitations and Significance (if any): Describe any data limitations discovered during the initial data quality assessment. Discuss the significance.of any data weakness that may affect conclusions about the extent to which performance goals have been achieved.

Actions Taken or Planned to Address Data Limitations: Describe how you have or will take corrective action, if possible, to address data quality issues.

Date of Future Data Quality Assessments: Enter the planned date for subsequent data quality assessments.

Procedures for Future Data Quality Assessments: Describe how the data will be assessed in the future (e.g., spot checks of partner data, financial audit, site visits, software edit check, etc.).

PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS, REVIEW, & REPORTING (Refer to Toolkit Part 2, Task 6)

Data Analysis: Describe how the raw data will be analyzed, who will do it, and when.

Presentation of Data: Describe how tables, charts, graphs, or other devices will be used to present data, either internally within the SO team or Operating Unit, or externally to Washington or other audiences.

Review of Data: Describe when and how the SO team or Operating Unit will review the data and analysis (e.g., portfolio review, mission internal review, activity-level reviews with implementing partners, etc.)

Reporting of Data: List any internal or external reports that will feature data for this indicator (e.g, R4 data tables, R4 narrative, Budget Justification, report to ambassador, activity manager's report, etc.)

OTHER NOTES (Refer to Toolkit Part 2, Task 5)

Notes on Baselines/Targets: Explain how the baselines and targets were set and identify any assumptions made. If baselines and targets have not been set, identify when and how this will be done.

Location of Data Storage: Identify where the data will be maintained in the Operating Unit (specific computer files or hard storage area, etc.)

Other Notes: Use this space as needed.

THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: mm/dd/yy

To avoid version control problems, enter the date of most recent revision to the reference sheet.

WORKSHEET 7: DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Refer to this checklist when the SO team conducts both initial and periodic data quality assessments. The full list does not have to be completed—the SO team may wish to identify the most critical data quality issues for formal or informal assessment.

Strategic Objective: _____

Intermediate Result (if applicable): _____

Performance indicator: _____

Data source(s): _____

Partner or contractor who provided the data (if applicable): _____

Year or period for which the data are being reported: _____

Is this indicator reported in the R4 Report? (circle one) YES NO

Date(s) of assessment: _____

Location(s) of assessment: _____

Assessment team members: _____

_____

For Office Use Only

SO team leader approval: X_____***Date***_____

Mission director or delegate approval:
X_____***Date***_____

Copies to: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

1. VALIDITY—Do the data adequately represent performance?

	Yes	No	Comments
Face Validity			
➢ Is there a solid, logical relation between the activity or program and what is being measured, or are there significant uncontrollable factors?	❑	❑	
Measurement Error			
Sampling Error (only applies when the data source is a survey)			
➢ Were samples representative?	❑	❑	
➢ Were the questions in the survey/questionnaire clear, direct, easy to understand?	❑	❑	
➢ If the instrument was self-reporting were adequate instructions provided?	❑	❑	
➢ Were response rates sufficiently large?	❑	❑	
➢ Has non-response rate been followed up?	❑	❑	
Non Sampling Error			
➢ Is the data collection instrument well designed?	❑	❑	
➢ Were there incentives for respondents to give incomplete or untruthful information?	❑	❑	
➢ Are definitions for data to be collected operationally precise?	❑	❑	
➢ Are enumerators well trained? How were they trained? Were they insiders or outsiders? Was there any quality control in the selection process?	❑	❑	
➢ Were there efforts to reduce the potential for personal bias by enumerators?	❑	❑	
Transcription Error			
➢ What is the data transcription process? Is there potential for error?	❑	❑	
➢ Are steps being taken to limit transcription error? (e.g., double keying of data for large surveys, electronic edit checking program to clean data, random checks of partner data entered by supervisors)	❑	❑	
➢ Have data errors been tracked to their original source and mistakes corrected?	❑	❑	
➢ If raw data need to be manipulated to produce the data required for the	❑	❑	

1. VALIDITY—Do the data adequately represent performance?

indicator:	*Yes*	*No*	*Comments*
➢ *Are the correct formulae being applied?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Are the same formulae applied consistently from year to year, site to site, data source to data source (if data from multiple sources need to be aggregated)?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Have procedures for dealing with missing data been correctly applied?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Are final numbers reported accurate? (Eg., does a number reported as a "total" actually add up?)*	❑	❑	
Representativeness of Data			
➢ *Is the sample from which the data are drawn representative of the population served by the activity?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Did all units of the population have an equal chance of being selected for the sample?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Is the sampling frame (i.e., the list of units in the target population) up to date? Comprehensive? Mutually exclusive (for geographic frames)*	❑	❑	
➢ *Is the sample of adequate size?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Are the data complete? (i.e., have all data points been recorded?)*	❑	❑	

Recommendations for improvement:

2. RELIABILITY—Are data collection processes stable and consistent over time?			
	Yes	*No*	*Comments*
Consistency			
➢ *Is a consistent data collection process used from year to year, location to location, data source to data source (if data come from different sources)?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Is the same instrument used to collect data from year to year, location to location? If data come from different sources are the instruments similar enough that the reliability of the data are not compromised?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Is the same sampling method used from year to year, location to location, data source to data source?*	❑	❑	
Internal quality control			
➢ *Are there procedures to ensure that data are free of significant error and that bias is not introduced?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Are there procedures in place for periodic review of data collection, maintenance, and processing?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Do these procedures provide for periodic sampling and quality assessment of data?*	❑	❑	
Transparency			
➢ *Are data collection, cleaning, analysis, reporting, and quality assessment procedures documented in writing?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Are data problems at each level reported to the next level?*	❑	❑	
➢ *Are data quality problems clearly described in final reports?*	❑	❑	

2. RELIABILITY—Are data collection processes stable and consistent over time?			
	Yes	***No***	***Comments***
Recommendations for improvement:			

3. TIMELINESS—Are data collected frequently and are they current?

	Yes	No	Comments
Frequency			
➢ Are data available on a frequent enough basis to inform program management decisions?	❑	❑	
➢ Is a regularized schedule of data collection in place to meet program management needs?	❑	❑	
Currency			
➢ Are the data reported in a given timeframe the most current practically available?	❑	❑	
➢ Are data from within the policy period of interest? (i.e., are data from a point in time after intervention has begun?)	❑	❑	
➢ Are the data reported as soon as possible after collection?	❑	❑	
➢ Is the date of collection clearly identified in the report?	❑	❑	

Recommendations for improvement:

4. PRECISION—Do the data have an acceptable margin of error?

	Yes	No	Comments
➢ Is the margin of error less than the expected change being measured?	❑	❑	
➢ Is the margin of error is acceptable given the likely management decisions to be affected? (consider the consequences of the program or policy decisions based on the data)	❑	❑	
➢ Have targets been set for the acceptable margin of error?	❑	❑	
➢ Has the margin of error been reported along with the data?	❑	❑	
➢ Would an increase in the degree of accuracy be more costly than the increased value of the information?	❑	❑	

Recommendations for improvement:

5. INTEGRITY—Are data are free of manipulation?			
	Yes	***No***	***Comments***
➢ ***Are mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that data are manipulated for political or personal reasons?***	❑	❑	
➢ ***Is there objectivity and independence in key data collection, management, and assessment procedures?***	❑	❑	
➢ ***Has there been independent review?***	❑	❑	
➢ ***If data is from a secondary source, is USAID management confident in the credibility of the data?***	❑	❑	
Recommendations for improvement:			

For indicators for which no recent relevant data are available
If no recent relevant data are available for this indicator, why not?
What concrete actions are now being undertaken to collect and report this data as soon as possible?
On what date will data be reported?

WORKSHEET 8: PERFORMANCE DATA TABLE

Input baselines and targets for the life of the SO for each SO and IR indicator. Modify the table to include additional indicators and years as needed. An excerpt from a completed table can be found in the toolkit in Part 2, Task 5.3.

SO or IR	Results Statement	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	Baseline Year	Baseline Value	2001 Target	2001 Actual	2002 Target	2002 Actual	2003 Target	2003 Actual
SO												
IR												
Sub-IR												

WORKSHEET 9: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TASK SCHEDULE

Use this worksheet to plan all of the SO team's monitoring and reporting activities over the life of the SO. Modify the table to include additional indicators and years as needed. An excerpt from a completed schedule can be found in Part 2, Task 6.1 of the toolkit.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TASKS	Episodic	FY 2001				FY 2002				FY 2003				NOTES
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
COLLECT PERFORMANCE DATA: RESULTS-LEVEL INDICATORS														
SO Indicators (list each in a separate row):														
IR Indicators (list each in a separate row):														
COLLECT PERFORMANCE DATA: ACTIVITY-LEVEL & CONTEXT INDICATORS														
CONDUCT EVALUATIONS & SPECIAL STUDIES														
REVIEW PERFORMANCE INFORMATION														
REPORT PERFORMANCE RESULTS														
ASSESS DATA QUALITY														
REVIEW & UPDATE PMP														

WORKSHEET 10: EVALUATIONS AND SPECIAL STUDIES PLANNING

Use this worksheet during a facilitated discussion with the PMP development team to determine whether and when evaluations and special studies might be conducted during the life of the SO. A completed version of this worksheet can be found in Part 2, Task 6.3 of the toolkit.

Evaluation/Study Subject	*When*	*Key Research Question(s)*

WORKSHEET 11: EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK (SOW) PLANNING

Use this worksheet as soon as the SO team has determined that an evaluation should take place in the near future. Reviewing this list of questions will help formulate a well-developed SOW.

PLANNING ELEMENTS	*DESCRIPTION*
What is the activity, or strategy being evaluated?	
Provide a brief background on the implementation.	
What are existing performance information sources?	
What is the purpose of the evaluation?	
Who is the audience for the evaluation?	
How will the evaluation be used?	
What are the key evaluation questions	
What evaluation methods will be used to answer the evaluation questions?	
What is the proposed composition of the evaluation team?	
What customers, partners, or stakeholders will participate in the evaluation?	
What is the schedule for the evaluation?	
What logistics are necessary for the evaluation?	
What are requirements for reporting and dissemination of the evaluation?	
What is the budget for the evaluation?	

Appendix B - Helpful Hints

Helpful Hint 1: Facilitating Group Discussions and Decision-Making B-2

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HELPFUL HINT 1: FACILITATING GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND DECISION-MAKING

There are two critical dimensions of an effective group discussion: "what" is discussed, and "how" the discussion takes place. The latter focuses on the process of the meeting – how decisions are made, how problems are resolved, how group members interact and is often where problems arise. Facilitators are especially helpful with managing the "how" aspects a meeting. However, they also sometimes assist with the "what" aspects as well.

Hints for Facilitators

- Encourage a creative environment
- Warm up
- Break the ice
- Review ground rules
- Introduce problem statement/discussion objective
- Manage flow of ideas/discussion
- Listen actively
- Solicit clarification by asking questions
- Provide feedback
- Record ideas/discussion on flip charts
- Facilitate decision-making. Consider consensus-building, multi-voting, pair-wise ranking, polling, or other techniques.

Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers "Basic Facilitation Skills Training Manual"

Ground Rules for Brainstorming

When used skillfully, brainstorming is a great technique to help people get involved in the process of generating creative ideas. A facilitator writes the topic or question to be brainstormed at the top of a large sheet of paper, then asks the group to call out their ideas in short phrases that can be written down quickly. In order to set a creative, high energy atmosphere, the following guidelines should be stated to the group at the outset:

- *Everyone participates*—no one dominates. Have each person share at least one idea before opening the floor for free flow.
- *Record every idea in full view* to prevents misunderstandings and reminds others of ideas.
- *Go for quantity*. The more ideas the better.
- *Don't criticize or evaluate ideas*. This is a key rule, and is often forgotten! Premature judgment will curb the essential creative flow. The time to evaluate is after you have created a large list of possibilities.
- *Encourage creative, free-wheeling ideas*. Wild ideas can lead to innovative approaches.
- *Ideas may be "piggy-backed."* One person may build upon another's idea.
- *Seek to combine ideas in creative ways*.

Do it quickly—5-15 minutes works well. After brainstorming, focus the group's thinking byjointly identifying the most promising ideas or combinations of ideas. Consider waiting a day before making a final decision in order to allow your sub-conscious mind to continue to work on it. Select the best idea based on agreed-upon criteria.

HELPFUL HINT 2: INDICATORS FOR HARD-TO-MEASURE RESULTS

Here are some key points to consider when using scales, indexes, and scorecards for hard-to-measure results.

Method	Definition	Strengths	Weaknesses
Rating Scales	A rating device that presents a range of responses of a single issue or a single dimension of an issue. Ratings are done by trained observers or experts. There are three major types of rating systems: written descriptions, photographs, and other visual scales	➢ Facilitates data collection on "soft" dimensions of development ➢ Enables transformation of "subjective" information into numbers	➢ Derived numbers can be misleading if underlying data are invalid or unreliable
Indexes	A combination of multiple ratings to assess an overall concept or issue	➢ A weighting system can be applied to assign greater or lesser value to each item in the index ➢ Useful for measuring progress in areas where complex, qualitative judgments are required	➢ Incorrect weighting can lead to erroneous conclusions ➢ Combining too many elements into a single number has limited management utility
Scorecards	A simple index that is based on yes/no responses	➢ Useful in determining whether certain characteristics are present ➢ Most useful for straightforward judgments	➢ May oversimplify complex information to the extent that scores lack meaning

Some points to note regarding rating scales and indexes:

- Different people use scales differently
- You need to determine how many values the scale should have
- Raters should be trained
- Consistency in ratings is key
- Using the same team of raters helps standardize ratings
- Weights should be assigned with care

Refer to the *Democracy and Governance Handbook's* appendix on using scales, indexes, and scorecards for performance measurement for additional examples.

HELPFUL HINT 3: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Your SO team can use the following interactive technique to brainstorm indicators for your results framework. Adapt the process to your needs and the resources available.

1. Set Up

On a large piece of newsprint, draw out the results framework for the SO. Under each results statement box, arrange the following:

- Blue Post-Its for each of the performance indicators initially proposed by the mission
- Mini Post-Its labeled with the name of each program under the result. Include the names of implementing partners and collaborating NGOs on each program Post-It
- Large Post-Its for general notes and comments

2. Discuss Initial or Existing Indicators

Discuss each of the initial indicators based upon your detailed quality assessment and notes from the review by the entire SO team. On each indicator Post-It, use Post-It "flags" or colored markers to record initial thoughts as follows:

- "Note!" flags for each indicator that the mission had previously proposed to report in the R4
- Green flags for each indicator that was outstanding or needed minimal improvement
- Yellow flags for each indicator that could be considered if it were significantly improved
- Red flags for each indicator that was completely unacceptable
- Blue flags for each red-flagged indicator that was not an acceptable performance indicator, but was a good indicator of context and that the mission should track

3. Brainstorm for New Indicators

Based upon discussions with partners, stakeholders, and others, brainstorm for additional indicators, with an eye for "adequacy" (including "balance"), using:

- Yellow Post-Its for each potential indicator
- For the new indicators, follow a rating process using flags as above.
- Engage in an iterative process of improvement, rating, and selection among all indicators

HELPFUL HINT 4: RAPID LOW-COST DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Key Informant Interviews: In-depth discussions on a specific topic with a knowledgeable person.

When Appropriate	Advantages	Limitations	Skills Required
➢ General information is sufficient for decision-making ➢ An understanding is required of the motivations and attitudes that direct behavior ➢ Available quantitative data needs to be interpreted ➢ Primary purpose of the study is to generate suggestions and recommendations ➢ The need is to develop questions, hypotheses, and propositions for further testing and refinement.	➢ Provides in-depth, inside information because it comes from knowledgeable persons. ➢ Provides flexibility to explore new idea & issues that had not been anticipated during planning ➢ Easy to find people with right skills to conduct these interviews ➢ Can be completed quickly.	➢ Does not provide quantitative data ➢ Findings are susceptible to interviewer biases	➢ Interviewer must have: ➢ Substantial knowledge of the subject and practical experience ➢ Exposure to techniques of conducting qualitative interviews ➢ Knowledge of local language

Focus Group Interviews: Participants discuss ideas, issues, and information among themselves under general supervision of a moderator

When Appropriate	Advantages	Limitations	Skills Required
➢ Ideas and hypotheses for designing a development intervention are needed ➢ Reactions to the recommended innovations need to be determined ➢ Responses of the local populations need to be determined ➢ Major implementation problems, whose nature and implications are not clear, are to be examined and analyzed ➢ Recommendations and suggestions are needed	➢ Enable information to be gathered rapidly ➢ Are economical-do not require large sample surveys, etc. ➢ Individual inhibitions are often reduced ➢ Generate fresh ideas	➢ Susceptible to same moderator biases as are key informant interviews ➢ Discussions can be dominated by a few articulate people ➢ Cannot provide quantifiable information	Interviewer must have ➢ Understanding of the subject ➢ Local language proficiency ➢ Training/ experience in conducting group discussions

Community Interviews: Community/village meetings open to all members

When Appropriate	Advantages	Limitations	Skills Required
➢ Village/Community-level data are required ➢ Support for a specific initiative needs to be assessed ➢ An assessment of the needs of communities is to be made in order to develop suitable programs ➢ An evaluation is to be conducted of the development initiative affecting a majority of the community members.	➢ Permit direct interactions between the investigator and a large number of local population ➢ Generate quantitative data ➢ Built-in mechanism for correcting inaccurate information ➢ Data can be collected quickly and can be cost effective	➢ Can be easily manipulated by community elite ➢ Can be monopolized by articulate participants ➢ Many issues cannot be discussed in group encounters	➢ Interviewer must have: ➢ Understanding of the subject ➢ Local language proficiency ➢ Training/ experience in conducting group discussions

Direct Observation: Intensive and systematic observation of a phenomenon or process in is natural setting. May involve interviews of key informants.

When Appropriate	Advantages	Limitations	Skills Required
➢ When trying to understand on-going behavior or an unfolding event ➢ Information about physical infrastructure is required ➢ Delivery systems or the services offered by public and private agencies are to be examined ➢ Preliminary information is required	➢ Enables investigator to study a phenomenon in its natural setting ➢ May reveal social and economic conditions and problems of which the informants are unaware ➢ Rapid and economical	➢ Susceptible to observer bias ➢ Units under observation must represent the population ➢ Observation affects people's behavior	➢ Observers must have: ➢ Specialized subject knowledge ➢ Experience in field observation ➢ Knowledge of local language

Informal Surveys: Differ from samples surveys in that they: focus on few variables, use a small sample size, use non-probability sampling, and permit more flexibility to interviewers in the field.

When Appropriate	Advantages	Limitations	Skills Required
➢ When quantitative information is needed about a homogeneous population ➢ Difficult to construct a probability sample without major investment ➢ Some qualitative information is already available ➢ Quantitative data about attitudes, beliefs and responses of target population are required immediately	➢ Can generate quantitative data when sample surveys are difficult ➢ Non-random sampling errors are low ➢ Provide relevant quantitative data in short time with limited personnel.	➢ Not good for collecting in-depth information ➢ Susceptible to sampling biases ➢ Complex statistical analyses are not always feasible	➢ Investigator must have: ➢ Strong knowledge of survey topic ➢ Formal training/ experience in conducting informal surveys ➢ Familiarity with local socioeconomic conditions

HELPFUL HINT 5: INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Operating Units have a variety of options to choose from when it comes to selecting an information system to manage the performance monitoring and reporting process. In order to decide what system is right for you, conduct a simple needs analysis by asking:

- How much will data collection and processing cost?
- What is the value of the information to decision-making?
- What level of data quality to decision-makers need?
- Who needs access to the data and when?
- What are the needs for security/control of data?
- What is the appropriate frequency of data collection and reporting?
- Are quality vendors/contractors available locally?

Microsoft Excel

Using a well-thought out spreadsheet, such as Microsoft Excel, may accomplish the mission's goals with less effort than an information system. Workbooks (files) can be used to work and store your data. Because each workbook can contain many worksheets, you can organize various kinds of related information into a single spreadsheet file. You can enter and edit data on several worksheets simultaneously and perform calculations based on data from multiple worksheets. When you create a chart, you can place the chart on the worksheet with its related data or on a separate chart sheet.

If using an Excel spreadsheet, take time to determine:

- How many fields of data (pieces of information) do you want to store?
- How many columns (in a database, a "field") and rows (in a database, a "record") would you need?

"Strengths" depend on a lot of things but could include:

- Relatively low cost to buy program (already included on many computers as part of the Microsoft Office suite)
- Relatively user-friendly
- Ability to generate graphs and charts based on data entered into the worksheet
- Help for users and developers is available within the program or from the Microsoft help centers in various countries and on the internet

"Weaknesses" include:

- Not robust/large enough for integration with enterprise-wide computer systems like Oracle
- Cannot provide meaningful analysis if data set is incomplete

Microsoft Access

Microsoft Access is a database program. You may need a programmer, although many non-IT specialists can learn Access fairly easily (the fact that the screens look similar to other Microsoft products helps). An average computer, or even a laptop, can run Access. Access is appropriate for a "mid-sized" database ("Large" would be Oracle). Access is often used by missions and other offices as their first database, when they are unlikely to need a large or complex database.

"Strengths" depend on a lot of things but could include:

- Relatively low cost to buy program (already included on many computers as part of the Microsoft Office suite)
- Relatively low cost of programmers (it is not a difficult programming language)
- Relatively user-friendly
- Help for users and developers is available within the program or from the Microsoft help centers in various countries and on the internet

"Weaknesses" include:

- Not robust/large enough for integration with enterprise-wide computer systems like Oracle
- Cannot provide meaningful analysis if data set is incomplete
- Fails when the data is too large (too many records) or there are too many relationships in the database

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

GIS is the general term used for applications that allow you to demonstrate the analysis of data in a map form; all GIS systems have a database inside. Although many GIS applications are available (do a search on the web to see some brand names) they require more expense and more development time than simple databases. GIS systems need a programmer, and the programmers are harder to find. It may be necessary to have a larger and/or dedicated computer to run a GIS system.

But ask questions first to determine if GIS is even needed. Why/how do you want the data to be linked to a map? Would it be enough just to have a chart showing the number of kids in each province or is it really important to show that information on a map? Although GIS systems are very powerful, especially for presenting uneven distributions of social indicators across geography, the cost of developing a system may not be justifiable.

"Strengths" depend on a lot of things but could:

- Can present data analysis linked to geography

"Weaknesses":

- Expense
- Less powerful analysis and results if you have an incomplete or small data set

Here are some examples of companies who sell GIS applications. On each of these web pages, there are descriptions of how GIS analysis was used in various sectors.

ESRI (http://www.esri.com/industries/index.html)
ArcInfo (http://www.esri.com/software/arcinfo/index.html)
ArcView (http://www.esri.com/software/arcview/index.html)
Atlas GIS (http://www.esri.com/software/atlas/index.html).
Clarklabs (http://www.clarklabs.org/03prod/gallery/imgalfrm.htm)
MapInfo
(http://www.mapinfo.com/solutions_and_services/interest_areas/government/government_solutions.html)
GRASS GIS (http://www.baylor.edu/~grass/links.html)

HELPFUL HINT 6: KEY FEATURES OF QUALITY DATA SOURCES

Primary Data Sources

You may occasionally use primary data collected on your own or through independent entities that you engage for this purpose. For example, you may require primary data to be collected scientifically to serve as a baseline, interim, or final evaluation of SO achievement.

In these settings, you should ensure that the contractor doing the data collection and analysis follows good statistical and operational methodology, as outlined in TIPS No. 12 and ADS 203.3.6.6.b. These requirements should be written into the contracts so they become enforceable if and when necessary. As part of data quality assessments, look for and document evidence of the following key features:

- Are there written descriptions of the data verification and validation procedures to be used to minimize the chance that significant error, including bias, are not added during collection, maintenance or processing of data?
- Are general procedures in place to control data quality, such as supervision of data collection?
- Are sufficient descriptions available of the instruments and procedures to be used to ensure that data are collected consistently over the course of the activity?
- Do mechanisms exist to ensure timely availability of data for management purposes?
- Is source documentation readily available?

Partner Data

Much of the data that you will collect will come from implementing partners, including contractors, cooperating agencies, and grantees. This data is typically derived from partners' ongoing performance monitoring systems. To assess the quality of partner data, you may:

- Periodically sample and review the partner data to ensure completeness, accuracy and consistency
- Use independent audits or other procedures for ensuring quality financial information when financial data is used for performance measurement
- Determine whether the partner appropriately addressed known data quality problems

As you seek to monitor whether implementation is on track towards expected results, you may want to use field visits, data from other sources, and independent surveys or evaluations to ensure quality data. All assessments should be documented and available. In particular, look for and document evidence of the following:

- Does the partner have procedures for data collection, maintenance and processing that are consistently applied and continue to be adequate?
- Does the partner continue to utilize these procedures to ensure a consistent flow of quality data?

Secondary Data Sources

Occasionally, you may rely on secondary data sources over which the Agency has no control. These may include government ministries or other bilateral donors or development agencies.

When such data are the only, or best, source of performance information, obtain as much information as possible as to how the data are collected and analyzed, and what quality control mechanisms exist. To perform data assessments, you may want to:

- Interview managers responsible for data collection within the source agency, and report findings in a memorandum of conversation.
- Discuss the quality of data—often off the record—with counterparts in other agencies. These discussions will be documented and summarized in memoranda that assess everything that is known about the reliability of such data.
- Share data collection experiences with secondary sources, and discuss how reliable they feel their information is. This information should be documented in trip reports.

When performing data quality assessments of secondary sources, you might choose to seek evidence of the following:

- Does the secondary source have procedures that periodically review data collection, maintenance and processing to ensure that these procedures are consistently applied and continue to be adequate?
- Were independent audits or other independent evaluations of the data available to ensure that quality data are available? This applies particularly to financial data, but may apply to other data if another donor or independent body assesses the adequacy of the data collection, analysis and reporting system.
- Does the secondary source address known data quality problems?
- Are there independent sources that confirm that secondary source data are accurate?

If the data from secondary sources turn out to be reliable, they can serve as an inexpensive, easily accessible source of performance information. If not, develop other data sources that can be used to monitor performance.

HELPFUL HINT 7: TIPS TO MINIMIZE BIAS

Bias Type	Tips to Minimize Bias
Interviewer bias	❑ Train interviewers thoroughly ❑ Standardize the interview protocol ❑ Use highly objective, closed ended questions ❑ Have each collector or team gather information from different areas, both in baseline and subsequent evaluation surveys ❑ For longitudinal surveys, the same data collector (or team) should collect information for the same individuals throughout the duration of the evaluation
Instrument or measurement bias	❑ Pilot test the instrument and revise accordingly ❑ Standardize measurement instruments and procedures ❑ Calibrate instruments frequently
Response bias	❑ Train interviewers thoroughly on how to probe for information ❑ Use highly objective, closed ended questions
Recall bias	❑ Train interviewers thoroughly on how to probe for information and how to help respondents remember past events ❑ Use specific and meaningful reference/recall period
Time or seasonal bias	❑ Standardize the time of day or season of data collection so information on treatment groups and controls is collected during the same period

HELPFUL HINT 8: TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION IN REPORTS

- Begin reports with a brief executive summary
- Include a table of contents and list of acronyms, if applicable
- Keep reports concise
- Use simple, clear language
- Use tables, charts, and graphs to summarize results
- Use simple, eye catching graphics to support text
- Synthesize available findings
- Use real examples
- Make concrete recommendations
- List “lessons learned”
- Provide references for additional sources of information

HELPFUL HINT 9: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE PORTFOLIO REVIEWS

The following tables (excerpted from ADS 203.3.3) provide a list of questions that can be used to plan and carry out portfolio reviews. Other questions may be relevant and useful to address. For those questions answered in the negative, the SO team should seek to understand the reason behind the answer and what corrective actions, if any, might be necessary.

Strategy and Activity Issues to Address during Portfolio Reviews

Area of Concern	Suggested Questions
Results	❑ Are the desired results being achieved? ❑ Are the results within USAID's manageable interest? ❑ Will planned targets set in the previous R4 be met? ❑ Is the performance management system in place adequate to capture data on the achievement of results?
Outputs	❑ Are planned outputs being completed on schedule? ❑ Are the outputs leading to the achievement of the desired results as anticipated?
Inputs	❑ Are the necessary inputs being provided on schedule by USAID and/or its customers/partners? ❑ Are inputs effective in producing the desired outputs? ❑ Are funding pipelines adequate to finance activities until new funds become available for obligation? ❑ If there are significant differences between planned and actual expenditures, do these point to potentially problematic delays or cost overruns ?
Development hypothesis	❑ Has the logic identified in the development hypothesis in the Results Framework been found to hold true? ❑ If not, what adjustments, if any, are needed to the strategy?
Critical assumptions inherent in results framework	❑ Do the assumptions stated in the Results Framework still hold true? ❑ If not, what effect does this have on the SO activities and expected results?
Non-USAID circumstances	❑ Are situations or circumstances beyond USAID control and influence, other than the identified critical assumptions, affecting USAID activities? ❑ If so, what are they, and what are the effects on USAID activities?
Interface between tactics and strategy	❑ At the current rate of progress, is USAID on track to achieve the results that have been targeted in the future? ❑ Have significant problems or issues been identified in their early stages in order to take corrective action, or are they dealt with after major problems have occurred?

Process Issues to Address during Portfolio Reviews

Area of Concern	Suggested Questions
Indicators and targets	❑ Are the performance indicators appropriate for management needs? ❑ Are the established indicators being monitored regularly? ❑ Will USAID be able to attribute progress in the indicator to USAID? ❑ Were the set targets realistic? ❑ If not, what targets are more appropriate? ❑ Do performance data meet quality standards for reporting?
Evaluations	❑ Have any evaluations been completed to fill performance information gaps? ❑ Is the information from prior evaluations informing decisions and action on relevant activities? ❑ Are new evaluations needed to inform future decisions?
Teamwork	❑ Do team members have clear roles and responsibilities and adequate authority for implementing activities? ❑ Is the team receiving adequate support from other units in the Mission, Operating Unit or Bureau? ❑ Is the team regularly involving non-USAID members in information sharing and decision-making? ❑ Is staffing of the team adequate? ❑ Are any changes to roles or new team members needed? ❑ Are sub-teams (if any) functioning adequately?
Customer/partner perceptions	❑ Are customer/partner expectations and needs being regularly assessed? ❑ Are customers/partners involved in performance management and assessing effort? ❑ Are gender concerns being addressed, and are there new gender issues that the SO team needs to take into account? ❑ What opportunities do customers have to obtain information and to provide ongoing feedback to USAID on priorities and activity implementation?

Vulnerability Issues to Address during Portfolio Reviews

Area of Concern	Suggested Questions
Financial vulnerability	❑ Do recipient institutions meet financial management and accountability standards? ❑ Are the funds received from USAID being handled properly? ❑ Are previously identified problem areas being corrected?
Other vulnerability	❑ Are activities in compliance with any applicable legal or legislative restrictions? ❑ Are potential conflict of interest or procurement integrity issues being adequately managed? ❑ Are activities in compliance with the environmental impact mitigation provisions of the 22 CFR environmental determination? (see ADS 204 and ADS 201.3.4.11b)
Audit readiness	❑ Are filing systems and documentation adequate to establish an audit trail? ❑ Are approval authorities and procedures clear and being followed? ❑ Has the necessary post-obligation documentation been developed (e.g., financial and substantive tracking)? ❑ Are the performance indicators supported by documentation that show reported data accurately represent real progress?

HELPFUL HINT 10: MAINTAINING OFFICIAL SO TEAM FILES

You are responsible for ensuring that you have official documentation to support the SO team's performance management and reporting activities. According to the ADS 202.3.7.4, you must maintain ***"a Performance Monitoring Plan and supporting documents, updates, and amendments".*** Accordingly, ADS 201.3.4.13 specifically mentions the following PMP elements:

PMP Required Elements	PMP Recommended Elements
➢ Detailed description of the performance indicators to be tracked ➢ Description of the source, method, and schedule for data collection and assignment of responsibility for data collection to a specific office, team, or individual ➢ Description of the known data limitations, the significance of the limitations for judging the extent to which goals have been achieved, and completed or planned actions to address these limitations ➢ Description of the quality assessment procedures that will be used to verify and validate the measured values of actual performance	➢ Explanation or justification for the selection of each particular indicator ➢ Description of plans for data analysis, reporting, review, and use ➢ Identification of possible evaluation efforts to complement the performance management effort and identify circumstances requiring evaluations or other special studies ➢ Estimation of the costs of collecting, analyzing, and reporting performance data ➢ Use of actual versus planned expenditures as an indicator to track the relationship between inputs and outcomes ➢ Plans for monitoring the underlying hypothesis, critical assumptions, and context affecting the Results Framework

In addition to the PMP itself, as you begin implementing the PMP you should organize and maintain a set of performance management files that document your performance management activities. The following files refer to the ***"supporting documents, updates, and amendments"*** that you should consider maintaining to support the PMP:

Recommended Documentation for Performance Management Files

- Data tables with targets and actual data for all indicators in PMP
- Source documents/supporting documentation for all data recorded in data tables
- Calculations to support data recorded in performance data tables
- Documentation of data quality assessments
- Documentation of indicator assessments
- Justification for any changes to R4 indicators
- Copies of all special studies and/or evaluations
- Copies of all surveys and other instruments used to collect performance data
- Reports of site visits by USAID staff to monitor activities
- Activity progress reports from partners
- Summary of outcomes of annual portfolio review process and activity implementation review if any

Lastly, ADS 202.3.7.4 requires SO teams and Operating Units to maintain the following documents related to performance management:

Required Documentation for Performance Management Files

- Strategic Plan
- Management Agreement (formerly Management Contract)
- Statutory checklists
- Assistance checklists
- Country checklists
- SO Team delegations and membership lists (including sub-team information, as appropriate)
- Activity approval documents
- Environmental reviews (including 22 CFR 216 documentation)
- Waivers
- Congressional notifications
- Bilateral obligation documents (grant and loan agreements)
- Non-bilateral obligation documents (contracts, grants, purchase orders, inter-agency agreements, PASAs, and RSSAs)
- Non-obligating agreements (memoranda of understanding)
- Procurement Requests, Commitment/Obligation Records
- Implementation letters
- Official correspondence
- Audit reports
- Results Review and Resource Request (R4)
- Evaluations
- Close out reports

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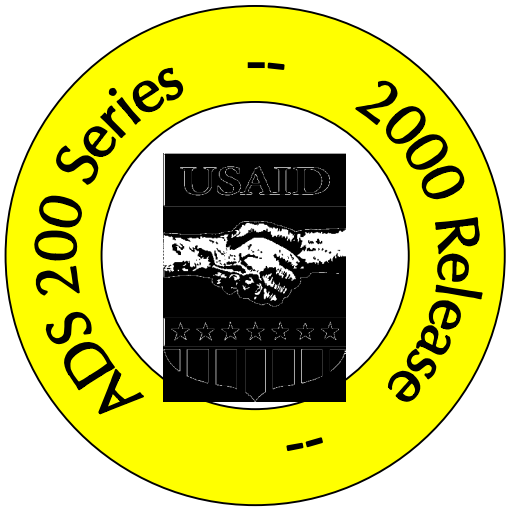


ADS 200 – INTRODUCTION TO MANAGING FOR RESULTS (EXCERPTS)

200.3.3 OVERVIEW OF USAID'S RESULTS-BASED PROGRAMMING SYSTEM

The approach and philosophy embodied in USAID's programming system evolved from innovative techniques developed by USAID staff as they sought more effective ways to work in extremely varied and changing development environments. USAID reform efforts legitimized and expanded a variety of successful practices. Overall, the objectives of this system are to

- Limit the Bureau approval process to higher-level results, as opposed to activity-level inputs and outputs
- Link Bureau budget allocations to results (objectives) as opposed to activities with defined inputs and outputs
- Delegate activity design, approval, and budgeting decisions to Operating Units
- Establish teams that bridge organizational boundaries both within and outside of USAID as the basic organizational unit to manage development programs

The system is designed to promote clarity in defining objectives and provide flexibility in selecting and implementing the activities to achieve them. A dynamic cycle of management functions lies at the heart of the system. These three functions are

- Planning
- Achieving
- Assessing and Learning

These three functions operate within the context of two elements of management leadership – defining an organizational mission and vision and taking management initiatives. The following graphic illustrates this model:

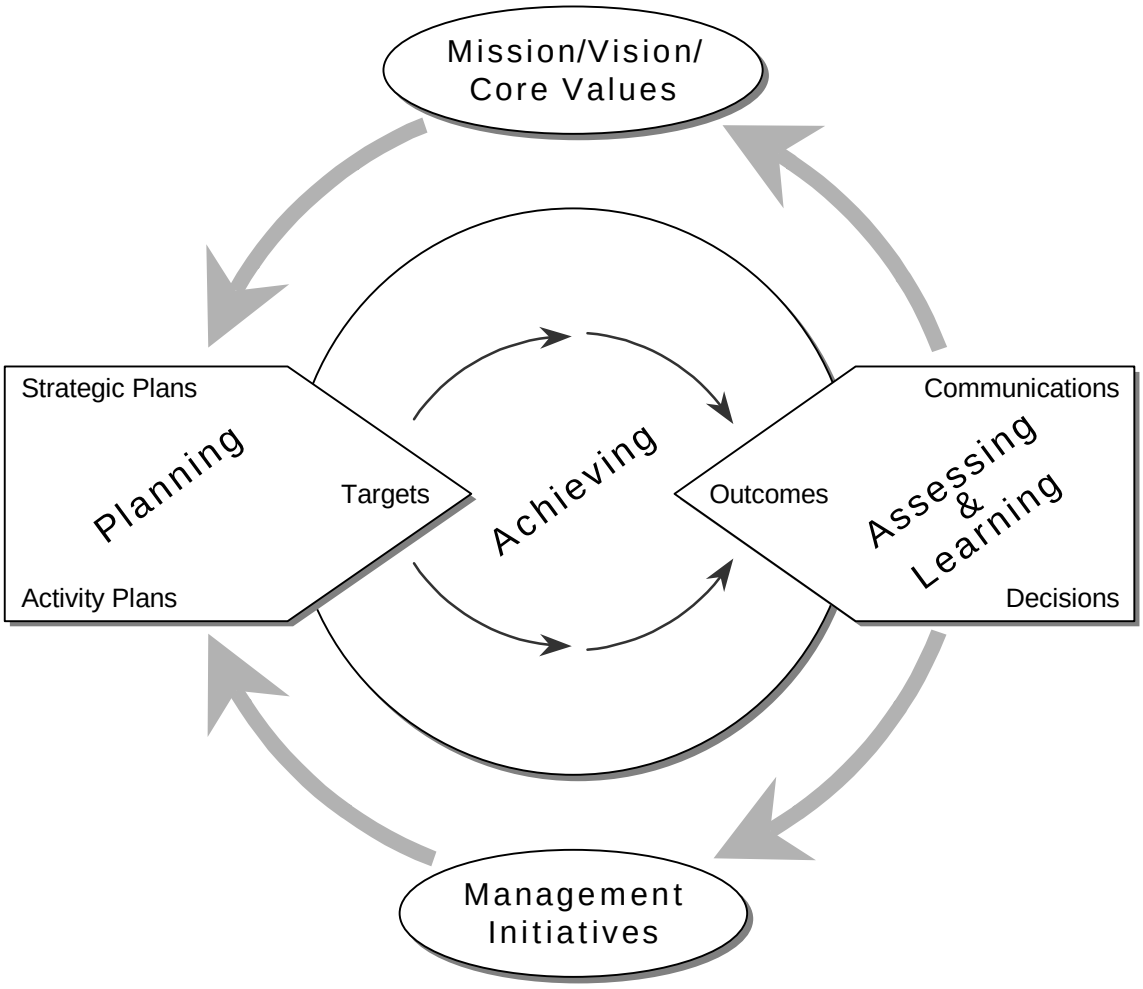


Figure 200A, Managing for Results

Before discussing each of the three main functions, it is worth pointing out three important linkages:

- The Agency **mission, vision, and core values** provide a framework that guides our planning. This framework is shaped by learning from past experience (both from USAID and others' experience). Our mission is described in the Agency Strategic Plan. **(See 200.4.2 and Mandatory Reference, The Agency's Strategic Framework and Indicators)** This plan also sets out an overall vision of what we want to accomplish through a statement of our overarching Agency goals. Section 200.3.1.1 of this chapter supplements the Strategic Plan by providing a vision of how we work. **(See 200.3.1.1)** Together, these mission and vision statements represent a broad consensus on a framework for action that directly impact our planning efforts.

- Linking the planning and the assessing and learning functions are **performance measures**. We need to know whether we are succeeding, and we do this by establishing performance measures and **performance targets** before achievement takes place. We use these measures to assess progress and **outcomes**. When necessary, we work to develop better performance measures as we implement our programs. These measures help us stay focused on results throughout the three phases of our work.
- Assessing and learning is not the end of the process. It includes making decisions that lead to **management initiatives** that in turn put us back into planning. New planning could range from developing a new activity, to refining Strategic Objectives or Intermediate Results, to rethinking our tactics in an entire goal area of the Agency Strategic Plan. The latter could affect many subsequent objectives in different country or Washington programs.

The three basic functions or phases of the model are summarized in sections 200.3.4.1 through 200.3.4.3.

A Note on Terminology

The term "project" is generally used throughout the development community and in host countries to denote structured interventions developed through various bureaucratic, analytical, and approval processes. In that general sense, USAID still carries out projects. Operating Units may wish to use the term "project" instead of "Strategic Objective" or "activity" when communicating with other organizations (for example, when translation of new terminology to different languages is problematic). However, we should be careful to bear in mind that the new programming approach is significantly different from that used prior to 1995, and that different U.S. Government entities do not use the term "project" consistently. Internally, in the ADS guidance, we use the term "activities" to refer to the inputs and outputs level of our intervention and the contracts and grants used to manage them. Every activity is intended to contribute to achieving formally approved results, defined as Strategic or Special Objectives or Intermediate Results. SOs provide the rationale for our activities.

200.3.3.1 PLANNING

Planning includes strategic and activity planning. Strategic planning occurs at several levels (at the Agency, Bureau, Operating Unit, and SO Team levels). Although many different steps are involved, the end result of strategic planning is to define the specific results we hold ourselves accountable for achieving. We call these types of results Strategic or Special Objectives. Activity planning serves to define the means (that is the inputs and outputs) that we need to achieve these objectives.

Key aspects of planning include

- Engaging customers and partners in our planning process to improve the quality of our decisions and increase the chances of achieving useful results

- Understanding the context and parameters within which we work, including relevant Agency policy, the host country, and other actors, such as donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Identifying and clarifying the specific development problems we seek to affect
- Developing hypotheses about how to address the selected problem
- Defining results (objectives) that reflect that hypothesis and obtaining approval to fund them
- Articulating alternative approaches and obtaining approval of funds for the approach chosen
- Determining how we will assess progress
- Organizing teams to manage for results
- Developing activities that achieve intended results and obtaining the approval to fund them in the time allotted

200.3.3.2 ACHIEVING

Achieving consists of implementing the activities we have planned. Because the majority of activities are conducted with partner institutions (governments, international organizations, contractors, and grantees), this means putting in place formal agreements to work with them and provide necessary financing.

Key aspects of achieving include

- Structuring effective SO teams and partner relationships
- Mobilizing inputs, including developing and negotiating formal agreements with partner organizations
- Engaging customers and partners to achieve results
- Managing financial aspects of work, including budgeting resources and reviewing expenditures
- Monitoring the quality and timeliness of outputs
- Ensuring accountability for use of resources and minimizing audit vulnerability

200.3.3.3 ASSESSING AND LEARNING

Assessing and learning represent a continuous effort to help anticipate and measure the impact we will have on the objectives we have defined, make decisions that improve our chances of ultimate success, and ensure that learning takes place both within the SO Team and throughout the organization. Assessing and learning take place as we work with our partners to transform inputs into outputs and as we assess whether the outputs are adequate to achieve our stated objectives. It requires good performance data and supporting analysis and evaluation. It also requires asking tough questions about the underlying logic on which our programs are based and the assumptions we made regarding events we do not control. In the long-term, we should learn from our experiences and save those lessons for future use.

Key aspects of assessing and learning include

- Reporting performance honestly and openly, even when results are not what was hoped
- Involving customers and partners in assessing the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of outputs
- Tracking progress in achieving outputs and results and reporting this progress
- Assessing the reliability and quality of performance measures and correcting weaknesses when these are found
- Questioning the underlying causal linkages between activities and results and conducting evaluations and research that can identify ways to strengthen that link
- Providing performance information at all levels of the Agency, at a level of detail that matches the needs of information users
- Recognizing the importance of learning from our mistakes rather than minimizing them to avoid possible embarrassment

ADS 201 – PLANNING (EXCERPTS)

201.3.4.13 PLANNING FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management requires access to useful and timely information on a broad range of factors throughout the life of an SO. Without planning how and when this information is to be obtained, it will be difficult or impossible, once activities start, to put systems in place to ensure adequate information flow to affect on-going decision-making and meet annual performance reporting requirements. The SO Team and their operating unit must take adequate steps to plan and institutionalize a process for collecting performance information as part of everyday work. This section describes how to carry out this planning. **(See ADS 203.3.2, Conceptual Framework, for a fuller discussion of the context within which assessing and learning takes place)**

a. The Performance Monitoring Plan

A Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) is a tool to support results-focused program management. A written PMP document must be in place for each SO within one year of strategy approval unless otherwise prescribed by the respective Bureau in the strategy review reporting cable. The PMP must be reviewed and approved by the Head of the Operating Unit. Although SO Teams are not required to submit PMPs to Washington for approval, sharing PMPs with technical and program specialists is encouraged. There is no one standard format for a PMP. Operating Units should use a format that best fits actual needs.

The PMP serves to

- Define specific performance indicators for each SO and IR, determining baselines and setting targets
- Plan and manage the R4 data collection process to meet quality standards for R4 reporting. This includes incorporating relevant data collection requirements into activities and obligation agreements
- Plan potential related evaluative work to supplement R4 Indicator data
- Estimate costs related to data collection and planning how these will be financed
- Communicate performance expectations to partner institutions that will produce the specific outputs that are intended to cause measurable changes in performance indicators

PMP Contents

At a minimum, PMPs must

- Provide a detailed description of the performance indicators to be tracked

- Specify the source, method, and schedule for data collection and assign responsibility for data collection to a specific office, team, or individual
- Describe the known data limitations, discuss the significance of the limitations for judging the extent to which goals have been achieved, and describe completed or planned actions to address these limitations
- Describe the quality assessment procedures that will be used to verify and validate the measured values of actual performance

Although not required to do so, Performance Monitoring Plans will be more useful to the Operating Unit if they

- Provide an explanation or justification for the selection of each particular indicator
- Describe plans for data analysis, reporting, review, and use
- Identify possible evaluation efforts to complement the performance management effort and identify circumstances requiring evaluations or other special studies
- Estimate the costs of collecting, analyzing, and reporting performance data
- Incorporate the use of actual versus planned expenditures as an indicator to track the relationship between inputs and outcomes
- Discuss plans for monitoring the underlying hypothesis, critical assumptions, and context affecting the Results Framework

Although there is no standard format specified for PMPs, it may be helpful to incorporate the format of the R4 performance data tables. **(See Additional Help document, TIPS No. 7, Preparing a PMP)**

PMP Preparation

During the strategic plan preparation phase, the SO Team will find it helpful to begin planning for performance management. Well-designed results frameworks reflect careful advance consideration of performance indicators, baselines, targets, and data quality issues.

In some instances, completion of the PMP may take place in stages if all interventions cannot be precisely defined early on. For example, if an implementing partner is tasked with developing major portions of a program (such as selecting types of interventions, local community partners, and areas of concentration), PMP completion will have to wait until the implementing partner has established a country presence and has had time to develop performance monitoring instruments and select specific sites. In such cases, the SO Team must prepare a preliminary PMP. In addition to including information on areas that can be adequately defined, the PMP can be used to establish milestones for accomplishing these preliminary mobilization tasks.

SO Teams should review and update their PMPs at least annually as part of the Portfolio Review and R4 preparation. **(See ADS 203.3.3, Portfolio Review, and ADS 203.3.6, R4)**

b. Performance Indicators

How Many Performance Indicators Should an SO Team Have?

Operating Units may have as many indicators in their Performance Monitoring Plan as are necessary and cost effective for management purposes. As a rule of thumb, two or three indicators per strategic element (i.e., per SO and IR) should be sufficient to assess performance if they generally meet the criteria described in section 203.3.6.5, Quality Standards for R4 Indicators. **(See ADS 203.3.6.5)** If the strategic element is narrowly defined, a single indicator may be adequate. Too many indicators can be worse than too few if they require more work (and money) to collect, analyze, report, and use. An SO Team will need enough indicators to meet R4 reporting requirements over the life of the SO. **(See ADS 203.3.6 and Additional Help documents TIPS No. 6, Selecting Performance Indicators, and TIPS No. 12, Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality)**

Can an SO Team Use Qualitative Indicators?

SO Teams may use qualitative indicators if they are the most appropriate and effective way of measuring an intended result. To ensure that indicators are comparable over time, SO Teams should clearly define and document qualitative indicators so as to permit regular, systematic, and relatively objective judgment regarding their change in value or status.

One useful type of qualitative indicator is a milestone, or milestone scale. To develop a meaningful set of milestone indicators, the SO Team looks at their Results Framework across the life of the SO and determines the significant events that will tell them they are achieving results. Very often, milestones are used for policy activities; for example, the establishment of an electoral commission or the revision of voter rolls are often used as important milestones towards “free and fair elections.” Milestones can also be helpful in interim PMPs during start-up or close out of activities.

Do SO Teams Have to Use Common Indicators?

The Agency made an effort to identify and use indicators that would be common for programs in each goal area. Because of the wide variation in country situation and types of programs, this approach turned out to be ineffective. The common indicators were either not useful for management or were still not amenable to aggregation at regional or Bureau levels. Clearly, there is variability between different Agency goal areas. For example, it is often easier to use common or similar indicators in Population and Child Survival than it is in Democracy and Governance.

As a result, SO Teams do not have to use common indicators. However, when identifying performance indicators, it is helpful to consider indicators that are derived from Agency experience and best practices within each sector. Country

programs with a similar development context that face similar development policies are encouraged to use similar indicators. The Agency's Annual Performance Plan (APP) is a useful source of information on indicators that have been found useful at aggregating performance information across a particular program area. The Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, Center for Development Information and Evaluation (PPC/CDIE) and Operating Units in the Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research (G) maintain current information on the status and availability of common performance indicators. Contact PPC and G for indicators that may be usable in your program area.

Can SO Teams and Operating Units Change Performance Indicators?

It is preferable to use the same set of indicators across the life of an SO whenever possible. In many cases, however, this is not possible, and SO Teams and Operating Units should change the indicators they use when it is determined that these are not useful or practical.

In some situations, an Operating Unit will find that initial indicators do not work out as well as had been anticipated. For example, good quality data may not be available or may be prohibitively expensive to collect. Sometimes, an indicator is very important at one phase of an activity (e.g., teacher training) but is not as important later (e.g., when classroom performance and student achievement may be the desired outcome).

In situations where indicators change, a brief discussion of the reasons for the change should be appended to the PMP. For changing indicators that are used for annual R4 reporting see section 203.3.6.4 for additional guidance. **(See ADS 203.6.4)**

How Must Indicators and Evaluations Reflect Gender Considerations?

Men and women have different access to development programs and are affected differently by USAID activities. USAID seeks to understand these differences, both to improve the overall impact of its programs and to ensure that women, who traditionally have less access to loans and other economic goods than do men, can obtain the resources they need to improve their lives.

One way to understand the effect of gender on our development efforts would be to disaggregate performance information by sex. In practice, however, this is not always feasible or cost effective. The following requirement has been developed to ensure due consideration in assessing the relationship between gender and our development efforts:

> Performance management systems and evaluations at the SO and IR levels must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the technical analyses conducted during the strategic planning stage demonstrates that
>
> - The activity or its anticipated results involve or affect women and men differently

- This difference is potentially significant for managing towards sustainable program impact

Such activities include, but are not limited to, humanitarian programs, micro-enterprise grants, and training programs. Where the people targeted by the activity cannot be easily identified (e.g., people who attend mass meetings, people who buy from social marketing program vendors, etc.), it may be too difficult to track and report sex-disaggregated data. In these cases, SO Teams are encouraged to refer to the "USAID Guide to Gender Analysis and Integration" for contextual indicators that may help them to assess gender impact indirectly.

It is highly recommended that SO Teams be aware that their activities may have significant differential effects by social group and watch to ensure that neither women nor men are disproportionately affected. For example, in a region where 8 of 10 farmers are women and there are certain social norms governing social relations between the sexes, the SO Team should weigh the benefits of using male versus female agricultural extension agents. Similarly, policy changes can often affect men and women differently, and SO Teams should look for unexpected effects that may need to be addressed.

When gender technical expertise is not present in an Operating Unit, technical assistance is available from the Global Bureau's Office of Women in Development. **(See Additional Help document, USAID Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis)**

c. Performance Baselines and Targets

PMP indicators selected to report progress in the R4 must be identified, including their baseline and targets, at least one year in advance in the preceding R4. **(See ADS 203.3.6)**

- **Performance baselines** reflect, as closely as possible, the value of each performance indicator at the start of USAID-supported activities that contribute to the achievement of the relevant strategic element. The baseline of a milestone indicator describes the status at the start of the intervention.
- **Performance targets** identify the specific, planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit time frame.

It is highly recommended that SO Teams establish baselines and targets for all other indicators in the PMP that may not be used for the current R4 reporting.

d. Budgeting for Performance Management

Sufficient funding and personnel resources must be made available for performance management work. The Agency recommends that 3 to 10 percent of total program resources be allocated for this purpose. Obviously, factors unique to each activity or strategic element influence this decision.

Performance management and evaluation must be cost-effective. If anticipated costs appear prohibitive, the SO Team should consider modifying

- Performance indicators to permit less expensive approaches to regular data collection
- Approach or design of evaluations, considering rapid, low-cost alternatives
- Relevant SO or Intermediate Result, since it is not possible otherwise to judge progress at reasonable costs

In some situations, expensive technical analysis or studies, such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), are vital to managing performance and are important ingredients of the development activity itself.

ADS 202 – ACHIEVING (EXCERPTS)

202.3.4 MONITORING QUALITY AND TIMELINESS OF KEY OUTPUTS

A major task of CTOs and SO Teams generally includes monitoring the quality and timeliness of outputs produced by implementing partners. Outputs are specifically described in SOWs and grant agreement program descriptions. Their production and use are critical to achieving results. Delays in completing outputs, or problems in output quality, provide an early warning that results may not be achieved as planned. This information may affect results-level performance targets that the SO Team presents in the R4 document. **(See ADS 203)** Early action in response to problems is essential in managing for results.

Monitoring compliance with 22 CFR 216 environmental determinations is part of this task. Environmental reviews are actively managed throughout the life of the SO and to ensure environmental soundness of activities. **(See ADS 204.3 and ADS 204.5.4 for additional guidance and see Mandatory Reference 22 CFR 216)**

202.3.4.1 ASSESSING PERFORMANCE OF CONTRACTORS AND RECIPIENTS

Assessing performance in the achieving stage normally refers to whether the outputs produced by the contractor or grantee are timely and of acceptable quality. Performance in terms of higher-level development results (as opposed to outputs) is discussed more broadly in ADS 203. **(See ADS 203)**

When it chooses a contract as the implementing instrument, the SO Team initially develops a Contract Monitoring Plan. Once the contract is awarded, the SO Team and the contractor "fine-tune" the Contract Monitoring Plan to ensure that its elements are accurate and appropriate. The CTO uses it to ensure that the contractor is performing in accordance with the terms contained in the contract. CTO responsibilities for monitoring contractor performance include

- Reviewing and approving deliverables and performance reports
- Maintaining a CTO work file
- Reporting variations, proposed substitutions, and problems
- Recommending modifications
- Analyzing financial reports
- Approving interim payments
- Preparing annual Contractor Performance Reports for contracts that have a value of more than $100,000, and submitting them to the Contracting Officer

When the implementing instrument is a grant or cooperative agreement, the role of the U.S. Government in day-to-day assessment of grantee performance is generally limited to certain fiscal oversight responsibilities, such as obtaining quarterly reports and other minimal

management areas as described in 22 CFR 226. **(See Mandatory Reference 22 CFR 226)** Ultimately, as part of assessing the effectiveness of activities in achieving results (as discussed in ADS 203), the SO Team will form an opinion about whether or not to issue further grants to a particular grantee.

SO Team members and CTOs must immediately notify the Contracting Officer of any suspected procurement fraud, bribery, conflict of interest, or other improper conduct, and then report these promptly and directly to the Inspector General.

Additional information concerning performance issues can be found in Additional Help in the *Technical Officer's Guide for Evaluating Contractor Performance.* Also see the MFR Training, Unit 2, Lesson 5, for additional information on monitoring contractor/recipient performance. **(See Additional Help document, MFR training, Unit 2, Lesson 5)**

202.3.4.2 USING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Use of customer feedback is essential for assessing the adequacy of outputs delivered. Teams will need to develop mechanisms to help ensure that implementing partners share the Agency's commitment to customer focus and that an effective feedback loop exists to bring customer information into results and activity management decisions. Customer participation can take place in several ways, including

- Involving customer representatives from associations, non-governmental organizations, informal groups, and/or collections of individuals on other SO Teams as members of the SO Team
- Making sure all acquisition and assistance instruments identify the intended customers for the results the parties are agreeing to achieve when they sign the agreement
- Developing an iterative process whereby feedback is elicited from customers and stakeholders through normally accepted means (e.g., focus groups, town meetings, formal and informal consultations, systematic formalized customer surveys or research, and rapid appraisal methods that involve customers) and communicating feedback to ultimate customers with an explanation of how their recommendations have been incorporated into our programming
- Recognizing the roles and responsibilities of the full range of customers, including both women and men

(See ADS 203 for further guidance on participatory techniques for assessing progress.)

202.3.4.3 MAKING NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

You must make adjustments in tactics when conditions warrant. This may include developing an entirely new activity and instrument, or it may simply mean modifying and changing existing activities. In either case, you must involve your Contracting/Agreement Officer early in the process.

Changing activities and instruments in mid-stream can create legal problems as well as disrupt implementation. Consequently, the risk of such changes must be balanced prudently with the intended benefit. Nevertheless, we must always remember that once a plan is

finalized and implementation begins, we continue to learn. In some cases, we might learn that our original plan needs to be modified or that the instrument or entity implementing under the instrument is not appropriate for the job. The SO Team must consult the Contracting Officer and, if appropriate, the legal advisor as soon as possible when it is considering any change that would affect a legal agreement. The SO Team must also determine whether and when it is appropriate to consult with Operating Unit management and host government/country partners when it contemplates such changes.

ADS 203 – ASSESSING AND LEARNING (EXCERPTS)

203.3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

203.3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Managing for results requires making decisions and taking actions to steer a set of activities to achieve intended results. Managers seek to combine feedback on past efforts with insights, hypotheses, other knowledge, and experience to make professional judgments about the most useful course of action to take. Assessing and learning is the process of systematically collecting information about the progress of development work, analyzing it so it can be used for management decisions, and reporting so the rest of the Agency can profit from the lessons learned.

Managers cannot know if they are on the road to achieving their goals unless they have ways to track progress. There are two steps in this process: (1) performance of on-going activities must be assessed by collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative information about what activities are achieving; and (2) the data from these assessments must be reviewed in the context of a broader analytical framework to make judgments about overall progress and learn how to improve performance. This is not simple. Like other organizations whose mission is to produce sustainable changes in the conditions of people's lives, USAID faces a complex problem when it comes to assessing results and reporting progress. Four main issues contribute to this complexity:

- **Attribution:** USAID does not work alone. Our activities enable host country institutions to meet social needs. This is often in collaboration with other donors. As we do this, we need to define results that both represent significant change and reflect the aspirations and desires of others. We must then work in partnership with individuals and institutions to collaboratively co-produce these development results. We rarely, if ever, have complete control over outcomes, and we can rarely, if ever, claim results solely as our own. In this setting it is difficult to measure the relative impact of our specific contributions to the development results we seek to achieve.
- **Data Availability:** We typically work in data poor environments. This stems in part from limitations in resources and institutional capacity in host countries. It can be very difficult to find reliable and practical indicators that measure incremental progress or final outcomes. This often means that we need to establish simple, low-maintenance data collection and analysis systems rather than rely on existing ones. Limitations in our own resources often preclude us, however, from completely filling existing gaps.
- **Unstable Environments:** We often work in unstable environments. Conditions constantly change due to events at a local, national, and even international level. Our programming system helps us stay flexible and adjust to change. It is important that our performance measurement systems be flexible enough to remain useful when changes occur.

- **Delayed Impact:** Finally, when we are most successful, the full development impact of our work is not realized immediately. Sometimes full impact is not felt until years after our investments were made and activities completed. This means that complete information on the positive impact of activities is typically not available at the time that management decisions on these activities have to be made. It also means that the best learning may not take place without monitoring and review of activities and SOs even after they are completed. Nonetheless, while final impact data may be hard to attain, one can monitor other information about progress using intermediate outcome data.

The process of assessing and learning requires that we go beyond meeting specific requirements that can be spelled out in a few pages of guidance. We must also demonstrate a broader commitment to some basic principles and practices and encourage our partners to do the same. By demonstrating these principles and practices as a regular part of our assessing and learning efforts, we gain credibility and obtain the confidence of those who support and finance our work.

203.3.2.2 PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSING AND LEARNING

The following overarching principles guide the Agency's work in assessing and learning. These principles guide our plans, actions, and decisions as we assess our programs and report on progress:

a. Self-assessment: SO Teams and other management units are responsible for actively and systematically assessing their contribution to program results and taking corrective action when necessary, within the scope of their authority and responsibility. They encourage partner organizations to do likewise.

b. Performance-informed decision-making: We seek to ensure that management decisions at all levels are informed by the best available performance information. In planning performance measurement, we seek to anticipate information needs for future decisions and put in place the mechanisms to obtain the best, most timely information from a variety of sources. Timeliness of the data depends upon the decisions to be made and the events measured. Daily data may be needed in the case of humanitarian interventions. Other data may only be needed or obtainable at multi-year intervals, e.g., participation rates in elections.

c. Candor and transparency in reporting: We strive for candor and transparency when reporting our progress. This involves three interrelated actions: (1) assessing the quality of data we use to report progress and stating known limitations; (2) conveying clearly and accurately the problems that impede progress and our efforts to address them; and (3) avoiding the appearance of claiming those results achieved with or by others as our own.

d. Information Sharing: Each SO team learns best practices, approaches, and techniques when it implements a strategy. If teams make available the most important and useful insights and knowledge from experience, others will be able to apply them to improve success elsewhere. Dissemination of R4s, evaluations, and SO close-out reports through the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, Center for Development information and Evaluation (PPC/CDIE) and provision of

related program information and experience on external and internal USAID web pages are ways to promote learning.

e. Economy of Effort: Data collection and reporting should be limited to what is most directly useful for managing performance at the Operating Unit level. More data is not necessarily more useful than less because it markedly increases the management burden and cost to collect and analyze. When partner organizations work with several Operating Units on the same activity, reporting burdens should be minimized by coordinating and agreeing on a manageable and reasonable set of reporting information.

f. Participation: We seek to involve our customers, partners, and stakeholders in our assessing and learning processes in order to improve the likelihood of obtaining useful information and strengthen overall assessing and learning processes. This contributes to achieving sustainable development impact. To promote participation in assessing and learning, we seek to

- Include customers, partners, and stakeholders when developing Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs) and when collecting, interpreting, and sharing performance information and experience
- Integrate our performance management efforts with similar processes of our partners
- Include ultimate customers and partners in planning and conducting evaluations
- Assist partners in developing their own performance management and evaluation capacity
- Consider the financial and technical assistance resources needed to ensure stakeholder participation in performance management and evaluation

203.3.2.3 ANALYTICAL APPROACH

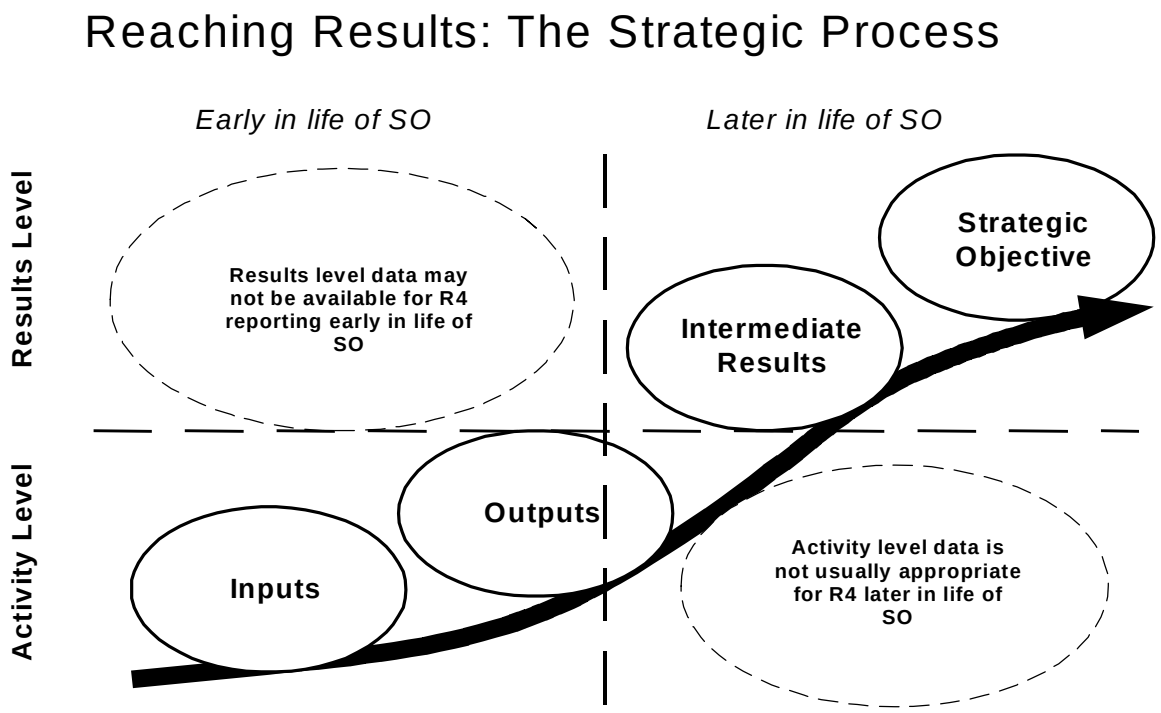
The type of performance information that managers use at an Operating Unit and SO Team level varies over the life of an SO as activities are initiated, outputs produced, and results achieved. This section describes the basic analytic approach the Agency uses to conduct assessing and learning efforts as development programs unfold.

Causal Pathway for Results. Performance management begins during strategic planning when a Results Framework is developed. While planning, the team develops a development hypothesis that documents causal linkages between USAID actions and the intended strategic objective. Strategic Plans focus on defining an ultimate objective (SO) and describing the Intermediate Results (IRs) that will lead to its achievement. The Performance Management Plan (PMP) for the Results Framework completes strategic planning by including definitions of the indicators, baselines, and targets to be achieved. The Strategy provides examples of illustrative activities to indicate that the means for achieving the IRs exist.

At the activity planning stage, SO Teams plan specific outputs to achieve each IR. Outputs are in turn produced with inputs, and inputs are financed with USAID and partner resources. It is most important to track whether the outputs lead to IRs and ultimately to the SO. It is not sufficient, for example, to train teachers in better teaching methods without also determining (1) whether they actually use the methods in the classroom; and (2) whether their students learn more effectively.

Therefore, when activity planning is completed, a complete causal pathway is developed linking inputs and outputs (activities) to IRs and the SO (results). This relationship is shown graphically in Figure 203A:

Figure 203A, Managing for Results Achievement



The dark arrow represents the causality chain linking inputs to SOs. At the early stages of implementation when activities are being established, measurable and attributable impact at the results level will be very limited and perhaps non-existent. Using results-level data at that stage is not very useful for performance management and reporting. At later stages, if the causal chain is adequate, the cumulative effect of activities becomes tangible, and results-level data will be measurable and attributable to USAID effort. At that point, activity-level data may no longer be appropriate for performance reporting though they may still be relevant for program management.

While the actual process of managing development programs is never as clean as is shown in the diagram, this provides a useful framework for thinking about the relationship between indicators of progress, activities, and results.

USAID Control Over Results. USAID has the most management control over results achievement at the activity level. Inputs and outputs are planned by SO Teams and achieved by implementing partners who receive USAID funds for this purpose. The legal agreements that form the basis for funding define the specific control that SO Teams exercise over activities. At the results stage, it is rarely the case that USAID activities so dominate that there is "firm" management control on the results. The results we seek typically involve many actors who influence final outcomes, sometimes more so than USAID. While we still have a manageable interest in the outcome and the Operating Unit and SO Team have accepted responsibility for results achievement, the degree of management control is much less than at the activity level. **(See discussion on accountability for results in ADS 200.3.2.1)** Therefore it is particularly important that we take every opportunity to influence others to pursue objectives that support and leverage the activities we implement, so that together we can achieve the results sought.

Performance Management. Performance management during implementation means obtaining systematic feedback on the robustness of the causality chain and increasing its "strength" over time, by making decisions and taking actions on the activities we control that reflect the feedback obtained. Assessing and learning for performance management is a highly proactive, forward looking process. Simply taking an occasional performance "snap-shot" to produce an R4 report is not adequate in the environments where USAID typically works.

Assessment Mechanisms. To assess and learn effectively, we have to develop assessment mechanisms during the planning stage for both strategies and activities. These mechanisms must be adequate for the SO Team to assess whether its program is actually leading towards desired results. Well-designed performance management systems yield valuable performance information that will help the team learn more about what they are accomplishing, plan for improvement, and communicate the results and lessons to others.

Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The cornerstone of the SO Team's performance management system is its PMP. **(See ADS 201.3.4.13)** An effective PMP guides the SO Team in its assessing and learning and supports continuous performance improvement. Well-designed PMPs enable timely and consistent collection of comparable performance data that can help the team manage for results and "tell its story better."

Using a Variety of Performance Indicators. It is rare that one can actually measure progress toward achieving an SO by directly measuring the objective itself. Instead, SO Teams develop and use a variety of performance indicators to monitor performance. During different phases of strategy implementation, SO Teams may find that different indicators are appropriate. At the beginning, it is important to measure progress in mobilizing inputs and the processes that transform inputs into outputs. If the SO team has problems early in implementation, results may not be achieved as planned without a change of course. Within a short time (one to two years for a new SO, or less for follow-on SOs), the effectiveness of outputs in creating IRs needs to be assessed along with the degree to which measurable results are being achieved. Maintaining the focus exclusively on inputs and

outputs at that stage is inappropriate and will distract the team from the ultimate purpose of performance monitoring, which is to measure progress towards a result.

Results measurement indicators must be developed early, as must the means to collect and analyze indicator data. R4 reporting requires that indicators, baselines, and targets be set at least one year before their actual measure is reported. **(See ADS 201.3.4.13)** Whether the indicators are in the form of measuring the final result itself, tracking milestones, or tracking different aspects of implementation that are important at different times, the team must have systems that provide performance information for management decision-making and reporting. The best approach is to incorporate data collection mechanisms directly into the activities as these are designed. It can be very costly in terms of both financial and staff resources for both USAID and partners to 'graft' indicator data collection late in the implementation process.

The SO Team needs additional management tools to help them integrate performance information generated from PMP indicators with other management information, assess the data, reach judgments, and make decisions about further implementation. The portfolio review process described in ADS 203.3.3 is one of these tools. **(See 203.3.3)** SO Teams take time once or twice over the course of a year to review what has happened in light of what was planned. As part of these reviews, the SO Team reviews what is accomplished at each level of the Results Framework, as well as the causal linkages between inputs, outputs, IRs, and the SO in order to learn and take action for performance improvement.

For example, a review may focus on the activity level *processes* by which inputs produce outputs. Are these processes efficient, effective, and results-oriented? What changes in activities are needed? The SO Team can assess the link between outputs and IRs by considering whether activity-level outputs are having the intended effects. Are outputs reaching the right customers? Should outputs be increased, decreased, or redesigned? Finally, the team will want to assess the causal assumptions inherent in the development hypothesis. Does satisfactory performance at the IR level result in expected SO level achievement? Should the PMP be updated? This review, particularly if there are unexpected developments, can result in decisions to carry out evaluations or special studies to gather additional performance information and inform future management decisions.

Summary. A results-oriented approach to performance management goes much beyond collecting performance information and reporting to Washington. SO Teams should put performance information to work by using data continuously to inform key management decisions, improve tactics and organizational processes, identify performance gaps, and set goals for improvements. By assessing and learning in this way, SO Teams are better able to deliver sustainable development results that will have lasting impact. The rest of this chapter discusses the tools and methods that are used for performance management.

203.3.2.4 ASSESSING AND LEARNING TOOLS

The process of assessing and learning uses a variety of tools to (1) gather information about what is happening and why (assessing); and (2) use this information to make management decisions and communicate experiences (learning). The tools that Operating Units and SO Team must use include the following:

- Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs)

- Portfolio reviews
- Evaluations
- Results Review and Resource Requests (R4s)
- SO close out reports
- In addition, teams may find special studies and data from outside sources to be useful or even essential to managing for results.

The PMP is discussed in ADS 201.3.4.13. **(See ADS 201.3.4.13)** The following sections discuss other tools for assessing and learning in detail.

203.3.6.3 SELECTION OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR R4 REPORTING

This section summarizes all of the mandatory requirements that apply to performance indicators used for R4 reporting. They apply specifically to indicators used for the data tables that support performance narratives for each SO. These requirements are intended to support the principles of assessing and learning. **(See 203.3.2.2)**

For each SO included in the R4, the SO Team, in consultation with the Operating Unit, **must** select no more than three to four performance indicators that give the best overall sense of progress in achieving the SO over the previous year. These indicators will be selected from those identified in the PMP developed for this purpose. **(See ADS 201.3.4.13)** PMP indicators may be quantitative or qualitative.

It is preferable to minimize changes in the indicators used from year to year to improve comparability and consistency of data over several years of reporting. However, this will not always be possible, particularly when the intent is to select those indicators that best reflect progress over the preceding year. As discussed in ADS 201.3.4.13, new indicators may be added to the PMP when they are found to have better qualities than ones previously used. **(See 201.3.4.13)**

The following criteria and procedures **must** be used to select specific indicators for use in R4 data tables:

- **Useful for Management:** Indicators should be useful for managing at the Operating Unit and SO Team level. Avoid collecting and reporting information that is not used to support Operating Unit level program management decisions. This criterion is intended to reduce the cost of reporting by encouraging units to limit reporting to data needed to manage for results.
- **Level of results achievement:** Indicators should reflect progress at the IR and SO level. However, when useful data at these levels is limited in quality, or unavailable, output-level indicators may be used. This may be the case early in the life of an SO when outputs are beginning to be produced but little measurable change is observable at the IR and SO levels. Any output-level indicators should be replaced with IR and SO indicators by the third year of the life of the SO.

- **Attribution:** Indicators selected for R4 reporting must measure change that is clearly and reasonably attributable, at least in part, to USAID efforts. Attribution exists when the links between the outputs produced by USAID's financed activities and the results being measured are clear and significant. Attribution can be based upon a solid and credible development hypothesis that is reflected in the results framework and combined with a strong causal link between outputs of activities and the intermediate results measured.

  For example, an indicator measuring acres of tropical forest cover under improved management can be reasonably attributed to USAID effort if (1) our activities involve management of forests; and (2) the activity's impact is significant enough to contribute to a measurable change in the indicator. Attribution may be less direct, but still meaningful, if USAID's financed activity involves policy dialogue to establish new incentives for sustainable forest management. However, if these incentives are not yet in place, and there is no other USAID activity, then a change in this indicator would not be attributable to USAID effort. A simple way to assess attribution is to ask the question, "If there had been no USAID activity, would the result have been different?" If the answer is "no," then there is likely to be an attribution issue and a more suitable indicator must be sought.

  Some indicators may be useful for describing the development context but are not adequate to meet the attribution requirement. Such indicators are considered "contextual" indicators. They may be used in R4 narrative to describe the development environment, but they should not be used in R4 data tables to describe the effects or impacts of USAID programs. In the example above, the policy indicator may be useful as a contextual indicator in the early years of an SO. Later on, as the impact of USAID efforts becomes clear and significant, a change in this indicator may be significantly attributable to USAID efforts, and the indicator could then meet the attribution criteria for R4 reporting.

- **Period covered:** The R4 Results Review is intended to cover progress during a one-year period. Since the Agency reports on a U.S. fiscal year basis, it is desirable to use data that matches the U.S. fiscal year whenever possible and to avoid using data that covers progress prior to the U.S. fiscal year. However, in many countries, performance information for certain indicators may not be available on a U.S. fiscal year basis. Indicator performance data may cover a one year period that varies from the U.S. fiscal year, such as a calendar year or other fiscal year used by partner or host country institutions. In all cases, the preference is to use the most current data available. The actual period covered **must** be made clear in the R4 data table.

- **Milestone Indicators:** Milestones refer to explicitly setting performance targets that measure progress towards the desired outcome that may not change incrementally. Milestones are often qualitative indicators. For example, in a policy reform activity, the first milestone may be passage of a law, a second may be the establishment of an oversight agency, and a third, equitable implementation of the policy. Milestones may be used in conjunction with other types of indicators to measure progress towards a goal. If a Milestone plan is to be used, the PMP must lay out the development hypothesis and provide the milestones for measuring progress along the timeline when they are expected to be accomplished.

- **Indicator Quality Standard:** To the extent possible, indicators used in R4 reporting must meet the quality standards described in section 203.3.6.5. **(See 203.3.6.5)** SO Teams must periodically assess the quality of the indicators they use, following guidance provided in section 203.3.6.5. **(See 203.3.6.5)** Whenever these quality standards cannot be met, known weaknesses must be identified in the comment section of the data table used for reporting. In addition, specific steps for correcting or overcoming these weaknesses must be discussed as well.

  By reporting data shortcomings and efforts to address them, R4 reports gain credibility and the confidence of the Agency's stakeholders. Awareness of data limitations is also important in ensuring the quality of management decision-making by Operating Units and their SO Teams.

203.3.6.4 CHANGING R4 INDICATORS

Operating Units may notify Washington of their interest to change R4 indicators using either the R4 cover memo, the R4 performance narrative, the relevant data table, or a special annex to the R4 report. As part of preparing an R4 report, an SO Team must determine which performance indicators it will use in the following year's report and provide the baseline and target information for that indicator. If the same (new) indicator is to be used over two or more years, the baseline and targets for future years is simply shown on the data table for the current year. If it is anticipated that a different indicator will be more appropriate in the next year's report, it must be identified along with its baseline and target in the current R4.

In some situations, an Operating Unit may discover that it cannot report against the previously planned and identified indicator for reasons beyond its control. In this case, the reasons must be stated in the R4 cover memo.

203.3.6.5 QUALITY STANDARDS FOR R4 INDICATORS

No data collection and maintenance process is free of error. However, SO Teams, Operating Units, and others will want to know how much confidence they can have in performance indicators and the data they use when making management decisions. In particular, SO Teams will want to be aware of any significant data limitations or errors that could lead to an inaccurate assessment and reporting of results achievement and subsequent audit exposure. SO Teams must understand data limitations, correct limitations when this is cost-effective, and be able to manage for results when data are known to be imperfect.

Since no data are perfect, the most important principle for assessing and reporting on indicator quality is that operating units must be aware of and transparently report known data limitations. Since data quality assessments can be difficult – although operating units should make every effort to reduce the cost of such assessments – data quality standards described in this section only apply to data that are used to (1) report progress in the annual R4 report; and (2) meet any additional data requests for inclusion in special reports to Congress or other oversight agencies, such as the annual HIV/AIDS or micro-enterprise reports. However, whenever operating units are collecting and using data for internal management reasons, prudence dictates that managers be fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the data they use. This is particularly the case when a particular indicator

may not be relevant at the beginning of an SO, but, because of its managerial usefulness, it is used for reporting towards the end.

There are two dimensions to indicator quality:

- Characteristics of the indicators
- Quality of the data reported for a given indicator

The following two sections describe each of these dimensions. **(See Additional Help documents, TIPS No. 6, Selecting Performance Indicators, and TIPS No. 12, Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality)**

a. Characteristics of Effective Performance Indicators

Operating Units and SO Teams use performance indicators to measure and track the progress of activities, IRs, or SOs toward achieving expected results. Although there are no "perfect" indicators, performance indicators should be consistent and comparable over time and in different settings. Performance indicators that are reported in the R4 report should be

- **Direct:** An indicator should closely track the result it is intended to measure. When direct indicators cannot be used because of costs or other factors, a reasonable proxy indicator may be used.
- **Objective:** An indicator should be unambiguous about (1) what is being measured; and (2) what data are being collected. Objective indicators are uni-dimensional and operationally precise.
- **Practical:** An indicator is practical if data can be obtained in a timely way and at reasonable cost.
- **Adequate:** Taken as a group, a performance indicator and its companion indicators should be the minimum necessary to ensure that progress toward the given result is sufficiently captured. An indicator only indicates progress; it is not a full description of everything achieved.

When the SO Team is satisfied that its performance indicators meet the characteristics above, it must consider the quality of its performance data -- the actual measured value collected for each indicator.

b. Data Quality Standards

Performance data reported in the R4 should be as complete, accurate, and consistent as management needs and resources permit. In addition, to be useful in managing for results and credible for reporting, R4 performance data should meet reasonable standards of validity, reliability, timeliness, precision, and integrity:

- **Data Validity:** Data are valid to the extent that they clearly, directly, and adequately represent the result that was intended to be measured. Measurement errors, unrepresentative sampling, and simple transcription errors may adversely affect data validity.

- **Data Reliability:** Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods from over time. Managers should be confident that progress toward performance targets reflects real changes rather than variations in data collection methods. When data collection methods change, these must be documented in the R4 and updated in the PMP. One of the most important tests of reliability is whether another researcher can go back to the same raw data set and come up with the same answer that was reported before.

- **Data Timeliness:** Data should be available with enough frequency and should be sufficiently current to inform management decision-making at the appropriate levels. Effective management decisions depend upon regular collection of up-to-date performance information.

  Because data are sometimes not available when SO Teams would like it for reporting purposes, it is tempting to make an extrapolation from prior years to create a 'projected actual' data point. Unfortunately, since this is not based on current information, it is not useful for either management or annual reporting. Unless current information is available to support their validity, such data cannot be used in the R4 report as performance indicators.

- **Data Precision:** Data should be sufficiently accurate to present a fair picture of performance and enable the SO Team to make confident management decisions. Normally a measure falls into a range -- the "margin of error" -- around the real value. There are two issues that affect how precisely values must be measured:

  1. Typically, data reported in international databases, such as those from the UN, World Bank, or even in special studies such as the DHS, are reported to be within a +/- 10 percent accuracy range. Getting data more precise than this, such as +/- 1 percent, for example, comes at an enormous cost and would not be more useful.

  2. The change being measured should be greater than the margin of error. If the margin of error is 10 percent, and the data show a change of 5 percent, it is difficult to determine whether the change was due to the USAID activity, or whether it occurred by chance.

  If it is too costly to get sufficiently precise data to measure progress, the SO Team should seek other indicators to measure progress towards achieving the SO.

- **Data Integrity:** Data that are collected, analyzed, and reported should have established mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that they are manipulated for political or personal reasons. This is one of the most difficult things to assess. It remains extremely important, however, because if data are altered for any reason, they are no longer useful for performance management. Although data integrity is at greatest risk of being compromised during collection and analysis, one of the most important quality controls is for Operating Units to ensure that data are accurately transcribed from the source to reporting in the R4.

There is always a trade-off between the cost and the quality of data. Although precise guidance cannot be given, SO Teams should balance these two factors to ensure that the data used are of sufficiently high quality to support management decisions. At the same time, the team must not expend so many resources that the achievement of SOs is impaired. In many cases, it is helpful to update the appropriate sections of the PMP to reflect such decisions in order to inform future implementation.

c. Quality Standards for Qualitative Data

In principle, the same quality standards for quantitative data apply to qualitative data. Some of the most salient points are:

- **Objective:** The indicators must be sufficiently defined in advance that an unbiased observer can understand what is being measured. For some milestone indicators, for example, passing a particular law, this is easy. For others, such as polling experts about the impact of a particular activity, it is much more difficult to ensure that similar experts will be polled about exactly the same issues.
- **Direct:** Qualitative indicators sometimes do not measure what an activity is trying to achieve. Customer satisfaction with a micro-enterprise program should identify what aspects of satisfaction are being measured and who is being surveyed. Careful definition of the indicators will help ensure that they are direct.
- Qualitative date must be **valid** in that they clearly, directly, and adequately represent the intended result. A particular validity issue is that since qualitative data are frequently based on small-scale surveys or expert opinions or case studies, care must be taken to ensure that information is representative and unbiased. Surveying project managers or satisfied customers may not be the best way to measure accomplishments. These should be balanced by surveying outside observers and dissatisfied customers. Ensuring the validity of qualitative data can be very difficult.
- Data needs to be **reliable** in that different observers of an activity would come to the same conclusion. This requires careful attention to the definition of the indicator; for example, the scope of work of a case study should be sufficiently rigorous so different groups of experts would come to similar conclusions if they followed the same methodology.

Other data quality characteristics, with the exception of “precision,” are largely the same for both quantitative and qualitative data.

203.3.6.6 ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE DATA

Operating Units assess data quality when establishing the performance indicators and when choosing data collection sources and methods. For each indicator reported in the R4 performance data tables, data quality must be reassessed as needed, but no less than once every three years. These assessments are intended to ensure that performance information is sufficiently complete, accurate, and consistent and meet the indicator quality requirements described in ADS 203.3.6.3. **(See 203.3.6.3)**

Meeting requirements for data quality assessments need not be excessively onerous. For example, an Operating Unit may review reports from a partner and determine that they are

sufficiently consistent to be considered reliable. Site visits with appropriate reports can also serve to spot check reliability. In some instances, holding discussions with data source agencies about their quality assurance procedures and confirming these with other data users may suffice, provided that these discussions are sufficiently detailed, cross checked, and well documented. In all cases, the goal is to ensure that the SO Team is aware of data strengths and weaknesses, and the extent to which it can be trusted when making management decisions.

When conducting data quality assessments, Operating Units must

- Verify and validate performance information to ensure that data are of reasonable quality based on criteria in ADS 203.3.6.3. **(See 203.3.6.3)**
- Review data collection, maintenance, and processing procedures to ensure that they are consistently applied and continue to be adequate.
- Document the assessment in the "Comment" section of the appropriate R4 performance data table.
- Retain documentation of the assessment in the SO Team's performance management files. Such documentation may be as simple as memoranda of conversations with data sources and other informed officials.

SO Teams use many sources of data, some of which are more reliable than others. The rigor of the required data quality assessment will differ for each source category. The three source categories are

- Implementing partners
- Secondary sources
- USAID as primary data source

a. Assessing Data from Implementing Partners and Secondary Data Sources

SO Teams often rely on data collected by implementing partners and secondary sources. When using such data for R4 reporting, SO Teams must perform assessments to determine how much confidence they can have that the data are usable for management and reporting purposes.

Implementing partner data often comes from management information such as periodic reports, service statistics, etc. In this case, SO Teams review the data to ensure that what is being reported is accurate. Generally, this is done in regular meetings with the implementing partners. To assess accuracy, field visits should include a comparison between central office records and the records kept at the field site. It is better to visit more sites than fewer, but the point is to be reasonably confident that the partner reports accurately reflect what occurs in the field.

Secondary sources, including government ministries, the United Nations, and international agencies, are usually not under USAID control. This means that USAID does not have the right to audit the data or investigate data quality in depth. To assess these data, the SO Team should arrange to be briefed on the data collection and analysis procedures, including procedures to reduce error. The SO Team should

review the data with other development partners to gain an appreciation of how accurate the data are and how much credence can be placed in the figures cited. In some situations, USAID provides assistance to government ministries to improve their data collection and analysis processes. In this situation, the SO Team may be in a very good position to assess the quality of the data.

In some cases, secondary source data are very accurate. In other cases, they represent little more than a guess or a figure created to meet political needs. It is very important to know which situation applies before using the data for reporting and management decisions. If an SO Team knows that data are not reliable, but chooses to report them anyway, they must disclose this in the "Comments" section of the R4 and should provide other information that confirms the data.

In all situations, the data quality assessment report must be retained in the SO Team's PMP files and updated at least every three years.

b. USAID as Primary Data Source

Occasionally, SO Teams use primary data collected on their own or through independent entities contracted for this purpose. Quality assessments must ascertain whether the data meets quality standards in ADS 203.3.6.5 **(See 203.3.6.5)** and whether the collection process addresses the following issues:

- Data are collected using methods to address and minimize sampling and non-sampling errors.
- Written procedures are in place for data collection.
- Data are collected by qualified personnel and personnel are properly supervised.
- Data are collected using a consistent collection process from year to year.
- Safeguards are in place to prevent unauthorized changes to the data.
- Source documents are maintained and readily available.
- Duplicate data are detected.

If an independent entity collected data for the Operating Unit, this internal control would be the joint responsibility of the Operating Unit and that entity. In most cases, the scope of work for the data collection contract must require that these issues be addressed. **(See Additional Help document, TIPS No. 12, Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality, and GAO, The Results Act: An Evaluator's Guide to Assessing Annual Performance Plans)**

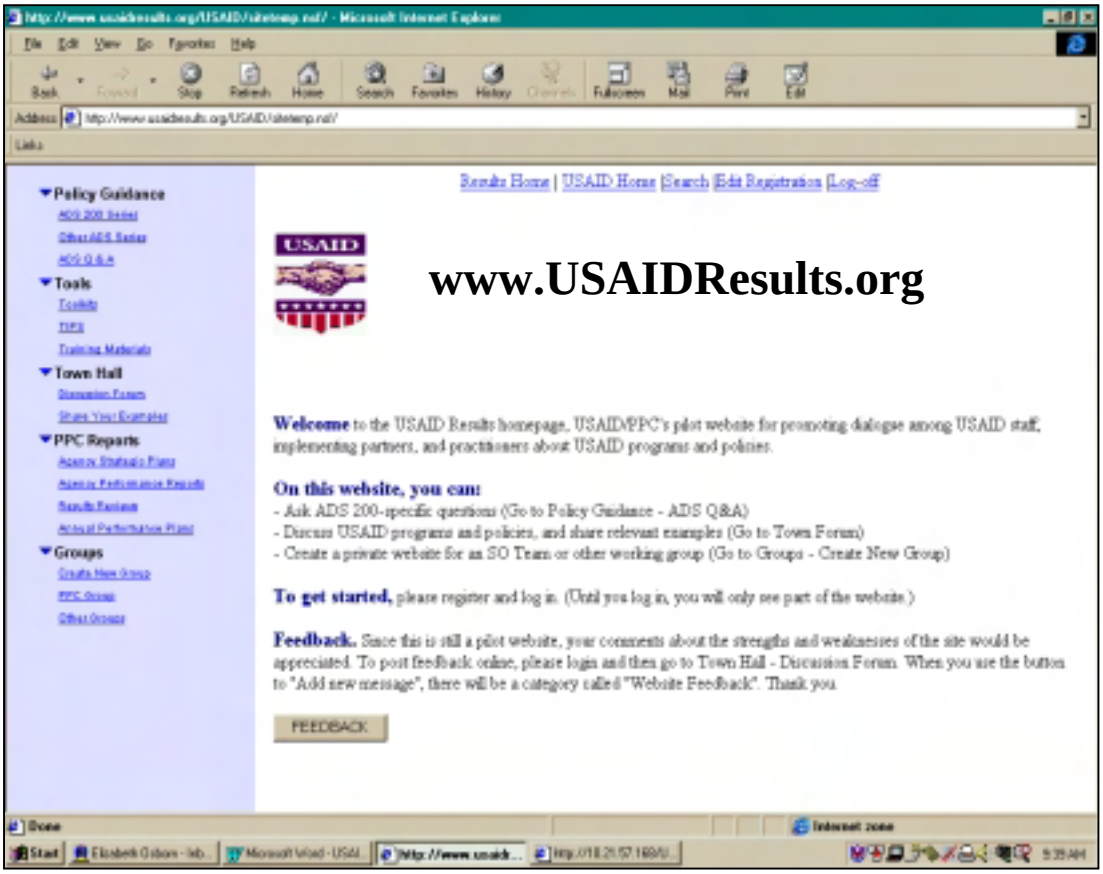
Appendix D - Helpful Resources

Helpful USAID Resources D-2

Other Useful Resources D-3

Description of USAID Services D-4

Excerpt from the USAIDResults.org Brochure D-6



*Interact with **www.USAIDResults.org** for the latest word in USAID programming guidance and best practices! See page D-6 for details.*

HELPFUL USAID RESOURCES

General Resources	
ADS 200 Series: USAID Programming Policies	http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/
Economic and Social Data Services	http://cdie.usaid.gov
Research and Reference Services	http://cdie.usaid.gov
USAIDResults.org	http://www.USAIDResults.org

Development Experience Clearing House	http://www.dec.org
FY 2002 R4 Database	http://www.dec.org/partners/pmdb/
Food Security Indicators and Framework for Use in the Monitoring and Evaluation of Food Aid Programs	http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACG170.pdf
Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators	http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACC390.pdf
Kumar, Krishna, "Rapid Low Cost Data Collection Methods for AID."	http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNAAL100.pdf
Pocketbook of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Indicators for Program Design and Evaluation	http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACG519.pdf
TIPS No. 1: Conducting a Participatory Evaluation (1996)	*All TIPS can be found at:* http://www.dec.org/usaid_eval/#004
TIPS No. 2: Conducting Key Informant Interviews	
TIPS No. 3: Preparing an Evaluation Scope of Work (1996)	
TIPS No. 4: Using Direct Observation Techniques	
TIPS No. 5: Using Rapid Appraisal Methods (1996)	
TIPS No. 6: Selecting Performance Indicators (1996)	
TIPS No. 7: Preparing a Performance Monitoring Plan (1996)	
TIPS No. 8: Establishing Performance Targets	
TIPS No. 9: Conducting Customer Service Assessments (1996)	
TIPS No. 10: Conducting Focus Group Interviews (1996)	
TIPS No. 11: Role of Evaluation in USAID (1997)	
TIPS No. 12: Guidelines for Indicator and Data Quality (1998)	
TIPS No. 13: Building a Results Framework (1999)	
TIPS No. 14: Monitoring the Policy Reform Process (1999)	
TIPS No. 15: Measuring Institutional Capacity (2000)	

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

Department of Energy	**http://www.orau.gov**
Department of Energy, "Guidelines for Performance Measurement"	http:// www.orau.gov/pbm/documents/g1201-5.pdf
Department of Energy, "The Performance-Based Management Handbook, Volumes 1-6	http://www.orau.gov/pbm/pbmhandbook/pbmhandbook.html
DOE Performance-Based Management Special Interest Group	http://www.orau.gov/pbm/

General Accounting Office	**http://www.gao.gov/**
GAO Guide to Implementing GPRA	http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/gpra.htm
Government Performance and Results Act	http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/mgmt-gpra/gplaw2m.html
GAO Results Act Evaluation Guide	http://www.gao.gov/
GAO, "Performance Plans: Selected Approaches for Verification and Validation of Agency Performance Information"	http://www.gao.gov/
GAO Quantitative Data Analysis	http://www.gao.gov/
GAO, Standards for Internal Controls	http://www.gao.gov/

Other	
Hatry, Harry P. and Joseph S. Wholey. *Performance Measurement: Getting Results,* 1999	None available
OECD Public Management and Governance	http://www.oecd.org/puma/

DESCRIPTION OF USAID RESEARCH SERVICES

Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS)

The Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) is managed by DevTech Systems, Inc., under contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development. ESDS staff provide economic analysts and policy makers with access to social and economic statistics on the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the emerging market economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics. The ESDS project serves as a focal point for collecting, analyzing and disseminating a wide range of data in support of the analysis, planning, management, and monitoring of programs and projects conducted by USAID and its development partners. You can access ESDS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (The link is 'Statistics' at the top of the homepage.).

Research and Reference Services (R&RS) and the USAID Library

R&RS is a research and reference services project designed to support USAID's development assistance programs. Located within the Agency's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE), R&RS provides relevant and timely information and analysis to USAID field and Washington staff, as well as USAID contractors and development partners. The project serves to link those who need information with the essential literature and resources.

The R&RS staff assists development practitioners in clarifying their information needs and responds by identifying, analyzing and disseminating appropriate information in a useful form. Products and services include analytical memoranda and papers, lessons learned analyses, reference, computerized database searches, bibliographies, interlibrary loans, tailored information packages, referrals, a current awareness update service, and several regular publications. Technical assistance and training is available to USAID mission libraries and other USAID units concerned with the Management of development information resources.

USAID Library and Learning Resources Center

The R&RS project staffs and manages the USAID Library and Learning Resources Center, the heart of the R&RS reference service, specializing in providing ready reference responses, ready access to information resources, and USAID database search service for USAID patrons, development partners and the public. The collection comprises USAID reports and serials, World Bank publications, commercially published books and journals, reference materials, newspapers, and CD-ROMs. The library's online catalogue is located at [http://library.info.usaid.gov/]. The telephone number is 202-712-0579.

You can access R&RS via CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov (Use the links 'Research' and 'Library' at the top of the homepage.).

Development Experience Clearinghouse

As part of PPC/CDIE's development information services team, the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) collects information that Describes USAID's own development assistance activities. These materials include: evaluations, research studies, contracts and grant agreements, technical assessments, and deliverables such as annual and final reports, training materials, conference proceedings, videotapes, and computer software.

The Clearinghouse has created an electronic library catalogue, the Development Experience System, or DEXS, which contains citations for over 100,000 documents. The DEXS also contains a growing collection of complete, full-text publications saved in Adobe Acrobat that can be downloaded to your computer. To search the DEXS, visit the Clearinghouse's web site at http://www.dec.org/partners/. Agency personnel may access the DEXS through CDIE Online at http://cdie.usaid.gov. The DEX is also available on CD-ROM (CD-DEXS). DEC has also manages the R4 database which is available both through USAID's intranet at http://cdie.usaid.gov/r4/ and USAID's internet at http://www.dec.org/partners/.

The ADS requires USAID employees to submit certain documentation, including the R4, Strategic Plans, PMPs, and evaluation reports among others. The Clearinghouse accepts electronic or paper copies, although e-mail submissions are encouraged. Documents must be final and include the author's name, descriptive title, contractor name, contract number, and publication date. The Clearinghouse accepts files in WordPerfect, MS Word, or PDF. Electronic documents should be saved in a single file and may be sent via e-mail or diskette. Hard copies will be scanned, so they should be free of handwritten notes.

EXCERPT FROM THE USAIDRESULTS.ORG BROCHURE

Introducing www.USAIDResults.org, an Internet-based Knowledge Management site that allows anyone around the world to access knowledge, experience, and discussion about USAID programming.

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Ask questions of the ADS Team ▪ Open to anyone who registers. ▪ Submit questions regarding USAID Programming Policies relevant to your work. ▪ When the ADS Team has researched your question, an answer will be posted with examples, explanation, and references to particular text within the ADS. ▪ Browse through other frequently-asked questions.	**Create a Group Space** ▪ Open to anyone who registers. ▪ Establish a group space that allows your team to share documents, hold discussions, recommend websites, and keep track of each other's telephone numbers. ▪ Choose who is a member of your group space; USAID staff, partners, and other donors may all be members. ▪ *How to create a group:* Go to www.USAIDResults.org - Create New Group and follow the instructions provided.

For more information about the ADS 200 series, please contact:

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