

[Guidance](#)[How To](#)[Examples](#)[Issues](#)[GPRA](#)[Definitions](#)[Feedback](#)[CDIE](#)[Online](#)

USAID Guidance on Performance Measurement

ADS chapter 203 and other USAID documents

This section contains performance measurement directives and pointers specific to the USAID system. Questions of indicator and data quality are addressed.

Directives: Series 200, Chapter 203:

"Managing for Results: Monitoring and Evaluating Performance" (June 1996)

<http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/203.htm>

Chapter 203 of the Agency Directives establishes Agency policy on monitoring and evaluating performance.

General Notice: Performance Measurement

<http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?>

[W%3DMESSDATE%20%20%3D%20%2719980301](http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?W%3DMESSDATE%20%20%3D%20%2719980301)

[%27%3A%2719980331%27%20ORDER%20BY%20NOTNUMB](http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?%27%3A%2719980331%27%20ORDER%20BY%20NOTNUMB)

[%26M%3D8%26K%3D-199803074%26U%3D](http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?%26M%3D8%26K%3D-199803074%26U%3D)

This March 1998 notice from PPC AA Thomas Fox shares USAID's current thinking on performance measurement. It describes Agency attempts to improve its ability to plan, measure, and manage for results, and includes a discussion of common indicators.

USAID Annual Performance Plan FY 1999

http://cdie.usaid.gov/html_docs/app/

The 1999 APP begins with an overall explanation of USAID's performance measurement and reporting system. It describes the benchmarks the Agency will use to measure progress against each of 31 performance goals under the seven Agency goals. Targets are disaggregated by regions.

Reengineering Transition Guidance Cable No. 10:

"Reengineered USAID Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Systems"

(November 1995)

<http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?>

[W%3DMESSDATE%20%20%3D%20%2719951101%27%3A%27](http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?W%3DMESSDATE%20%20%3D%20%2719951101%27%3A%27)

[19951130%27%20ORDER%20BY%20NOTNUMB%26M%3D59%26K%3D-](http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?19951130%27%20ORDER%20BY%20NOTNUMB%26M%3D59%26K%3D-)

[199511002%26U%3D](http://www.usaid.gov:1000/BASIS/notice2/all/notices2/DDW?199511002%26U%3D)

This message provides guidance on the reengineered USAID performance monitoring and evaluation systems. It summarizes requirements, policies and procedures of USAID's performance monitoring and evaluation systems.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS. No. 6:

"Selecting Performance Indicators" (1996)

<http://165.13.91.11/SEARCH/BASIS/DIS/DIS/DOCS/DDD/90476>

CDIE's "TIPS" series provides advice and suggestions to USAID managers on how to plan and conduct performance monitoring and

evaluation activities effectively. This TIPS offers advice for selecting appropriate and useful performance indicators.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS. No. 7:

"Preparing a Performance Monitoring Plan" (1996)

<http://165.13.91.11/SEARCH/BASIS/DIS/DIS/DOCS/DDD/90477>

This TIPS offers advice for preparing a Performance Monitoring Plan for the systematic and timely collection of performance data.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS. No. 8:

"Establishing Performance Targets" (1996)

<http://165.13.91.11/SEARCH/BASIS/DIS/DIS/DOCS/DDD/91247>

This TIPS discusses what targets are, why they are important, and what information sources and approaches may be used for setting targets.

[Guidance](#)[How To](#)[Examples](#)[Issues](#)[GPRA](#)[Definitions](#)[Feedback](#)[CDIE](#)[Online](#)

How to Measure Performance

This is the practical 'how-to' section where you will find advice on developing performance measurement systems-- through tools, handbooks, guides and best practices from USAID and non-USAID entities alike.

Performance Monitoring Indicators

<http://www.worldbank.org/html/opr/pmi/contents.html>

You can download the World Bank's handbook for task managers (1996) on performance monitoring indicators, an excellent resource for understanding and developing indicators. This site also includes dozens of examples of indicators for a wide variety of sectors.

Designing Project Monitoring and Evaluation

<http://www.worldbank.org/html/oed/lp008.htm>

The Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank periodically prints a newsletter called "Lessons and Practices." This 13 page issue (June 1996) focuses on monitoring and evaluation. It provides an easy-to-read and relatively short walk through the process promoted by the World Bank to design a monitoring and evaluation system. Especially useful are the discussions of indicator types and data collection.

Performance Monitoring Plan Table

http://cdie.usaid.gov/pme/htm_docs/sec7/pmptbl.htm

This is a blank Performance Monitoring Plan table to guide you in planning how performance will be measured and monitored for a strategic objective, special objective, or strategic support objective. This tool is meant to be adapted to your needs.

Performance Measurement Data Table

<http://ntrrb0016.usaid.gov/irt/R4Schedu.nsf/e507da4f2f44b14d8525643a007a7e55/f17bff0992e6ed46852565b7005d911a?OpenDocument>

This table is for reporting targeted baseline and actual results in the annual Results Review and Resource Request (R4).

Guiding Principles for Implementing GPRA

<http://www.financenet.gov/financenet/fed/cfo/gpra/guidprin.htm>

In this two-pager, the Chief Financial Officers' Council

presents the results of a study of Federal agencies and others' experiences with Managing for Results. Of the nine principles offered, the last four are good pointers on performance measurement data. 1995

Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Performance Measurement

<http://www.npr.gov/library/papers/benchmrk/nprbook.html>

This is a long (31 pp.) report but well-worth your time if you want to read about what works in performance measurement. The National Performance Review studied and identified best practices in performance measurement. In this document they highlight "a broad array of successful processes, approaches, tools, and practices used in: establishing and updating performance measures, establishing accountability for performance, gathering and analyzing performance data, and reporting and using performance information." 1997

OMB Primer on Performance Measurement

<http://www.dtic.mil/c3i/bprcd/4130.htm>

This primer, a thoughtful piece on measuring performance in compliance with GPRA, defines several performance measurement terms, outlines areas or functions where performance measurement may be difficult, and provides examples of different types of performance measures. Be warned: the document is presented in one long column, so its eight pages take a little while to download. 1995

Performance Pathways

<http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov/mkm/pathways/pathways.htm>

This page is regularly updated and contains a set of links to performance-related resources, including a library and "how to" guides.

Performance Measurement in the Public Sector

<http://www.gvnfo.state.ut.us/planning/primer.htm>

A very good primer on performance measurement by the State of Utah. This 11-page document contains definitions of performance measurement terms (input, outcome, output) and discusses the advantages and limitations of Performance Measurement. It is easy to read and includes a concise summary at the end. 1993

Outcome Oriented Management Strategy

<http://www.gvnfo.state.ut.us/planning/how.htm>

This 10-page guide picks up where the Utah primer (mentioned above) leaves off. General to any public agency, it introduces the guiding principles of a performance measurement system and covers many of the topics in strategic planning (goals, objectives, strategies, outputs and outcomes and their measures). There is an

example of performance measures used by the State of Texas and descriptions of four different types of performance measures.

[Guidance](#)[How To](#)[Examples](#)[Issues](#)[GPRA](#)[Definitions](#)[Feedback](#)[CDIE](#)[Online](#)

Examples of Performance Measurement

In this section we provide examples of the performance measurement systems used by a range of USAID, other U.S., and State Government agencies.

Results-Oriented Monitoring and Evaluation

<http://www.undp.org/undp/eo/mae-toc.htm>

This extensive handbook (1997) for program managers gives you an idea of how UNDP handles monitoring and evaluation. There is a section on indicators which may be helpful.

1998 Results Review and Resource Requests

<http://cdie.usaid.gov/r4/>

The 1998 R4s are available for your perusal on-line. It may be helpful to read about the experiences of and the indicators used by other operating units with objectives similar to your own.

DHHS Spotlight on Measurement Programs

<http://odphp.osophs.dhhs.gov/pubs/prevrpt/97winspot.htm>

Look here for some examples of measuring performance in the health sector. This site provides four pages of brief descriptions of various local, State, and Federal measurement programs. 1997

Development and Use of Outcome Information in Government: The Inter-American Foundation Case Study

<http://server.conginst.org/conginst/results/caseiaf.html>

This 11-page case study describes the Inter-American Foundation's experiences in developing a conceptual framework and indicators to assess the results of its projects. 1996

Global Menu of Indicators

<http://www.iaf.gov/results/menu02.htm>

An extensive list of sample indicators developed by the Inter-American Foundation in a variety of areas including standard of living, organizational capability, policy environment, etc. Unfortunately you cannot search the site by topic so you have to click through the 44 indicators to find what you are interested in.

DOE Environment, Safety, and Health Performance Measures

http://www.tis.eh.doe.gov/web/oeaf/performance_measures/performance_measures.html

To get an idea of how other U.S. Government agencies are complying with performance monitoring requirements, visit [this page](#). It links to documents that illustrate how the Department of Energy structures its performance measurement system. 1997

[Guidance](#)[How To](#)[Examples](#)[Issues](#)[GPRA](#)[Definitions](#)[Feedback](#)[CDIE](#)[Online](#)

Performance Measurement Issues

Food for Thought

Some of the thought-provoking issues surrounding performance measurement are discussed in these sites such as: participation in performance measurement, meeting GPRA requirements, and linking performance to resource allocation.

On Track: The Reengineering Digest

http://cdie.usaid.gov/pme/html_docs/ref/ontrkind.htm

On Track is a monthly publication from the office of Results Oriented Reengineering of PPC. It addresses issues related to USAID's reengineering efforts including many specific to performance monitoring. For instance, there are articles on participatory monitoring and evaluation, AID's implementation of GPRA, and case studies from various operating units.

The RFNET Website

http://209.135.238.69:591/rfnet/rfnet_index.htm

RFNET is an informal, moderated email discussion group on reengineering and Results Frameworks. It began as an information server for use by the Results Framework Subject Matter Experts in the Africa Bureau. You can now visit the RFNET website to search the archives of previous discussions or to join the discussion yourself.

Performance Management: Perspectives for Today's Public-Sector Manager

<http://www.aspanet.org/cap/perf.htm>

Several interesting articles from the Pennsylvania Times, (Jan. 1997) provide information and examples of how strategic planning and management using performance information have been used positively by a diverse range of federal agencies, states, counties and cities. About 20 pages.

Outcome and Performance Measurement Systems: An Overview

<http://www.alliance.napawash.org/ALLIANCE/Picasas.nsf/e24ffc586e80044a852564ed006eb5be/8e42ab014448fcc1852564c80055a2dd?OpenDocument>

These three pages by The Alliance for Redesigning Government of the National Academy of Public Administration contain links to a paper "[Outcome and Performance Measurement Systems: An Overview](#)" and case studies in the areas of Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Improving Program Outcomes, Using Performance Data for Resource Allocation Decisions, Community Benchmarking and External Benchmarking.

Selected Internet Resources on Performance Measurement

<http://www.aspanet.org/cap/weblinks.htm>

Two pages of links to various State and National agencies' websites

about their own performance measurement activities. It includes a link to a site about the Government of Australia's use of performance evaluation, a site on performance measurement in private sector business, and a site on recent information from the National Performance Review.

[Guidance](#)[How To](#)[Examples](#)[Issues](#)[GPRA](#)[Definitions](#)[Feedback](#)[CDIE](#)[Online](#)

Government Performance and Results Act

Background, Case Studies, and Updates

Consult this section if you need more information about legislation guiding performance measurement in Federal agencies. Included are resources from OMB, GAO, the National Performance Review, and the Chief Financial Officers' Council.

Text of the Government Performance and Results Act

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c103:S.20.ENR:>

Public Law 103-62, the Government Performance and Results Act (1993), known as GPRA or "The Results Act," requires federal agencies to develop strategic plans, performance measures, annual performance plans, and performance reporting. If you need to refer to the original Act, visit this page.

General Information about the Results Act

<http://www.npr.gov/library/resource/general.html>

This page leads you into the internet world of GPRA from OMB and GAO. Among other topics it includes OMB's "[Report to the President and Congress on the Government Performance and Results Act](#)" which provides a progress report on the implementation of GPRA. An OMB paper gives background and United States Government experience to date with the GPRA: "[Implementation of the GPRA.](#)" A GAO paper outlines the key steps that an agency needs to take to implement GPRA: "[Executive Guide - Effectively Implementing the GPRA.](#)" The [Resource Guide by the National Performance Review](#) is a good primer on topics like Managing for Results and Accountability. There is a helpful glossary of GPRA terms, and links to other sites about the GPRA and Managing for Results.

GPRA Report: News and Analysis of the GPRA

<http://ombwatch.org/www/ombw/gpra/gpra1.html>

This page, maintained by OMB Watch, provides an informative introduction to the GPRA and updates of the most current events pertaining to the Results Act. Look for well-written news and analyses about the legislative status of GPRA and links to the [GPRA plans](#) of several U.S. Government agencies. Updated regularly.

Managing for Results

<http://www.npr.gov/initiati/mfr/index.html>

This is the National Performance Review's site containing three pages of resources on results-oriented government management. Check it out for background on Managing for Results, official guidance, and an extensive list of resources. There are case studies from 23 different federal agencies and departments, as well as the strategic plans and accountability reports of many U.S. Government agencies, and a section of frequently asked questions about Managing for Results and GPRA. Regularly updated.

US Chief Financial Officers' Council: GPRA Committee Reports/Guidance

<http://www.financenet.gov/financenet/fed/cfo/gpra/reports.htm>

This is the Chief Financial Officers' Council's three pages of GPRA reports and guidances. It includes important reports to the Council from the Budget Subcommittee, GPRA Implementation Subcommittee, GPRA Human Resources Committees, and a report from OMB. There is also a bulletin on Interagency Coordination and Stakeholder Involvement, and a listing of important GAO documents on GPRA. Look for links to the [strategic plans](#) and [performance plans](#) of many U.S. Government agencies in the sidebar.

[Guidance](#)[How To](#)[Examples](#)[Issues](#)[GPRA](#)[Definitions](#)[Feedback](#)[CDIE](#)[Online](#)

Definitions of Performance Measurement Terms

For quick reference, we have included definitions of some of the most common performance measurement terms. The definitions come from [Directives Series 200 Glossary of Terms](#).

Input

The provision of technical assistance, commodities, capital or training in addressing development or humanitarian needs.

Interim Performance Target

A target value which applies to a time period less than the overall time period related to the respective performance indicator and performance target.

Output

The product of a specific action, e.g., number of people trained, number of vaccinations administered.

Performance Baseline

The value of a performance indicator at the beginning of a planning and/or performance period. A performance baseline is the point used for comparison when measuring progress toward a specific result or objective. Ideally, a performance baseline will be the value of a performance indicator just prior to the implementation of the activity or activities identified as supporting the objective which the indicator is meant to measure.

Performance Indicator

A particular characteristic or dimension used to measure intended changes defined by an organizational 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" or "whether" a unit is progressing towards its objective, rather than why/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). Quantitative indicators are preferred in most cases, although in certain circumstances qualitative indicators are appropriate.

Performance Information

The body of information and statistical data that directly relates to performance towards overall USAID goals and objectives, as well as operating unit strategic objectives, strategic support objectives and special objectives. Performance information is a product of formal performance monitoring systems, evaluative activities, customer assessments and surveys, Agency research and informal feedback from partners and customers.

Performance Monitoring

A process of collecting and analyzing data to measure the performance of a program, process, or activity against expected results. A defined set of indicators is constructed to regularly track the key aspects of performance. Performance reflects effectiveness in converting inputs to outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Performance Monitoring Plan

A detailed plan for managing the collection of data in order to monitor performance. It identifies the indicators to be tracked; specifies the source, method of collection, and schedule for collection for each piece of datum required; and assigns responsibility for collection to a specific office, team, or individual. a) At the Agency level, it is the plan for gathering data on Agency goals and objectives. b) At the Operating Unit level, the performance monitoring plan contains information for gathering data on the strategic objectives, intermediate results and critical assumptions included in an operating unit's results frameworks.

Performance Monitoring System

An organized approach or process for systematically monitoring the performance of a program, process or activity towards its objectives over time.

Performance monitoring systems at USAID consist of, inter alia: performance indicators, performance baselines and performance targets for all strategic objectives, strategic support objectives, special objectives and intermediate results presented in a results framework; means for tracking critical assumptions; performance monitoring plans to assist in managing the data collection process; and the regular collection of actual results data.

Performance Target

The specific and intended result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe and against which actual results are compared and assessed. A performance target is to be defined for each performance indicator. In addition to final targets, interim targets also may be defined.

[Guidance](#)

[How To](#)

[Examples](#)

[Issues](#)

[GPRA](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Feedback](#)

[CDIE](#)

[Online](#)

Feedback

Tell us what you think

We would like to hear your opinions about this guide. The Guide will be updated periodically and your comments can help improve it. Did you find it useful? Is there something else you would like to see on it? Is there anything you didn't like about it? Please send your comments by email to:

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