

ADS 201 Additional Help

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Introduction

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning throughout the Program Cycle involves staff at all levels at a Mission. The following guidance describes various roles and responsibilities involved in these practices. Each Mission should detail their staff functions, based on these roles and responsibilities, in their Mission's Monitoring Mission Order and Evaluation Mission Order. Comprehensive tables are provided at the end, showing program office and technical office roles and responsibilities side-by-side. This guidance supplements ADS 201.3.5.4, ADS 201.3.5.11, and ADS 201.3.5.21.

Front Office

Mission Directors and their Deputies can create a Mission culture which embraces strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) practices.

Monitoring: The front office plays an important role in monitoring by reviewing proposed indicators in a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) and ensuring necessary performance and context data are collected and are of sufficient quality.

Evaluation: The front office helps guide evaluation planning, such as indicating priority projects or activities for evaluation, identifying evaluation triggers, and approving evaluation plans. Participating in end-of-evaluation events, such as briefings and action-planning meetings, can garner support for evaluation results, increasing the likelihood that actions will be taken to improve programming.

Learning: Supporting and demonstrating collaboration and adaptive management is critical in creating an effective enabling environment for the Program Cycle. Communicating and taking actions that emulate CLA – including continuous learning and adaptive management – helps create that culture in a Mission.

Program Office

The program office serves as the Mission home for M&E and CLA activities, ensuring compliance with USAID policies and supporting technical offices. The program office is the main point of contact with the regional bureau and Washington, responding to issues as they arise. For this reason, the program office must identify a monitoring and an evaluation Point of Contact (POC), who may or may not be the same individual. If a Mission has a Mission-wide M&E platform, that contract should be managed by the program office. A table at the end of this guidance provides a comparison of program office and technical office roles and responsibilities.

Monitoring: The program office supports technical offices by: ensuring compliance with monitoring requirements, including data quality standards; promoting best practices for generating, managing, and utilizing monitoring information; and encouraging consistency across monitoring plans. The program office is responsible for maintaining the Mission-wide Performance Management Plan (PMP), reviewing Project and Activity MEL Plans, and leading the annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR) process.

Evaluation: The program office coordinates evaluations across the Mission and takes the lead on: developing evaluation plans, including fiscal year budget estimates; helping identify appropriate mechanisms for procuring evaluations; and organizing peer reviews of evaluation statements of work (SOWs). Following procurement of external evaluations, the program office, not the office managing the project or activity being evaluated, must manage the evaluation to maintain evaluation team independence and reduce the perception of bias. After data collection and analysis, the program office organizes peer reviews of draft evaluation reports to verify they are of good quality and meet ADS requirements. Once finalized and approved, this office ensures final reports are posted publicly, data about the evaluation are reported in the PPR, and a post-evaluation action plan is developed.

Learning: The program office plays a critical role in planning for, facilitating, and leading CLA activities, such as using the CLA maturity matrix or other tools to assess current learning practices and determine priorities for the planning period. The program office is responsible for drafting the CLA Plan for the Mission-wide PMP, managing its implementation, and updating it as necessary. The program office can play a key role in connecting staff and offices across the Mission, and in establishing knowledge capture and transfer processes. Several Missions have hired a Learning Advisor, based in the program office.

Technical Teams and Offices Including CORs/AORs/GATRs

Technical officers, including Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), Agreement Officer's Representatives (AORs), Government Agreement Technical Representatives (GATRs), Activity Managers, and Project Managers, play a distinct role in M&E and CLA activities, providing specific sector and implementation perspectives. Beyond those of the program office, technical offices may choose to identify their own M&E POC, or procure a sector-specific M&E platform support contract. For a breakdown of technical office roles and responsibilities, see the table at the end of this guidance.

Monitoring: Technical offices develop and select indicators, and also directly interact with implementing partners as indicator data are collected and reported. CORs/AORs/GATRs must review, collaborate on, and approve or concur with Activity MEL Plans. Technical offices also ensure that data are: collected and maintained in line with USAID's data quality standards through required Data Quality Assessments (DQAs); analyzed for decision-making purposes; and appropriately shared and reported.

Evaluation: Evaluation SOWs are typically drafted by a technical office then shared with the program office. Technical offices ensure that implementing partners are aware of any planned evaluations, including the timeline and scope of their expected involvement. Technical offices must also provide all relevant background materials to the evaluation team, both in evaluation design stages and as data needs arise while the evaluation is underway. Technical offices play a critical role in the reviews of evaluation designs and draft evaluation reports, and should play a substantial role in post-evaluation action plan discussions.

Learning: In design phases, technical offices may identify learning questions or technical knowledge gaps and should consider how to build learning and knowledge sharing into projects and activities, then work

with the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) to choose instruments that allow for the right level of adaptation. Technical staff build and strengthen relationships with stakeholders, including government counterparts, donors, civil society, and others, to ensure programs are built on contextual knowledge and are updated as new knowledge is gained. Additionally, staff can work to facilitate collaboration and coordination among activities and implementing partners, and the adaptation of activities when needed.

The Project Manager has a role in facilitating collaborating, learning, and adapting on technical teams during project implementation, but also encourages collaboration and learning among the implementing partners working under a project. This may be done through efforts such as joint work planning, partner meetings, peer assists, or communities of practice. The Project Manager works with CORs/AORs/GATRs to collect and analyze performance and context monitoring data in order to understand progress toward expected outcomes and changes in the environment that may affect implementation. Project Managers are encouraged to organize periodic reviews to reflect on project progress and manage adaptively.

Other Teams, Offices, or Units at the Mission

Contract Officers (COs) and Agreement Officers (AOs) play a key role in supporting adaptive management by assisting technical offices in choosing and implementing appropriate mechanisms that facilitate ongoing learning and adaptation.

Washington Operating Units

Monitoring: Washington Operating Units (OUs) support Missions in fulfilling monitoring requirements by providing technical support in selecting appropriate indicators, assisting in the development of Mission-wide PMPs and Project and Activity MEL Plans, supporting data quality, and reviewing annual PPR data.

Washington OUs must follow monitoring guidance in ADS 201.3.5.2 - 201.3.5.8 when implementing projects or activities. For field support activities, a Washington OU must coordinate with the Mission Activity Manager to ensure both the Mission and Washington OU have the most up-to-date information.

Evaluation: Washington OUs support Missions in fulfilling evaluation requirements by assisting in early identification of evaluation questions during project design, participating in peer reviews of evaluation SOWs and draft evaluation reports, assisting in the development of Mission-wide PMPs and Project and Activity MEL Plans, reviewing PPR evaluation data, and providing other support as requested by Missions.

Washington OUs must follow evaluation guidance in ADS 201.3.5.9 - 201.3.5.18. Washington OUs may develop bureau-specific guidance for the division of evaluation management responsibilities between program offices and technical offices, provided that evaluation independence is addressed and protected.

Learning: Washington OUs support Mission learning by providing support in developing collaborating and learning opportunities, facilitating knowledge sharing among Missions, and staying current on relevant technical developments. Some Washington OUs have taken on a knowledge steward role by developing and implementing learning agendas that address questions of relevance to a number of Missions or by synthesizing data and summarizing lessons learned across Missions. Other OUs have funded evaluations, assessments, or other data collection efforts meant to increase the knowledge base at Missions.

Monitoring Roles and Responsibilities		
	Program Office	Technical Office
Monitoring Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a monitoring POC • Prepare the Mission Order on Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay up-to-date on monitoring requirements and guidance • Assist with team specific monitoring processes • Participate in Mission Order development and finalization
CDCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure CDCS references the underlying evidentiary base (past evaluations, analysis, etc.); and includes required elements, such as illustrative performance indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop illustrative performance indicators for the Results Framework
Mission-wide Performance Management Plan (PMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the overall PMP process and serve as a resource for Mission requirements and approval process • Collect any CDCS indicator data, if determined by the Mission • Assist technical staff with completing each PIRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop indicators for each IR and sub-IR, and as applicable, for the DO. • Finalize the relevant sections of the Mission-wide PMP • Ensure that all PIRSs are completed and updated
Project MEL Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Project MEL Plans meet requirements, are consistent with the Mission CDCS, and are reflected in the Mission-wide PMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a Project MEL Plan as part of the project design process and update as needed
Activity MEL Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as a resource in reviewing Activity MEL Plans and their alignment to Project MEL Plans and the Mission-wide PMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Activity MEL Plans are consistent with and feed into the Project MEL Plan • Ensure that the MEL Plans meet any contractual requirements • Approve Activity MEL Plans submitted by partners
Collecting performance information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each technical office or project manager has arranged for collection of indicator data, as needed • May manage contracts to ensure collection of certain context or high-level performance indicator data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure data are collected and of sufficient quality • May collect data directly or from implementers or other sources • Work with implementers to resolve any problems with data collection or data quality
Maintaining performance information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, develop, and maintain the Mission-wide PMP and related performance information systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share data with the program office or contribute data to performance information systems on a regular basis
Reviewing Performance Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the overall Mission process for reviewing and analyzing performance results, particularly portfolio reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and provide analytical insight for data collected or provided by partners and others • Identify key issues and any corrective action for activity, project, or DO management • Review performance data regularly,

Monitoring Roles and Responsibilities		
	Program Office	Technical Office
		<p>particularly before any portfolio review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct activity oversight, such as site visits, in accordance with USAID policy and COR/AOR responsibilities
Data Quality Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure data reported to Washington meet USAID data quality standards • Provide input into DQAs • Flag data quality issues and limitations and maintain documentation on data quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead DQAs • Identify quality issues and solutions on the basis of the DQAs or as they become apparent during implementation
Annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead overall PPR process • Review information provided by technical offices • Submit PPR to the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance in the State Department • Liaise with the regional bureau program office • Ensure that any critical revisions identified during the Washington PPR review process are completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide performance information to the program office, including indicator data and required supporting narratives • Help make critical revisions identified during the Washington review process
Annual Portfolio Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review project results and data • Assist technical offices and project managers in analyzing data • Ensure high quality standards for Mission’s portfolio reviews and that recommendations and action items are documented • Review and analyze PMP indicators and identify/solicit appropriate issues for portfolio reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize performance results for portfolio reviews • Develop summary write-ups, and assist in completing data tables and trends analyses
Alignment with Interagency Data Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with other USG agencies to ensure consistency of PMP indicator selection and reporting with inter-agency data needs for USG Initiative Reporting (i.e., PMI, PEPFAR, GCC, FTF, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate at the technical level with other USG agencies on data collection and reporting

Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities		
	Program Office	Technical Office
Evaluation Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an evaluation POC • Prepare a Mission Order on Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate sharing of evaluation procedures and support their implementation • Participate in Mission Order development and finalization
Training & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in training of key staff • Identify and promote tools, resources, and opportunities that support cross-program learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in training of key staff • Identify and promote tools, resources, and opportunities that support cross-program learning
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure planning for evaluation questions in CDCS development • Ensure adequacy of the Mission-wide Evaluation Plan • Ensure evaluation questions are developed during project design and included in MEL Plans • Ensure that dissemination planning and post-evaluation action planning are incorporated into SOWs • Develop evaluation budget estimates • Allocate program funds for external evaluations (Goal: three percent of a Mission or Washington OU's total program budget) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relevant technical support to develop evaluation questions as part of the Mission-wide PMP and MEL Plans • Develop a budget estimate for evaluations, both individually and collectively • Incorporate dissemination planning and post-evaluation action planning into SOWs and evaluation plans • Allocate program funds for external evaluations (Goal: three percent of a Mission or Washington OU's total program budget)
Evaluation Statements of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that final SOWs for external evaluations meet ADS 201 standards • Organize technical peer reviews to assess quality of evaluation SOWs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support to ensure SOWs meet ADS 201 standards • Participate in peer technical reviews of evaluation SOWs
Managing an Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage external evaluations (at a Mission) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the evaluation, in particular through communicating with IPs and other stakeholders
Evaluation Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize technical peer reviews to assess quality of evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in peer technical reviews of evaluation reports
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update PPR Evaluation Registry on planned, ongoing, and completed evaluations • Store evaluation data in accordance with ADS 579 • Ensure the final evaluation report is uploaded to the DEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update PPR Evaluation Registry on planned, ongoing, and completed evaluations • Store evaluation data in accordance with ADS 579 • Ensure the final evaluation report is uploaded to the DEC
Utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure dissemination plans and post-evaluation action plans are implemented and tracked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure dissemination plans and post-evaluation action plans are implemented and tracked

CLA Roles and Responsibilities		
	Program Office	Technical Office
CLA Processes and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify appropriate resources for CLA - if there is a Mission Learning Advisor, that position is generally in the program office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and participate in collaborating, learning, and adapting activities for the office
CDCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include overview of the Mission's CLA approaches in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning section of the CDCS 	
CLA Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of learning practices at the Mission, either by using the CLA Maturity Matrix or other means Draft a CLA Plan to be included in the Mission-wide PMP Manage implementation of the CLA Plan and update as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the development of the CLA plan and participate in Maturity Matrix exercises, as appropriate
Portfolio Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the front office, determine the objectives, format, and participants for portfolio reviews With Program Office leadership, provide technical teams with information and guidance on portfolio review objectives Assist with data analysis Distill learning from portfolio reviews, share findings, and ensure follow-up on action items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for portfolio reviews by compiling data and information and working with partners and stakeholders as needed Manage follow up actions, as assigned
CDCS Mid-course Stocktaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the front office, determine the objectives, format, and participants for portfolio reviews Manage the planning process Provide technical teams with information and guidance Ensure follow-up on action items and update the CDCS and PMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare by compiling data and information and working with partners and stakeholders as needed Manage follow up actions, as assigned