OLSIA MEAL Policy

Organization of literacy support for independent Afghanistan

2025

OLSIA MEAL POLICY

Contents

Board Approval

The board of director of OLSIA, by resolution duly adopted by unanimous vote at a meeting duly called and held and not subsequently rescinded or modified in any way, has duly determined that this policy is workable and fair to and in the best interests of OLSIA, the board, approve this policy, recommended for use and directed that the amendment be submitted for consideration by OLSIA board members and ED at the OLSIA board meeting.

Each member of the board agrees to perform such further acts and execute such further documents as are necessary to effectuate the purposes hereof. This policy manual shall be understood and enforce in accordance with and governed by the laws of the government of Afghanistan.

The OLSIA Board Approval constitutes approval of this policy manual undersigned.

Abdul Qaum Almas	Signature
Fazal Rabani	Signature
Abdul Jabar Ameri	Signature
Farhad Naderi	Signature
Haroon Ahmadi	Signature

OLSIA MEAL POLICY

Policy Update

In order to provide flexibility and operate within this policy, the MEAL policies and procedures in this manual are subject to review and updates on regular basis. This policy was created in April 2024 and reviewed in June 2024. The changes in size and complexity and implementation of new systems are subject to changes in regulations and MEAL standards, and the existed processes or policies of OLSIA will need to be modified accordingly.

Added this, it's important that any best practices or 'lessons learned' are regularly incorporated into the policies and procedures for continual process improvements. Any changes and updates will be incorporated in this manual on annual basis and will be effective for implementation after the approval of the OLSIA board. The next review of the policy will be performed in May 2027.

Policy Implementation

The MEAL coordinator, supported by the executive director and program manager, is responsible for developing, reviewing and implementing MEAL policies and procedures, as well as monitoring existing program function and policies. OLSIA believes that all relevant staff receive access and regular training on this policies and procedures of the organization, so the benefits of the structure that the document creates can be realized. Also, a regular and consistent enforcement of the policies across all levels of the organization is in place to minimize and mitigate the risks falling out of compliance with the policies.

In due course, the OLSIA board has a fiduciary duty to the organization to ensure that program development policies are used appropriately. This includes making sure that there are good documented policies and procedures to protect those resources and management of OLSIA is responsible for ensuring these policies and procedures are communicated, followed, monitored, and corrected as needed.

Policy Orientation

The purpose of this policy is to ensure efficient and effective management of the projects and programs, monitoring and evaluation, and the alignment of program planning steps with the overall mission of the organization. This manual includes policies and rules that govern the MEAL activities that align with the overall goals of the organization that are written with enough clarity to be understood by individuals involved. It is important that all relevant staff understand the policies and procedures adopted in this manual. To effectuate, O

LSIA MEAL coordinator is responsible to conduct an orientation about the policy and all the updates and changes incorporated in this manual. For new staff, MEAL policies and procedures should be explained in detail and productive training ought to be provided as/when needed.

Background of the Organization

The Organization of Literacy Support for Independent Afghanistan (OLSIA) was founded in 2024 with the conviction that education is the cornerstone of lasting peace, economic stability, and social inclusion in Afghanistan. Grounded in the belief that every person—regardless of age, gender or circumstance—deserves the opportunity to learn and grow, OLSIA is committed to building a brighter future for Afghan communities.

From its inception, OLSIA has positioned education as "first and for all," directing its efforts toward increasing access to literacy, computer skills, vocational training and the English language. By mobilizing educated Afghan youth and partnering with local communities, OLSIA strives to overcome barriers that have long limited opportunities, especially among women and underserved populations.

Operating across multiple provinces, OLSIA implements projects that combine classroom learning with practical skill-building: establishing computer learning centers, delivering soft-skills training, and facilitating vocational pathways. These initiatives are designed not only to educate but to empower learners to participate meaningfully in the economy and society.

OLSIA's vision is of a united and prosperous Afghanistan where development opportunities are accessible to all, thereby fostering social inclusion and stability. Its mission centers on building a collective movement of educated Afghan youth who champion education for all ages and all genders—with no discrimination. The ultimate goal is to enhance livelihoods, create economic opportunities, and contribute to the country's long-term development.

Through transparent governance, community-centered design and partnerships that link education with employment, OLSIA seeks to ensure that every Afghan has a chance to unlock their potential. We believe that when people lead their own learning and development, the benefits ripple outward—strengthening families, communities and the nation.

Our Vision:

A united and prosperous Afghanistan where education and development opportunities are accessible to all, fostering social inclusion and stability.

Our Mission:

We aim to build a collective movement of educated Afghan youths to support education above all, education for all ages and all genders without any discrimination of any kind.

Goal

To improve access to education, vocational skills, and economic opportunities, enhancing the livelihoods of Afghan communities and contributing to the country's long-term development.

Humanitarian Principles:

OLSIA is committed to the principles that are central to establishing and maintaining the provision of humanitarian response to the affected people in natural disasters and complex emergency situations and/or implementation of human development interventions. The main humanitarian principles defined by UN have been adopted by OLSIA. The four core principles are:

- Humanity
- Neutrality
- Impartiality and,
- Independence

MEAL Introduction

This Policy Monitoring, Evaluating, Accountability and Learning for project results is an updated version of our few past years' experience. It seeks new directions in planning of monitoring and evaluation in the context of fast result oriented programs strategic plans.

Management and staff on key functions and mechanisms strive for results and principles in the overarching programmatic documents including the strategic plan to be achieved.

Terminologies

Monitoring is the ongoing process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving their goals and objectives.

Evaluation is a rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision-making.

While monitoring provides real-time information required by management, evaluation provides more in depth assessment. The monitoring process can generate questions to be answered by evaluation. Also, evaluation draws heavily on data generated through monitoring during the program and project cycle, including, for example, baseline data, information on the program or project implementation process, and measurements of results.

Accountability is the commitment to respond to and balance the needs of all project stakeholders including beneficiaries, donors, partners, and organization itself.

Learning is about embedding processes for internal reflection using data and raising questions to make smarter and informed project decisions. (More key definitions are available under literature review).

OLSIA Concepts of Having MEAL

M&E and Accountability

OLSIA holds itself accountable by assessing the performance of its project interventions to targets established on the basis of available evidence; engaging evaluators to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of its interventions, publically disclosing evaluation results and disseminating them to a broad range of stakeholders, including the Afghanistan public; and using key findings and lessons to inform decisions and resource allocation. For evaluation to serve the aim of accountability, OLSIA's programs include/will include meaningful outputs and outcomes, metrics derived from the analysis and program logic of the interventions.

OLSIA is committed to transparency and making information available to the public. This is done through routinely updating OLSIA's website with the most recent information. In addition, OLSIA regularly publishes monitoring and evaluation results information on its website. Monitoring data is updated quarterly to show both the progress of program-specific projects and activities, as well as aggregated progress across each of the sectors that have common indicators.

M&E and Learning

OLSIA emphasizes the importance of learning through its commitment to evaluations. Evaluation of projects that are well designed and executed can systematically generate knowledge about the magnitude and determinants of project performance, suggesting OLSIA staff, government, and donor organizations to refine, designs and introduce improvements into future efforts.

Learning requires careful selection of: (i) evaluation questions regarding fundamental assumptions underlying project designs; (ii) methods of analysis that identify the internal and external validity of the findings; and (iii) mechanisms to share findings widely and to facilitate integration of the evaluation conclusions, lessons and recommendations into decision-making.

In order to provide evidence to inform decision making, OLSIA requires that every completed evaluation report includes a summary of findings. The summary of findings summarizes the key components of the program, the program logic and accompanying assumptions, monitoring indicators and results, and evaluation questions and findings, as well as key lessons learned by OLSIA staff and donor organization from program implementation and results.

Objectives of This Policy include the following:

A basic understanding of the purposes, processes, norms, standards and guiding principles of MEAL within OLSIA.

- Knowledge of the essential elements of the monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Knowledge of the essential elements of the evaluation process.
- Planning and monitoring emergency programs, projects and activities
- Managing the commissioning process of evaluations

Monitoring and evaluation helps the organization extract relevant information from past and ongoing activities that can be used as the basis for programmatic fine-tuning, reorientation and future planning. Without effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to judge if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved.

Commitment of OLSIA for having M&E

Monitoring and evaluation serve several purposes. In the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation, it would be difficult to know whether the intended results are being achieved as planned, what corrective action may be needed to ensure delivery of the intended results, and whether projects are making positive contributions towards project or program objectives. Monitoring and evaluation always relate to pre-identified results in the development and humanitarian plan.

They are driven by the need to account for the achievement of intended results and provide a fact base to inform corrective decision-making. Monitoring, as well as evaluation, provides opportunities at regular pre-determined points to validate the logic of a program, its activities and their implementation and to make adjustments as needed.

Good planning and designs alone do not ensure results. Progress towards achieving results needs to be monitored. Equally, no amount of good monitoring alone will correct poor program designs, plans and results. Information from monitoring needs to be used to encourage improvements or reinforce plans. Information from systematic monitoring also provides critical input to evaluation. It is very difficult to evaluate a program that is not well designed lacking a clear theory for change and that does not systematically monitor its progress.

Commitment of M&E team and others involved

M&E team along with all involved in M&E planning, designing tools, data collection, performing evaluation and analysis must understand that monitoring and evaluation is a significant responsibility and will make it a priority. During their employment with OLSIA, the staff is expected to perform all M&E activities in professional, ethical, and standard manner and must ensure honesty, confidentiality and reliability at each stage of M&E – from planning to results reporting in order to estimate, track and evaluate the impacts of the projects and programs using technically rigorous, systematic, and transparent methods. It is predicated on the principles of accountability, transparency, and learning. For privacy of the respondents, a disclosure review committee will be established to protect the rights and privacy of individual respondents to OLSIA surveys.

OLSIA and Planning M&E

An M&E plan shall be developed as a roadmap that has to describe how the project or program must be monitored and evaluated as well as how the evaluation results be used for a project improvement and decision making. It is important to involve project managers, evaluators, donors, and other stakeholders in the designing of the M&E plan, as stakeholder involvement in the early phase ensures the applicability and sustainability of M&E activities. The idea is to identify opportunities and barriers as a team in the planning stage with a focus on problem-solving and maximizing impact.

- Planning Monitoring
- Use of Logical Frame Work
- Performance questions Objective, Output in rare cases activities
- Information needs and indicators;
- Baseline information: Requirements, status and responsibilities;
- Data-gathering methods, frequency and responsibilities;
- Reporting and provision of feedback
- Implementation Support: Required forms, planning, training, data management, expertise, resources and responsibilities;
- Communication: Analysis, reporting, feedback and change processes and responsibilities

Sample M&E plan

Objective Colum	Colum Expected Result	Indicators	Target	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Frequency	Responsibility	Tool required and responsible person
Objective									
Outputs									

M&E at the earliest stage of Project / program

An M&E plan shall be created right in the beginning when the project interventions are being planned. Planning project interventions and designing an M&E strategy should go hand in hand. Planning the M&E this early on shall help ensure that there is a robust system in place to monitor every little intervention and activity of the project and evaluate their success, and shall help the project managers and other staff members associated with the project to get a clear picture of key objectives and ensure the project is on the right track.

The process of designing an M&E plan:

Developing an M&E plan is a dynamic and multi-faceted process as it involves merging and connecting different elements of M&E into one holistic system to measure the performance of interventions and impact of a project. It is recommended to design the M&E work plan in a manner that it's flexible so adjustments could be made anytime within the context of the work plan to account for issues that may arise during the M&E process. Below is the step-by-step process that has to be followed while designing an M&E plan:

Defining a monitoring and evaluation framework

A sufficient background knowledge is required to design a framework. A framework shall increase understanding of the project's goals and objectives and shall define the relationships between factors key to implementation. A framework shall also articulate the external and internal elements that can affect the project's success.

It is important to notice that there is no one size fits all when it comes to frameworks. Different kinds of frameworks can be used for different projects, and the best way to determine an ideal type is by understanding the scope of the project and then choosing the one that best fits the purpose. One of the following three types of M&E frameworks shall be used depending on the project scope:

Theory of Change – A theory of change shows a bigger picture of all the underlying processes and possible pathways leading to long term behavioral changes in the institutional, individual or community levels, while visualizing all the possible evidence and assumptions that are linked to those changes.

Logical Framework (Log-Frame)/Logic Model – Unlike the theory of change, a Log-Frame is to the point and focuses only on one specific pathway that a project deals with and creates a neat and orderly structure for it. This makes it easier for the project managers and stakeholders to monitor project implementation.

Results Framework – A results framework emphasizes on results to provide clarity around the key project objectives. In other words, it outlines how each of the intermediate results/outputs and outcomes relate to and facilitates the achievement of each objective, and how objectives relate to each other and the ultimate goal.

Identifying relevant indicators

Once the program's goals and objectives are defined and an outline of an M&E framework is in place, indicators shall be defined for tracking progress towards achieving those goals. A good mix of process, outcome and impact indicators is always recommended.

Process indicators track the progress of the project. These indicators shall help us get clarity on whether activities are being implemented as planned. On the other hand, outcome indicators track how successful program activities have been at achieving project objectives. Unlike process indicators, these indicators shall focus more on what the project is trying to achieve rather than how it is being achieved. Impact indicators measure the long term goals or impacts of a project.

Identifying data collection tools and methodologies:

After creating monitoring indicators, relevant data shall be identified and collected to demonstrate the actual results of the project interventions against the indicators. M&E coordinator shall recommend to involve the project team and stakeholders in the discussion to make the process more participatory. Before collecting data, it may be needed to discuss these questions as a team:

- Will the data be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of the two?
- What baseline data already exists?
- What are the most relevant methods and tools to collect new data?
- How will the collected data be recorded?
- How and when will the data be analyzed?
- Who will be responsible for data collection and analysis?

The golden rule to be followed is to collect fewer useful data properly than a lot of data poorly. It is important for project managers to take into consideration staff time and resource costs of data collection to see what is reasonable.

Once the appropriate data sources have been selected, the next step would be to decide on the appropriate tools and methods to collect the data from the data source. Following are some common types of data collection methods:

- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Case studies
- Interviews
- Workshops
- Content analysis of materials etc.

It is suggested to use digital data collection tools available in the market to help data collectors gather data faster and more efficiently.

Once the process of data collection is determined, it is also necessary to decide how frequently data will be collected. This will depend on the needs of the project, donor requirements, available resources, and the timeline of the intervention.

Criteria for Selecting Indicators

Indicators are used to measure progress toward the expected results throughout the implementation period. Different types of indicators are needed at different points in time to trace the progress of the intervention against the program logic. Indicators in a project and M&E Plan should strive to meet the following criteria:

Direct: An indicator should measure as closely as possible the result it is intended to measure.

Unambiguous: The definition of the indicators should be operationally precise and there should be no ambiguity about what is being measured or how to interpret the results.

Adequate: Taken as a group, indicators should sufficiently measure the result in question. Developers of the M&E Plan should strive for the minimum number of indicators sufficient to measure the result.

Practical: Data for an indicator should be realistically obtainable in a timely way and at a reasonable cost.

Useful: Indicators selected for inclusion in the M&E Plan must be useful for OLSIA management and oversight of the program.

Indicator Plan

Objective	Indicator	Definition of Indicator and Management Utility	Baseline Data and Targets	Data Collection Sources & Methods	Frequency of Data Collection	Responsible
		Quantitave and qualitative information				

Data collection methods

The data to be collected and the methods for collecting the data will be determined by the evidence needed to address the evaluation questions; the analyses that will be used to translate the data into meaningful findings in response to the evaluation questions Documentation Review:

- Biophysical measurements
- Direct Observation
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Case Studies
- Focus groups Interviews

Data Quality Standards

The data used to measure indicators should meet the following standards:

Validity: Data are valid to the extent that they clearly, directly and adequately represent the result to be measured. Measurement errors, unrepresentative sampling and simple transcription errors may adversely affect data validity. Data should be periodically tested to ensure that no error creates significant bias.

Reliability: Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods over time. Project managers and M&E staff should be confident that progress toward performance targets reflects real changes rather than variations in data collection methods.

Timeliness: Data should be available with enough frequency and should be sufficiently current to inform management decision-making. 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 project managers to make confident decisions. The expected change being measured should be greater than the margin of error. Measurement error results primarily from weakness in design of a data collection instrument, inadequate controls for bias in responses or reporting, or inadequately trained or supervised enumerators.

Consistency: Data should be consistent with the documented definition of the indicators.

Objectivity: Data that are collected, analyzed, and reported should have mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that data are subject to erroneous or intentional alteration. The data collector should follow agreed-upon data collection and quality control procedures to ensure consistency, reliability, objectivity, and accuracy of data.

DEVELOPING A RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Key considerations in a Results Framework (RF) shall include the following:

Relevant results achieved by other donors, government, nongovernmental organizations and more are to be included in the RF or described in the development hypothesis if OLSIA believes it can influence those results. They should also be identified in the development hypothesis in terms of both their importance to achievement of higher-level results and why we think that they will be achieved. The Goal and results statements define what will be achieved at the end of the strategy period.

A statement of a result at any level should be the completed result of actions or processes, not the actions or processes themselves, for example a statement of a desired result, such as "Emergency Response Provided" versus a statement of an action or process, "Increase the capacity to deliver emergency NFI and food items to affected people". A result should be stated clearly and precisely in a way that can be objectively measured. Each objective, Immediate Result (IR), and/or Sub-IR should identify one clear result in the cause and effect chain, precluding the need for additional explanation, e.g. "through", "by", or "for".

The Goal, each objective and each IR must have at least one performance indicator specified. These serve as the basis for monitoring progress toward results achievement. The indicators should measure the intended results of the project and how these results will be achieved. They may be included on the RF graphic, if there is sufficient space, and they must be included in the Performance Management Plan (PMP). There are several clearly defined steps in the development of an RF. These include problem analysis; stakeholder consultation; analytical work; development of a Goal-level hypothesis; identification of IRs and Sub-IRs; specification of roles of other actors; clarification of assumptions and risk; and an iterative process of revision as necessary.

FRAMEWORK AND LOGICAL FRAMEWORKS:

The Results Framework is a strategic planning tool that helps Missions identify the hypothesis and focuses on what results lead to other results. The Log-Frame underlying a project allows the Mission to define exactly what resources and set of actions are needed to achieve and measure the results (see the example).

Logframe

Summary of Objectives/Outputs	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumption
Overall Goal/Objective, Impact: Greater Why? Project contributions to the solution of a sector problems after the project has finished. The higher order objective to which the project contributes	How will the overall goal/impact be measured including quantity, quality, location and time?	How will the information be collected, when and by whom? Sources of information and methods used to collect and report	Important external factors necessary for sustaining the overall objectives in the long run. Assumptions for the long term sustainability
Intermediate Goal, purpose, outcome: Why? Direct benefits (e.g. to a specific target group), what is the effect of the project?	How will the outcome/purpose be measured including quantity, quality, location and time?	How will the information be collected, when and by whom? Sources of information and methods used to collect and report	Important external factors needed in order to attain the overall goal/impact. External conditions to be met for the project being successful
Outputs, results: What? Tangible products or services delivered by the project. (These are also the deliverables of the terms of reference)	How will the outputs/ results be measured including quantity, quality, location and time?	How will the information be collected, when and by whom? Sources of information and methods used to collect and report	Important external factors needed in order to attain the Outcome/ intermediate goal
Activities : How? Necessary tasks for achieving outputs. Main activities that must be undertaken in order to accomplish outputs			Important external factors that must prevail in order to accomplish the Outputs

Example: Filled Matrix

	Intervention Logic	Objective Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Overall Goal, Impact	To improve the awareness of youth for human rights	30% of youth are able to name 10 basic human rights	Report on the evaluation of questionnaires filled in by youth	Youth is interested in human rights
Outcome	Human rights education is taught in schools	In the school year 2015 10 lessons on human rights are taught	Regular report on school teaching	Participants consider that human rights are important
Results, Outputs	15 teachers are able to teach human rights and have manuals	Teachers successfully pass the exam at the end of the course With 80% right ans.	Diploma delivered by trainers	Teachers believe that they should teach human rights
Activities	5 day seminar and manual			Motivation of teachers

FIGURE: EXAMPLE OF LINKAGES BETWEEN AN RF AND LOGFRAME
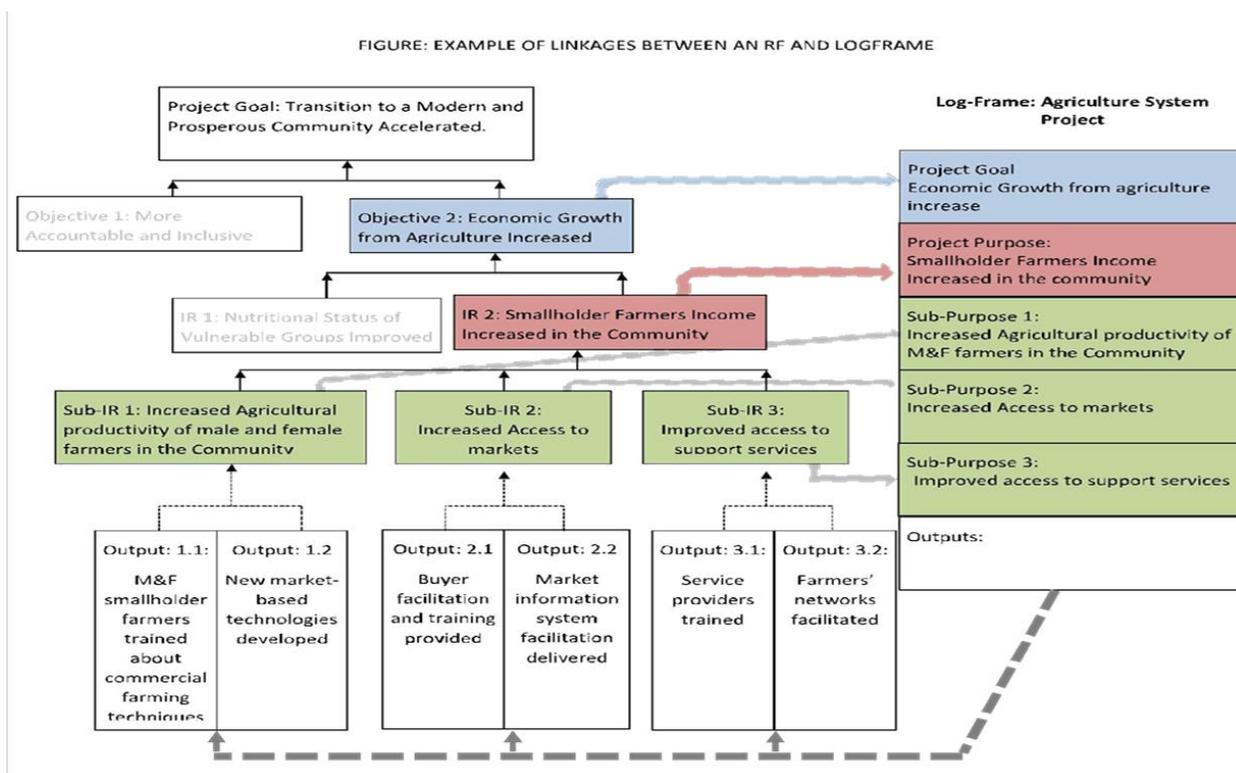
Defining Rule and Responsibilities

The ToR for M&E officer will be established through project-specific M&E requirements. Generally, an M&E officer will be responsible to support the M&E team in data collection, analysis and learning activities to help ensure accountability and efficiency from start to finish of a program/project.

The officer will work closely with the Program team to assess field conditions support M&E capacity building initiatives and facilitate the collection of quality data. Collaborate with the program team in reviewing and preparing monthly quarterly and final narrative donor reports. Additionally, the incumbent will follow-up and work on indicators implementation of processes, standard operating procedures and any other tasks given.

In addition, s/he will take part in developing and updating monitoring and evaluation tools such as Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) Performance Indicator Summary Table (PIST) Performance Indicator Tracking Table (PITT) and different data collection forms.

The M&E Officer shall have Superior knowledge of monitoring and evaluation concepts and practices, ability to design comprehensive M&E tools, experience in working with multi-donor funded organization, and undertake regular field visits with excellent reporting and analysis ability plus good interpersonal relationship skills and ability to work with a diverse team of national and international staff and consultants.

Field Monitoring

Field monitoring must be undertaken as much as possible in collaboration with donor organizations, government, and other stakeholders to build shared understanding of progress towards results, as OLSIA is having participatory approach.

- Common field monitoring systems should meet the needs of donor organizations regarding shared program results.
- In all cases, M&E staff should plan to prioritize field monitoring of activities and outputs that target the needs of the project clients.

The project should review the data to:

- Revalidate if the project and program results logic remain valid in light of the operational experience and evidence.
- Discern what issues have emerged during implementation: Have the foreseen risks and assumptions materialized?
- Have other unforeseen challenges, opportunities and risks materialized? Are these being managed?

On the basis of that monitoring data, the project management should re-confirm that the delivery of outputs is on schedule and that the project is contributing towards the desired outcomes. If not, they should determine what changes are needed.

If revisions to plans are needed, then the project management should draft the revisions, including the results framework with new cost estimates, annual /periodic targets and so forth, to facilitate decision-making at higher levels. Such information could be provided at agreed intervals such as quarterly, semi-annually, annual or on as needed basis.

M&E and Logical Framework

A logical framework approach is a tool for designing, monitoring and evaluating projects The logical frame matrix has three (3) main features:

- **Firstly**, it describes how a program or project is meant to work on a practical basis;
- **Secondly**, the log frame matrix identifies the components required to assure that the stated results and objectives are achieved;
- **And thirdly**, the matrix lists specific indicators to be used to measure actual performance

The basic principles for M&E which are included in the logical are:

- Measureable objective
- Performance indicator
- Target and periodic reporting

The above features of a logical frame directly depend and used in M&E, the logical frame work is a tool used to design a project ensuring that the outcome and objectives of the project are achieved, so designing at the theoretical stage and ensuring they are met in the implementation stage, for the second aim M&E is introduced and used.

Therefore, M&E planning is developed along with the project development process. Without having an M&E the logical frame work won't work. And the logical frame work entails detailed planning for M&E and implementation of the project.

The elements of logical frame work

- Overall Objective
- Outcome
- Output
- Activities
- Indicators - Means of Verification: The means of verification are the sources of information for the data needed to give contents to the indicators; and the methodology used to get the value.
- Assumption

The External Factors are situations, events or decisions that are necessary for the success of the project, but beyond its control. (Risks). Risks are external factors that are outside your control but which have an impact on your performance and ability to implement your project.

- Indicator Plan
- Means of Verification
- Assumption and Risk

Overall objective	Indicator	Means of verification	Assumption and Risk
Outcome			
Output			
Activity			

M&E Tool

Is the questionnaire for collecting the data for the associated indicators, usually for objectives indicators?

Resource Needed:

- M&E Budget
- The following will be factors influencing the M&E budget
- Salary of M&E staff
- Communication
- Transportation
- Software and IT
- In project with high magnitude data collection expenses
- Training and capacity building
- Required training and capacity building will be providing for the M&E staff, this the OLSIA mandates
- M&E Approach / Participatory

Usually M&E approach is participatory because of keeping the transparency and involves representative from internal and external stakeholders.

Monitoring for results /Implementation

The previous section provided guidance on how to plan for monitoring and evaluation including developing an M&E framework and effectively addressing other planning needs, such as securing resources and capacities for implementing monitoring and evaluation activities.

This section provides step-by-step guidance on how to implement planned monitoring activities. It also presents useful tools and tips for effective monitoring and use of monitoring evidence in decision-making.

The M&E will be implemented following award of the project

- Review the Logical Frame Work Review the Indicator
- Obtain donor's agreement on the list of Indicators

Have a clear common understanding of the following:

A. The monitoring policies applicable to the respective monitoring entity
B. Relevant roles and responsibilities and how they are applied in monitoring for both outcomes and outputs, and management entities in projects and programs
C. Commonly used monitoring tools and approaches
D. Implement monitoring actions: organize, plan and implement monitoring actions, using selected tools for collection and analysis of data and reporting.
E. Use monitoring data objectively for management action and decision-making

Preparing to monitor by reinforcing the initial M&E plan

Once there is clear understanding on the monitoring policy, operational context, roles and responsibilities, one can prepare to implement monitoring actions. The first activity in implementing monitoring activities is to ensure that the M&E framework is up to date. The M&E framework prepared at the end of the planning stage of a program or project forms the basis for this purpose. It should be carefully reviewed and elaborated as necessary.

Monitor: Collection of data, analysis and reporting

Scope of monitoring

For each information need or indicator, you must establish how the information will be collected and organized

- Information gathering and organizing
- Participation and Monitoring
- Options for verifying data
- How to collect information and data / using tools /reporting
- Storing Monitoring information
- Responsibilities
- Communication of Monitoring Results
- Implementing a Learning System
- Management of Monitoring data /make a data base

Individual partner contributions to the outcomes through outputs should be monitored and evaluated—these outputs may be generated by programs, projects, policy advice, advocacy and other activities. Their monitoring and evaluation entails analyzing whether or not outputs are in the process of being delivered as planned and whether or not the outputs are contributing to the outcome.

Evaluation

Evaluation is critical for OLSIA to progress towards advancing human development and relieve human suffering based on project or program specific objectives. Through the generation of evidence and objective information, evaluations enable managers to make informed decisions and plan strategically. The effective conduct and use of evaluation requires adequate human and financial resources, sound

understanding of evaluation and most importantly, a culture of results-orientation, learning, inquiry and evidence-based decision-making.

- When evaluations are used effectively, they support program improvements, knowledge generation and accountability.
- Supporting program improvements— did it work or not, and why? How could it be done differently for better results?

The interest is on what works, why and in what context. Decision makers, such as managers, use evaluations to make necessary improvements, adjustments to the implementation approach or strategies, and to decide on alternatives. Evaluations addressing these questions need to provide concrete information on how improvements could be made or what alternatives exist to address the necessary improvements.

Supporting accountability— is OLSIA doing the right things? Is OLSIA doing things right? Did OLSIA do what it said it would do?

The interest here is on determining the merit or worth and value of a project and its quality. An effective accountability framework requires credible and objective information, and evaluations can deliver such information. Evaluations help ensure that OLSIA goals and projects are aligned with and support of the ground realities,

OLSIA is accountable for providing evaluative evidence that links its contributions to the achievement of development results in our country and for delivering services that are based on the principles of human development. By providing such objective and independent assessments, evaluations in OLSIA support the organization's accountability towards its Executive Board, donors, governments, national partners and on top clients (beneficiaries).

Principles, norms and standards for evaluation

The evaluation policy was adopted to strengthen the evaluation function in OLSIA. The guiding principles, norms and standards as expressed in the policy and Norms and Standards for Evaluation guide the practice and use of evaluation in OLSIA. Norms for evaluation are how evaluation should be conducted in order to meet the required quality standards and its intended role.

Roles and responsibilities in evaluation

The OLSIA evaluation policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of key constituents of the organization in evaluation. Program units and the OLSIA Evaluation Department carry out different types of evaluations in order to objectively assess OLSIA contributions to program and project results.

Roles and responsibilities in decentralized evaluations:

Who: Actors and Accountability	What role and responsibilities	When
• Senior Management of Program Units • OLSIA contribution towards national goals • Progress, problems and trends in the achievement of OLSIA level and program results • Patterns and efficiency of resource use • Use of evaluative knowledge for learning and accountability •	• Ensure development of the evaluation • Promote joint evaluation work with the UN system and other partners. • Ensure clear and comprehensive results frameworks are in place, and effective monitoring is implemented • Safeguard the independence of the evaluation exercise and ensure quality of evaluations • Prepare a management response to all evaluations and ensure the implementation of committed actions in the management response	• Planning • Planning and monitoring • Commissioning of evaluation Post evaluation and follow-up
• Heads of Thematic Units and Program Officers/Project Staff Heads of Thematic Units: • OLSIA portfolio of programs and projects in a thematic area— OLSIA contribution to particular outcomes within a program Officers or Project Staff: • Progress towards and achievement of outputs and outcomes • Problems and issues related to implementation • Practical project-level collaboration with and monitoring of partners' contribution, as well as resource mobilization	• Participate and involve relevant stakeholders in developing an evaluation plan • Ensure initiatives in a given thematic or results area • Facilitate and ensure the preparation and implementation of relevant management responses. • Facilitate and ensure knowledge sharing and. • use of sectoral or thematic evaluative information in programming.	• Planning • Planning and monitoring • Post-evaluation and follow-up

• M&E Specialists/Advisers and Regional Evaluation Advisers. • Coherent M&E framework and systems in place and implemented at the program and project levels. • Enhanced quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation.	• Support program evaluation ability by facilitating the development of a coherent results framework and a monitoring system, and providing program and project staff with tools, guidance and training. • Support evaluation planning and upload and maintain the evaluation plan • Provide guidance in drafting evaluation selecting evaluators, mapping stakeholders, reviewing draft evaluation reports, and identifying evaluation questions and methodologies. • Facilitate the preparation of timely management responses to all evaluations. • Ensure management response tracking and support M&E capacity development and knowledge sharing.	• Planning and ongoing implementation • Post-evaluation and follow-up
• Oversight Units: Regional Bureau and the Executive Office	• Regional bureau: provide oversight to ensure that the relevant country offices fulfill the requirements as outlined above. • The Executive Office provides oversight for evaluations carried out by the regional bureau and other corporate units	• Planning, monitoring, implementation and follow-up.
• Evaluation Office	• Provide norms, standards, guidelines and tools to support the quality enhancement of evaluations. • Maintain and improve management systems for evaluation.	

Policy on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results, requirements for evaluation practices have been adjusted in many ways. This table lists the policy requirements before and after the introduction of the Evaluation ToR.

Tool	Before evaluation policy	After Evaluation Policy
Pre evaluation	Optional	• Only mandatory when required by a partner-ship protocol and included in the project document. • Strongly recommended to evaluate pilot projects before replication or up scaling, projects that are going into a next phase.
Evaluation Plan	Country-level evaluation plan is prepared by country offices electronically, and submitted to the Evaluation Office for approval.	All program units are required to prepare a plan for the program period. It is made available to the Executive Board along with the program document before its approval. It is to monitor and report on evaluation complain
Management response	Optional	All evaluations require a management response. It is to monitor and report on the status of committed follow-up actions
information Disclosure	It contains evaluation plans and reports. It is optional for program units to upload information.	Program units are required to upload evaluation plans, reports, and management responses. It contains summary reports, information on evaluation focal points in each program unit, and various reporting tools for all program units.

Avoiding and mitigating conflict of interest in evaluation due to past engagement

As a general rule, OLSIA commissioning units will not assign consultants to the evaluation of projects, sectors and themes, strategies, corporate processes or policies for which they have had prior involvement in design, implementation, decision-making or financing. Following this principle, OLSIA staff members or employees that may be or have been directly or indirectly related to the program or project should not take part in the evaluation team.

Assuring the quality of evaluation design and methodology: This section describes key components of quality evaluation design and elements of quality evaluation reports to help OLSIA managers, evaluation managers and partners carry out effective quality assurance of the evaluation process and products. It is intended to enhance knowledge about available methods and tools to ensure that key evaluation products—such as the ToR, evaluation design and reports—meet the quality criteria as defined by the governing norms, standards and policies.

This section also aims to help external evaluators understand the quality standards that are expected of evaluations in OLSIA.

While external evaluators are responsible for refining the methodology and carrying out the evaluation, overall design and methodology is largely determined by the information provided in the evaluation department. Therefore, those responsible for drafting the ToR can refer to this section for information on key elements of the design and the role of stakeholders, defining the context, the evaluation purpose, and focusing the evaluation before drafting and finalizing the ToR.

Overview

Developing a quality evaluation design involves a thorough understanding of what is being evaluated and making decisions about the following key elements and how each will contribute to valid and useful evaluation results:

- The purpose of the evaluation
- The focus of the evaluation, that is, the key questions that the evaluation seeks to answer
- The sources and methods for obtaining information that is credible and defensible
- The procedures that will be used to analyze and interpret data and report results
- The standards that must be reached for the project to be considered successful
- The evidence that will be used to indicate how the project has performed and demonstrate its results (outputs and outcomes)

Role of stakeholders

Stakeholders play an important role in designing and carrying out a quality evaluation. Stakeholders include individuals and groups that have a vested interest in the results of the evaluation. Their involvement at all stages of the evaluation—including focusing the evaluation, shaping the questions to be addressed, identifying credible sources of evidence, reviewing findings and assisting in their interpretation—increases the credibility, potential usefulness and sustainability of evaluation results. Typically, stakeholders can be divided into three major categories, which are not mutually exclusive:

- Those involved in the program implementation—donors, collaborators, strategic partners, administrators, managers and staff
- Those served or affected by the program—intended beneficiaries, relevant organizations and agencies, government officials, advocacy groups, skeptics, opponents and staff of the implementing or competing agencies
- Primary users of the evaluation—specific persons in a position to do or decide something regarding the program, such as donors, IP programmatic counterparts and partners in joint evaluation

The level of involvement of stakeholders will vary among evaluations. When designing an evaluation, it is important for the program unit to identify stakeholders early and draw upon their knowledge as the evaluation design is shaped, starting with their meaningful involvement in developing the ToR.

This is particularly critical for joint evaluations, in which case partners involved in the evaluation should be involved in all phases of developing the evaluation design All evaluations start with a purpose, which sets the direction. Without a clear and complete statement of purpose, an evaluation can risk being aimless and lacking credibility and usefulness. Evaluations may fill a number of different needs. The statements of purpose should make clear the following:

- Why the evaluation is being conducted and at that particular point in time
- Who will use the information?
- What information is needed?
- How the information will be used?

The purpose and timing of an evaluation should be determined at the time of developing an evaluation plan. The purpose statement can be further elaborated at the time a ToR for the evaluation is drafted to inform the evaluation design.

Focus in Evaluation

Scope in the evaluation

The evaluation scope narrows the focus of the evaluation by setting the boundaries for what the evaluation will and will not cover in meeting the evaluation purpose.

The scope defines, for example The unit of analysis to be covered by the evaluation, such as a system of related programs, polices or strategies, a single program involving a cluster of projects, a single project, or a subcomponent or process within a project:

- The time period or phase(s) of the implementation that will be covered
- The funds actually expended at the time of the evaluation versus the total amount allocated
- The geographical coverage
- The target groups or beneficiaries to be included
- The scope helps focus the selection of evaluation questions to those that fall within the defined boundaries.

Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions, when answered, can give users of the evaluation the information they seek in order to make decisions, take action or add to the knowledge base. The evaluation questions refine the focus of the evaluation by making explicit the aspects of the project that will be considered when judging its performance.

Evaluation questions reflect the underlying chain of assumptions about how the project is expected to operate within its contexts pursuant to the intended outputs and outcomes. The questions chosen for an evaluation should follow from a thorough understanding of the project operations, intentions and context and should be selected for their role in meeting the evaluation purpose, objectives and relevant evaluation criteria.

An indefinite number of questions could be asked for each evaluation criterion. Real world evaluations are limited in terms of time, budget and resources. Therefore, it is important to be strategic in determining what information is needed most and to prioritize evaluation questions. It is better to answer fewer questions robustly than to answer more superficially.

A clear and concise set of the most relevant questions ensures that evaluations are focused, manageable, cost-efficient and useful.

To ensure that the key questions selected for the evaluation are the most relevant and most likely to yield meaningful information for users, OLSIA program units must solicit input from and negotiate agreement among partners and other stakeholders, including the evaluation team.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation design must detail a step-by-step plan of work that specifies the methods the evaluation will use to collect the information needed to address the evaluation criteria and answer the evaluation questions, analyze the data, interpret the findings and report the results.

Evaluation methods should be selected for their rigor in producing empirically based evidence to address the evaluation criteria and respond to the evaluation questions. The evaluation report should contain an evaluation matrix that displays for each of the evaluation criteria, the questions and sub-questions that the evaluation will answer, and for each question, the data that will be collected to inform that question and the methods that will be used to collect that data.

In addition, the inception report should make explicit the underlying theory or assumptions about how each data element will contribute to understanding the development results—attribution, contribution, process, implementation and so forth—and the rationale for data collection, analysis and reporting methodologies selected.

Primary data consists of information evaluators observe or collect directly from stakeholders about their first-hand experience with the project. These data generally consist of the reported or observed values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, motivations and knowledge of stakeholders, generally obtained through questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups, key informants, direct observation and case studies. These methods allow for more in-depth exploration and yield information that can facilitate deeper understanding of observed changes in outcomes and outputs and the factors that contributed by filling out the operational context for outputs and outcomes.

Secondary data is primary data that was collected, compiled and published by someone else.

Secondary data can take many forms but usually consists of documentary evidence that has direct relevance for the purposes of the evaluation. Sources of documentary evidence include: local, regional or national demographic data; nationally and internationally published reports; social, health and economic indicators; project or program plans; monitoring reports; previous reviews, evaluations and other records; country strategic plans; and research reports that may have relevance for the evaluation. Documentary evidence is particularly useful when the project or program lacks baseline indicators and targets for assessing progress toward outputs and outcome measures. Although not a preferred method, secondary data can be used to help recreate baseline data and targets.

Secondary information complements and supplements data collected by primary methods but does not replace collecting data from primary sources.

- Who takes care of it? Better to be an external person
- Mid-term evaluation: Explain what a midterm evaluation is and whether your organization wants to encourage it
- Final evaluation: Explain what a Final evaluation is
- Importance of Lesson Learnt

Data Management /Data base

Field visit report format:

The content of the field visit report varies depending on the purpose of the visit. At a minimum, any field visit report must contain an analysis of the progress towards results, the production of outputs, partnerships, key challenges and proposed actions. This format shall be changed to fit local needs.

Date of visit: _____ Subject and venue of visit: _____ (Project number and title, venue.

Purpose of the field visit:

Outcome	Update on outcomes	output	Update on output	Reasons if progress below target	Update on partnership strategies	Recommendations and proposed action
	A brief analysis on any relevant changes pertaining to the outcome as stated in results matrix	State output from project document or work plan.	Achievements of the project in outputs (marking if strategic) and soft assistance (if any).	If applicable		Actions matter on related any to outcome, progress of outputs, and/or partnerships. Corrective measures. Responsibilities/time

PROJECT PERFORMANCE—IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

(If the person conducting the field visit observes problems that are generic and not related to any specific output, or that apply to all of them, he or she should address the 'top three' such challenges.)

List the main challenges experienced during implementation and propose a way forward.

1.---
2.---
3.---

PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS

LESSONS LEARNED

1.---
2.---
3.---

Participants in the field visit:

Prepared by: _____ (Name, title)

- List of persons met
- Other annexes

Results framework with means of verification

Impact :			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Mean of verification
Outcomes			
Output 1:			
Output2:			

Check Lists

1

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR VALIDATING ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS	Yes	No
The assumed condition is outside the control of the program or project		
The assumed condition is necessary for program success		
The assumed condition is not a result that could be included in the results framework		
There is a high probability that the assumption will hold true		
The assumption is specific and verifiable-its status can be checked by calling partners or donors		
The assumption is stated as if it is actually the case		
The risk is clearly beyond the control of the program		
The risk is not simply the negative restating of an assumption		
The consequences of the risk are sufficiently grave as to pose a serious threat to overall program success		
There is a moderate to high probability that the risk may occur		

2

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING OUTPUTS AND OUTPUT INDICATORS	Yes	No
The outputs and their indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART)		
The outputs are defined as products or services made possible by the resources provided in a project.		
The language used to describe the outputs includes the noun or thing to be produced, as well as the verb describing what happens on completion of the output.		
The outputs are defined as things over which one or more agencies have control and can be hild accountable for delivering		
The outputs defined are necessary ingredients for achieving the outcomes.		
There are indicators that measure both the process of producing the outputs (e.g. how many of something was done), as well as the quality and/or effect of what was produced (e.g. level of usage or user satisfaction with what was produced).		

3

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING OUTCOMES AND OUTCOME	Yes	No
INDICATORS		
The outcomes and their indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART		
The outcomes clearly outline an area of work where the agency and its partners can have significant influence		
The outcomes are worded in such a way that they communicate what has changed, for whom (if relevant) and by when, (Outcomes should generally be achievable within five years.)		
The outcomes clearly address the interests and concerns of men, women and marginalized groups (if relevant).		
The outcomes address changes in institutional capacities and behavior that should lead to sustainable development of the country or region		
The outcomes speak to changes in conditions and capacities and not delivery of products and services.		
The outcomes have indicators that signal how the desired change will be measured		
The outcome indicators are measures of change that go beyond what one agency will produce or deliver. They are measures of change in the country or region and not measures of what project will produce.		
The outcome and its indicators provide a very clear and precise image or picture of what the future should look like, and is not so general that it could cover almost anything		

4

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING A RESULTS MAP	Yes	No
We have identified results that relate to addressing policy and legislative constraints		
We have identified results that relate to addressing gaps in institutional capacities		
We have identified results that relate to addressing relevant cultural and social norms		
We have identified results to improve the condition of men, women and marginalized groups		
We have identified results that address the rights of different groups in society		
We can see many layers of results		
We have defined the results in broad terms, looking beyond the specific contribution of individual agencies or stakeholders		
The results map provides us with a picture of the broad range of actions that will be needed (including advocacy and soft support) and does not only focus on projects or		

5

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING A PROBLEM TREE	Yes	No
We have identified problems and causes that relate to the policy and legislative environment		
We have identified problems and causes that relate to gaps in institutional capacities		
We have identified problems and causes that relate to cultural and social norms		
We have identified problems that affect men, women and marginalized populations, and the rights of different groups		
We can see many layers of causes of the problems we have identified		
We have defined problems in the broadest terms, looking beyond the issues that individual agencies or stakeholders are concerned wit		
We have defined the problems and their causes without initially focusing only on the dimensions that one or more agencies have capacity to address thorough projects		

6

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING THE READINESS FOR EVALUATION	Yes	No
Does the subject of evaluation have a clearly defined results map? Is there common understanding as to what projects will be subject to evaluation		
Does the subject of evaluation have a clearly defined results map? Is there common understanding as to what projects will be subject to evaluation		
Is there sufficient capacity for the projects to provide required data for evaluation? For example, is there baseline data? Is there sufficient data collected from monitoring against a set of targets? Are there well-documented progress reports, field visit reports, reviews and previous evaluations?		
Is the planned evaluation still relevant, given the evolving context? In other words, is there still a demand for evaluation? Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly defined and commonly shared amongst stakeholders?		
Will political, social and economic factors allow for an effective conduct and use of evaluation as envisaged?		
Are there sufficient resources (human and financial) allocated to evaluation?		
Are there sufficient resources (human and financial) allocated to evaluation?		

Literature Review

Principles of planning, monitoring and evaluating for results

These principles should be kept in mind throughout the entire process of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Ownership:

Ownership is fundamental in formulating and implementing programs and projects to achieve results. There are two major aspects of ownership to be considered:

- The depth, or level, of ownership of plans and processes
- The breadth of ownership

Engagement of stakeholders

Throughout all stages of planning, monitoring, evaluating, learning and improving, it is vital to engage stakeholders, promote buy-in and commitment, and motivate action.

A strong results management process aims to engage stakeholders in thinking as openly and creatively as possible about what they want to achieve and encourage them to organize them to achieve what they have agreed on, including putting in place a process to monitor and evaluate progress and use the information to improve performance.

Focus on results:

Planning, monitoring and evaluation processes should be geared towards ensuring that results are achieved not towards ensuring that all activities and outputs get produced as planned

Planning for results: Practical applications:

The Benefits of planning

There are four main benefits that make planning worthwhile:

Planning enables us to know what should be done when—without proper planning, projects or programs may be implemented at the wrong time or in the wrong manner that results in poor outcomes. A classic example is that of an assistance agency that offered to help improve the conditions of rural roads.

The planning process was controlled by the agency with little consultation. Road repair began during the rainy season and much of product used for construction was unsuitable for the region. The project suffered lengthy delays and cost overruns.

One community member commented during the evaluation that the community wanted the project, but if there was proper planning and consultation with them, the donors would have known the best time to start the project and the type of material to use.

Planning helps mitigate and manage crises and ensure smoother implementation—there will always be unexpected situations in programs and projects.

However, a proper planning exercise helps reduce the likelihood of these and prepares the team for dealing with them when they occur. The planning process should also involve assessing risks and assumptions, and thinking through possible unintended consequences of the activities being planned. The results of these exercises can be very helpful in anticipating and dealing with problems. (Some planning exercises also include scenario planning that looks at 'what ifs' for different situations that may arise.)

Planning improves focus on priorities and leads to more efficient use of time, money and other resources—Having a clear plan or roadmap helps focus limited resources on priority activities, that is, the ones most likely to bring about the desired change. Without a plan, people often get distracted by many competing demands. Similarly, projects and programs will often go off track and become ineffective and inefficient.

Planning helps determine what success will look like—a proper plan helps individuals and units to know whether the results achieved are those that were intended and to assess any discrepancies. Of course, this requires effective monitoring and evaluation of what was planned. For this reason, good planning includes a clear strategy for monitoring and evaluation and use of the information from these processes.

Putting it together: Planning for change

Planning for real results requires thinking critically about desired change and what is required to bring it about. The process involves asking a series of questions:

- What precisely do we want to see changed?
- How will this change occur?
- What will make change happen?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What resources are needed?
- What conditions need to be in place, and what will influence these conditions?
- How will we monitor and evaluate the changes?
- How will we use the information obtained from monitoring and evaluation?

The process should define all the building blocks required to bring about the desired long-term goal, and monitor and evaluate the extent to which progress is being made. Done in this manner, planning can become a powerful process that helps to:

- Achieve stakeholder consensus and commitment
- Communicate clearly with all stakeholders about the desired changes
- Motivate actions and mobilize resources
- Better define all the internal and external resources and partnerships needed to achieve results
- Better understand the interests, needs and concerns of different groups of stakeholders, including men, women and traditionally marginalized groups
- Set clearer performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation
- Allocate responsibilities

Recap of key considerations in planning for results

Planning should be focused on results—real development changes that help to improve people's lives. It should not be done merely to meet the requirements of supervisors or Headquarters.

Planning should always be seen as a process, of which the actual plan is only one product.

The planning process should extend beyond only looking at results and performance should include a plan and mechanisms for managing, monitoring and measures. It evaluating and well developed ideas for partnering and collaborating to achieve the desired results.

The planning process should be highly participatory and very open, and should encourage frankness, creativity, and innovation.

Planning must be guided by core principles of development effectiveness. It should not lead to a neutral or generic plan but one that is based on lessons of what works or does not work in development programming.

The most important outcomes of the planning process are: clarity on goals, objectives and a vision of the future; commitment and motivation of Stakeholders; and clarity on the process to implement and manage the plan.

The planning document can serve as a useful record of what has been agreed and a tool for communicating to new stakeholder Building knowledge for generality and wider-application—what can we learn from the evaluation? How can we apply this knowledge to other contexts?

The main interest is in the development of knowledge for a common use and for generalization to other contexts and situations. When the interest is on knowledge generation, evaluations generally apply more rigorous methodology to ensure a higher level of accuracy in the evaluation and the information being produced to allow for generality and wider-application beyond a particular context.

Evaluations should not be seen as an event but as part of an exercise whereby different stakeholders are able to participate in the continuous process of generating and applying evaluative knowledge.

Organizations managers, together with government and other stakeholders, decide who participates in what part of this process (analyzing findings and lessons, developing a management response to an evaluation, disseminating knowledge) and to what extent they will be involved (informed, consulted, actively involved, equal partners or key decision makers).

These are strategic decisions for assistance organizations managers that have a direct bearing on the learning and ownership of evaluation findings. An evaluation framework that generates knowledge, promotes learning and guides action is an important means of capacity development and sustainability of results.

Evaluation criteria help focus evaluation

Objectives by defining the standards against which the project will be assessed. OLSIA evaluations generally apply the following evaluation criteria to help focus evaluation objectives: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project efforts.

Relevance concerns the extent to which a project and its intended outputs or outcomes are consistent with national policies and local traditions and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. Relevance also considers the extent to which the project is responsive to OLSIA human priority needs of empowerment and gender equality issues.

Relevance concerns the congruency between the perception of what is needed as envisioned by the project planners and the reality of what is needed from the perspective of intended beneficiaries. It also incorporates the concept of responsiveness—that is, the extent to which OLSIA was able to respond to changing and emerging priorities and needs in a responsive manner. An essential sub category of relevance is the criteria of appropriateness, which concerns the cultural acceptance as well as feasibility of the activities or method of delivery of a project.

While relevance examines importance of the project relative to the needs and priorities of intended beneficiaries, appropriateness examines whether the project as it is operation is acceptable and is feasible within the local context. For example, a project may be relevant in that it addresses a need that intended beneficiaries perceive to be important, but inappropriate because the method of delivery is incongruent with the culture or not feasible given geographic or other contextual realities. In applying the criterion of relevance, evaluations should explore the extent to which the planning, design and implementation of project takes into account the local context.

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which the project intended results (outputs or outcomes) have been achieved or the extent to which progress toward outputs or outcomes has been achieved.

Evaluating effectiveness in project evaluations involves an assessment of cause and effect— that is, attributing observed changes to project activities and outputs, the extent to which changes in the number of voters can be attributed to a voter education project. Assessing effectiveness in outcome evaluations will more likely examine OLSIA contributions toward intended outcomes.

An outcome evaluation might explore the extent to which the observed outputs from a voter education project, along with other OLSIA supported outputs such as professionalizing the electoral administration, contributed towards achieving stated outcomes relating to inclusive participation measured by other observers and reputable experts.

Assessing effectiveness involves three basic steps:

1. Measuring change in the observed output or outcome
2. Attributing observed changes or progress toward changes to the project and determining OLSIA contributions toward observed changes
3. Judging the value of the change (positive or negative)

Efficiency measures how economically resources or inputs (funds, expertise and time) are converted to results. A project is efficient when it uses resources appropriately and economically to produce the desired outputs. Efficiency is important in ensuring that resources have been used appropriately and in highlighting more effective uses of resources.

As the nature and primary purposes of project and outcome evaluations differ, the application of criterion will also differ. In assessing efficiency, a project evaluation might explore the extent to which resources are being used to produce the intended outputs and how resources could be used more efficiently to achieve the intended results. An outcome evaluation may involve estimates of the total OLSIA investment toward a given outcome.

The application of this criterion, particularly in OLSIA outcome evaluations, poses a challenge as the nature of OLSIA project do not always lend themselves to conventional efficiency indicators. In such cases, some analysis of delivery rates, the reasons some projects are implemented more quickly than others, and overall management ratios at the program level might be considered. It is also important to assess how the partnership strategy has influenced the efficiency of OLSIA project through cost-sharing measures and complementary activities.

Sustainability measures the extent to which benefits of a project continue after external assistance has come to an end. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating the extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional and other conditions are present and, based on that assessment, making projections about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the intended results in the future.

An assessment of sustainability might explore the extent to which:

- A sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key stakeholders, has been developed and implemented.
- There are financial and economic mechanisms in place to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the assistance ends.
- Suitable organizational arrangements have been made.
- Policy and regulatory frameworks are in place that will support continuation of benefits.
- The requisite institutional capacity i.e. systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc. exists.

Impact measures changes in human development and people's well-being that are brought about by development projects directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Many development organizations evaluate impact because it generates useful information for decision making and supports accountability for delivering results.

At times, evaluating impact faces challenges: confirming whether benefits to beneficiaries can be directly attributed to OLSIA support can be difficult. However, the impact of OLSIA project should be assessed whenever their direct benefits on people are discernible.

Some Key Definitions:

Activity — Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs. Typically, multiple Activities make up one Project that work together to meet the Project's Objective.

Actual — A data point that shows what has been completed, as opposed to a number that is a target or a prediction.

Baseline — The situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.

Benchmark — Specific, pre-determined, targets or objectives that measure progress over the life of the program.

Beneficiary — An individual who experiences better standards of living as a result of the project.

Beneficiary Analysis — An analysis used to estimate the impact of projects on the poor or affected ones. It also has broader applicability for determining the impact on populations.

Closeout — refers to anything deemed final as of the end of a project/program.

Common Indicator — Indicators that OLSIA uses to aggregate results across projects within certain sectors and report internally and externally to key stakeholders.

Completeness Index — A measure that OLSIA uses to assess the extent to which proposed activities have been defined.

Cumulative — An indicator classification. These indicators report a running total, so that each reported actual includes the previously reported actual and adds any progress made since the last reporting period.

Data Quality Reviews — A mechanism to review and analyze the quality and utility of performance information. It covers a) quality of data, b) data collection instruments, c) survey sampling methodology, d) data collection procedures, e) data entry, storage and retrieval processes, f) data manipulation and analyses and g) data dissemination.

Disclosure Review Committee — A committee established to protect the rights and privacy of individual respondents to OLSIA surveys.

Evaluability — The ability of an intervention to demonstrate in measurable terms the results it intends to deliver.

Evaluability Assessment — An assessment conducted to determine the ability of an intervention to demonstrate in measurable terms the results it intends to deliver.

Evaluation Risk Assessment — Assesses the evaluation activity/deliverable under review, and the current risks and cost-benefit of proceeding with the evaluation.

Final Evaluation — Evaluation conducted at the end of the period of implementation of the intervention or at a date sufficiently after the intervention to be able to measure results.

Goal — The ultimate purpose of a development or humanitarian intervention.

Goal Indicator — Indicators that measure the changes that occur during or after implementation of a project.

Impact — The expected result of a project on beneficiaries.

Impact Evaluation — A study that measures the changes in defined aspects of target population that are attributable to a defined intervention. Impact evaluations require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual, which estimates what would have happened to the beneficiaries in absence of the project.

Indicator — Quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement of an intervention.

Indicator Inputs — An indicator classification. These indicators are the components of a composite indicator, such as a percentage or ratio. In most cases, they will be the numerator and denominator used to calculate the indicator.

Indicator Tracking Table (ITT) — A report that tracks progress on the indicators included in a project's M&E Plan.

Input — The financial, human, and material resources used for an intervention.

Key Performance Indicator — An indicator selected from the M&E Plan that is reported quarterly in the Quarterly Results Report and publicly in the Table of Key Performance Indicators.

Level — An indicator classification. These indicators track trends over time, and may fluctuate up and down between quarters.

M&E Plan — Tool for outlining a project's approach to monitoring, evaluating, and assessing progress towards its objectives.

Management Information System (MIS) — A system designed to collect, process, store, and disseminate data to assist in the management of programs.

Milestone — The expected result for a particular indicator to be met by a certain point in time.

Mid-Course Evaluation — A study performed during the period of implementation of the intervention.

Modification — Refers to any Change in Cost or any Change in Scope.

Monitoring — A continuous function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to gauge progress toward final program objectives and achievement of intermediate results along the way.

Objective — The result that a Project intends to achieve.

Outcome — The likely or achieved intermediate effects of an intervention's outputs.

Outcome Indicator — An indicator that measure the intermediate effects of an Activity or set of Activities and are directly related to the Output Indicators.

Output — The direct result of a Project Activity. The goods or services produced by the implementation of an Activity.

Output Indicator — An indicator that directly measure Project Activities. They describe and quantify the goods and services produced directly by the implementation of an Activity.

Participant — An individual who takes part in a OLSIA Project.

Process Indicator — An indicator that measures progress toward the completion of a Project Activity, a step toward the achievement of Project Outputs and a way to ensure the work plan is proceeding on time.

Program — A group of Projects implemented together to achieve a goal.

Program Logic — An explanatory model that demonstrates how a Program's Activities lead to the expected outcomes, objectives, and goal of a project, presented graphically.

Project — A group of Activities implemented together to achieve an objective.

Qualitative methodology — The system of design, monitoring, and evaluation by which non-numeric data is scientifically collected and made generalizable. Qualitative methods typically include but are not limited to focus groups, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and other ethnographic forms.

Result — The output, outcome or impact of a development intervention.

Summary of Findings — A document created with each independent evaluation report, which describes the context, program logic, monitoring results, evaluation results, and lessons learned from the evaluated project/activity/sub-activity.

Table of Key Performance Indicators — A document that reports on a sub-set of the indicators reported on in the Indicator Tracking Table. The indicators are selected project-wise by the project team for its better reflection.

Target — The expected result for a particular indicator to be met by the end of a project.

The End.