**Project/Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plans**

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is an organized process for collecting and analyzing information to determine if a project or activity is achieving the goals and objectives of the program and to make informed decisions during implementation on how to best manage work. This is tracked through the creation of and reporting on a **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (MEL Plan).**

Each MEL Plan should contain key activities with corresponding output indicators and, when appropriate, results indicators. Both output indicators and results indicators have baselines and targets, data sources, disaggregation, and frequency of data collection. S/GWI has provided a recommended template for the project MEL Plan. It is not required that the applicant used the attached template, but the applicants using their own template should be sure to include all components detailed with the recommended MEL Plan Template. Each component is described in detail below.

***Goals and Objectives:*** Please copy goals and objectives listed in the **Project Narrative Template**. The guidance for creating goals and objectives is listed in Section 2: Project Approach of the Project Narrative Template instructions.

***Activities:*** For S/GWI projects, there should be at least two activities associated with each objective. Activities are the major actions carried out with grant funds during the performance period. They are directly linked to achievement of project objectives and are sufficient to reach those objectives.

Activities should be well-defined in terms of audience, location, duration, and cost:

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| **Strong Activity Example** | **Weak Activity Example** |
| Conduct two-day training program by Prof. Djelloul at the Marrakesh Civic Education Center on municipal elections monitoring process for 25 political science students from the University of Marrakesh to be completed 30 days before June 19 elections. | Election monitoring training. |

A good activity description designates the person responsible for implementing, defines the activity location, specifies duration of the activity, indicates the number of participants, sets deadlines to be respected, and provides details to justify budget requested.

***Performance Indicators:*** S/GWI projects track three types of performance indicators, **F-Standard GNDR Indicators**, **Results Indicators** and **Output Indicators**. Indicators used to observe progress being made towards anticipated results. Performance indicators should be linked to the project’s activities and objectives and are described in more detail below.

In differentiating between results indicators and outputs, it can be useful to think of outputs as tying to activities (e.g., outputs of a training program include the number of individuals trained and number of training sessions held). Multiple outputs when taken together build to achieve a desired result (e.g., two training sessions with 60 people each lead to an overall increase in knowledge of participants). Results are developmentally significant changes that impact the beneficiaries, while outputs are lower-level steps that are essential in achieving results.

Measures should be in quantifiable terms and clearly defined. Qualitative indicators are acceptable if they provide a reliable means to measure a particular phenomenon or attribute.

**Results Indicators** measure the extent to which a project objective is being achieved. Results indicators often measure change (e.g., change in knowledge of participants, number of women who voted in last election (compared to previous election), change in percent of women in workforce). Each objective listed must have at least one results indicator. Results indicators should answer the question, “*How will we know achievement when we see it?*”

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| **Results Indicators** |
| Change in the number of university students participating in the municipal elections monitoring process |

**Output indicators** do not measure change. They instead measure what comes out of project activities. Example: *Number of training sessions held* (product of activity, no change)

| **Activity** | **Output Indicators** |
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| Conduct two-day training program by Prof. Djelloul at the Marrakesh Civic Education Center on municipal elections monitoring process for 25 political science students from the University of Marrakesh to be completed 30 days before the June 19 elections. | Number of students trained on the municipal elections monitoring process |
| Number of training modules provided |

***Baselines and Targets:*** Besides defining the performance indicators in the MEL plan, it is also important to set baselines and targets for each indicator and describe the methodology for measuring the performance indicators (e.g., pre- and post-test surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.), including the data source (e.g., training sign-in sheets, website hits, survey data) and the frequency of measurement (e.g., after each workshop, quarterly, annually). Baselines and targets must be specified for each indicator included in the MEL plan.

A **Baseline** measure for an indicator is collected before or at the start of a project and provides a basis for planning and/or assessing subsequent progress and impact. This measure explains the current state of the result or output prior to the project start (e.g., number of people who already have vocational training, percent of women who already vote). If a prior program already provided vocational training to 100 women, then the baseline for “number of women trained” should be 100. For S/GWI projects, the baseline is often 0, but it does not have to be. Some projects must perform a baseline assessment to establish baselines. For example, if an indicator was “Number of women with knowledge of voting process,” the project might conduct a pre-test to determine how many women already have knowledge of the voting process.

**Targets** are reasonable estimates of the outputs or results to be achieved by the project over its period of performance. Targets are estimates. Performance may be higher or lower than the target, given realities of project implementation.

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| **Results Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **End of Project Total** |
| Change in the number of university students participating in the June 19 municipal elections monitoring process | 0 | 20 | 22 |

For any baselines for targets expressed as percentages, please include information on how the percentage was derived, as demonstrated in the example below:

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| **Results Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** |
| Percent of workshop attendees who go on to monitor the June 19 municipal elections | 0 | 80%  (80% = 16 attendees go on monitor elections of the target 20 total workshop participants ) |

The **Data Source** is the collection tool by which the project will obtain results indicator or output indicator information throughout the program. Data collection tools should be easy to use for both the participant and the person responsible for analyzing the data. Suggested data collection tools include, but are not limited to:

* Pre- and post-tests
* Pre and post intervention surveys/questionnaires
* Meeting minutes
* Attendance sheets
* Site visit checklists
* Interviews
* Focus groups
* Secondary Data: Data that already exists (e.g.: Government reports, census information)
* Program reports

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| **Results Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Data Source** |
| Change in the number of university students participating in the June 19 municipal elections monitoring process | 0 | 20 | Attendance sheets |

**Data Disaggregation** separates data into its component parts to look at how specific subgroups perform.  It is important to consider only the information that you need to know as there are infinite ways to disaggregate information collected from program.  The most common ways to disaggregate data are by sex and age. S/GWI requires that data at a minimum be disaggregated in this way.

It is particularly important to disaggregate data by sex to show the impact that a program is having on women, men, girls, and boys. This helps us to understand how the program implemented has changed the roles and responsibilities of men and women. Sex-disaggregated will help to illustrate the differences and inequalities in various situations for women and men.

Data may need to be divided into additional categories (e.g., region, vocation, type of organization, etc.) to meet the individual needs of the program. There is a specific place in the MEL Plan to enter in other disaggregation information.

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| **Results Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Data Source** | **Gender/Age Disaggregation** | **Other Disaggregation** |
| Change in the number of university students participating in the June 19 municipal elections monitoring process | 0 | 20 | Attendance sheets | Men (Age 18 – 30), Women (Age 18 – 30) | Voting District |

**Frequency of Data Collection** establishesschedule of when data will be collected (e.g., monthly, quarterly, and bi-annually) and validates its feasibility for program design. Note that this is not necessarily the frequency of the activity (e.g., literacy classes delivered daily), but rather the frequency by which data will be collected (e.g., program participant information collected quarterly). Consider what timing makes sense for each indicator.

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| **Results Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Data Source** | **Gender/Age Disaggregation** | **Other Disaggregation** | **Frequency of Data Collection** |
| Change in the number of university students participating in the June 19 municipal elections monitoring process | 0 | 20 | Attendance sheets | Men (Age 18 – 30), Women (Age 18 – 30) | Voting District | One time |

S/GWI wants to afford recipients the flexibility to design an MEL plan that is customized to the specifics of the project. S/GWI recognizes that sometimes it may be difficult for recipients to design truly results-oriented MEL plans, but we encourage recipients to develop an MEL plan that is as comprehensive, ambitious, and creative as possible. It should also incorporate constant learning and adaptation to improve implementation and avoid unintended consequences of implementation.

The MEL plan is meant to detail how the results and outputs of project activities will be measured quantitatively. Yet, sometimes the results of a project are more easily conveyed qualitatively. Recipients can describe how project impact will be assessed qualitatively at the beginning of the MEL plan. For large S/GWI grants, please explain how an evaluation will be independent if it is included in the budget and MEL plan. “Independent” can include a contractor, consultant, or other outside source of an evaluation of the progress, process, or results of an activity. If awarded, S/GWI encourages recipients to provide success stories and anecdotal or other qualitative evidence of project impact in the quarterly progress reports, as well as showing how well the project is meeting the targets set in the MEL plan.

**Learning Plan** Data and monitoring is only worth the level of effort it takes if it is used to improve the effectiveness of the work. To ensure that activities achieve the most positive change, please describe how learning will be incorporated through the implementation process and who will be responsible for making sure learning is utilized and reported.