MEAL Plan
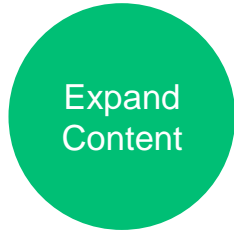
MEAL Plan

MEAL plan as expressed in the GAC Performance Measurement Framework template

Expected Results[1]	Indicators[2]	Baseline Data	Targets[3]	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Frequency	Responsibility
Ultimate Outcome (Long term)							
Intermediate Outcomes (Medium term)							
Immediate Outcomes (Short term)							
Outputs							

MEAL Plan

How was your MEAL plan designed?

- *With indicators and targets that would help your proposal be successful for funding?*

- With indicators and targets that you felt would best support learning / that are meaningful to your target communities?

- *Timing for data collection aligned with funder reporting schedule?*

- Timing for data collection aligned with learning needs, time for adaptation and future planning?

   i.e., Was it for a funder?
   Or, for your teams and your stakeholders?

MEAL Plan

Tips for reviewing/strengthening Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)

- **Revise according to updated Logic Model**

- Review indicators

- Set targets

- Review data collection methods

- Review timing

"This red line indicates the change in this red line over a period of time."

MEAL Plan

Tips for reviewing/strengthening Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)

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Do they correspond with the level of change?

    Intermediate (behaviour, practice, performance)
    Immediate (capacity, access)

Do they follow the required syntax?

    unit of measure > unit of analysis > context

    e.g. %/total > women farmers trained > with improved knowledge of…

Do you have the requisite number of indicators for each outcome?

    Intermediate: 2-3, at least 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative
    Immediate: 2, at least 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative

    e.g. %/total women farmers trained intending to implement at least 1 new practice covered in training…OR %.total women farmers expressing confidence in capacity to…

MEAL Plan

Tips for reviewing/strengthening Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)

- Revise according to updated Logic Model

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Does the indicator reflect the perspective of impacted beneficiaries?

Can it be measured? If you cannot collect data on it, you cannot measure it.

Is the indicator practical? Will it be easy to collect and analyze data? Will data collection be affordable?

Does the indicator include disaggregation as needed? (e.g. gender, age, etc.)

Are there any ethical considerations to collecting data against the indicator?

Can the data be verified by other means? (e.g. benchmarking or using both quantitative and qualitative data)

Will those collecting the data interpret the indicator the same way? (be as specific as possible in wording and *avoid qualifiers*)

Does it align to national/global data (e.g. FIAP/SDG KPIs)?

MEAL Plan
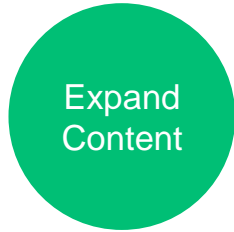
You may find it helpful to add columns to your working PMF

EXPECTED RESULTS	INDICATORS	DEFINITION (calculation)	LEARNING (disaggregation/pivots)
1000 – Enhanced wellbeing of marginalized women and girls in communities of district in country	1000.1 % of women contributing to decisions regarding family income and expenditures	% of women participating in project <u>self-reporting</u> contributing household decision-making between baseline and endline	Age Household income Is woman contributing to income Marital status Lives with elders *Anything else?*

MEAL Plan

Tips for reviewing/strengthening Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)

- Revise according to updated Logic Model

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- **Set targets**

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What would you consider a success?

What would your target beneficiaries consider success?

What would other stakeholders consider success?

What is achievable/realistic given the scope/inputs/timeframe for your project? (expressing targets as a %/total is helpful in thinking through feasibility)
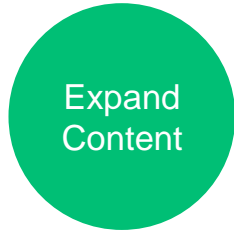
What is the relationship between output targets and higher-level targets?

*Monitoring progress against targets is important for analysis and learning. Falling short of a target is not failure, it is a warning flag that something is not going as expected. **It is an opportunity for learning and course correction.**

MEAL Plan

EXPECTED RESULTS	INDICATORS	TARGETS
1100 – Improved livelihoods among women farmers in community	1100.1 #/total women farmers trained with increased monthly incomes of at least 40% over baseline	80/100 women farmers trained
1110 – Increased capacity for agro-ecology among women farmers in community	1110.1 #/total women farmers trained with improved skills for agro-ecology	90/100 women farmers trained
1111 – Training on agro-ecology provided to women farmers in community	1111.1 # of women farmers trained in agro-ecology	100 women farmers trained

Not all experiencing capacity change will achieve behaviour change

Not all that receive inputs will realize change

Provides the 'total' for higher level outcomes, reflecting the # of beneficiaries receiving inputs through this pillar of intervention

MEAL Plan

Tips for reviewing/strengthening Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)

- Revise according to updated Logic Model

- Review indicators

- Review targets

- **Review data collection methods**

- Review timing

What is the most feasible/appropriate tool for each indicator?

How can you make the most out of each data collection tool?

What other information will you need to collect on data collection tools in order to understand findings?

Have you included both quantitative and qualitative methods?

MEAL Plan

The trick with data collection is to collect as much as is needed for learning and validation, but only as much as will be used.

Thinking about how you can maximize the utility of each data collection tool is key!

So is your plan for compiling and analyzing the information/data you collect (more on this later).

GET ALL THE INFORMATION YOU CAN, WE'LL THINK OF A USE FOR IT LATER.
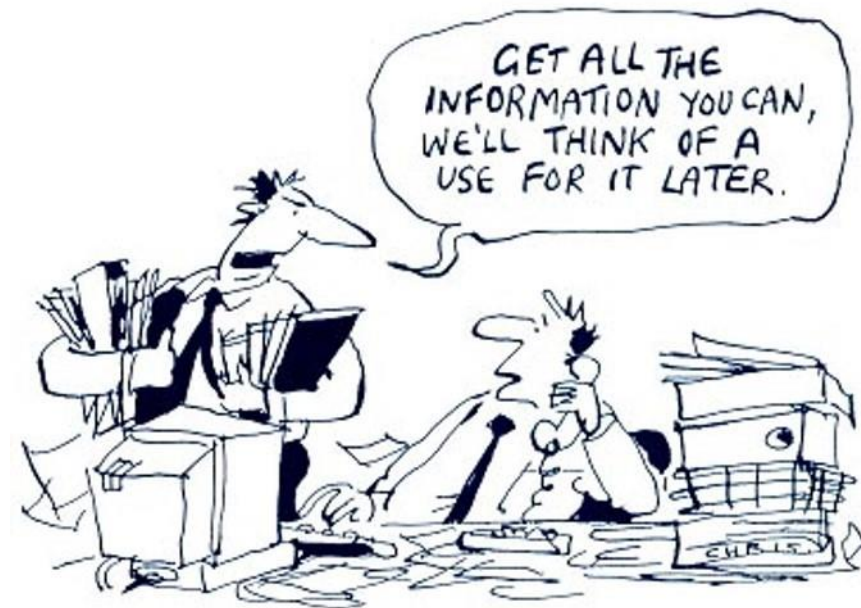
MEAL Plan
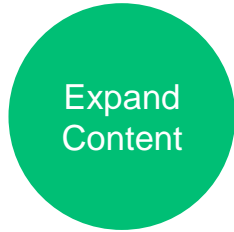
Data Collection: You may want to create a separate table for mapping data required for each data collection tool (include in PIP section)

TOOL	TIMING	MAPPING	DATA REQUIRED
Self Assessment Questionnaire for teachers	Baseline	1000.1 1100.1 *Learning*	– Likelihood of staying in the profession – Feelings of Isolation/disconnectedness – *Region, age, # of years in profession, distance from home, marital status* – *What criteria will they use to decide whether to stay in the profession?* – *What are they hoping to get out of their mentor relationship?* – *What are they hoping to get out of the prof development community?*
	Midline Endline	1000.1 1100.1 1100.2 1110.1 1110.2 *Learning*	– Likelihood of staying in the profession – Feelings of isolation/disconnectedness – Freq of use of mobile phones to seek support from mentors/colleagues – Usefulness of support received from mentors/colleagues – *Most influential factors impacting feelings of isolation* – *Most influential factors impacting feelings of disconnectedness*

MEAL Plan

Data Collection: Thinking outside the PMF

One of the drawbacks of the Logical Framework approach is that we risk only measuring against our Theory of Change.

This can both limit learning and impact results.

MEAL Plan

Data Collection: Consider qualitative and open-ended elements to data collection tools

- **Supports data validation**

- Provides for deeper learning and analysis

- Allows for identification of unanticipated results

- Supports communications

Qualitative data can be used to validate results by echoing/reinforcing findings

e.g., Interviews and focus groups can ask the same questions as a surveys – this can be used to check whether self-reported data is truthful and accurate (and vice versa)

e.g., "this was echoed by our participants in focus groups who observed a strong connection between….", etc.

MEAL Plan

Data Collection: Consider qualitative and open-ended elements to data collection tools

- Supports data validation

- **Provides for deeper learning and analysis**

- Allows for identification of unanticipated results

- Supports communications

Open ended questions can be used to validate whether project activities are responsible for results

e.g., what was the most influential factor in….

Qualitative / open ended methods can help us understand why results are not as expected, allowing for course corrections

e.g., identifying contextual issues, or gaps in project approach impacting results

MEAL Plan

Data Collection: Consider qualitative and open-ended elements to data collection tools

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e.g., identifying contextual issues, or gaps in project approach impacting results

Open ended questions can be used to validate whether project activities are responsible for results
e.g., what was the most influential factor in….

When quantitative data leaves us asking 'why', qualitative data can provide needed insight. This can provide input / ideas for course corrections to ensure achievement of results
e.g., e.g., A focus group with farmers may shed light on why some farmers have increased incomes while others have not

MEAL Plan

Data Collection: Consider qualitative and open-ended elements to data collection tools

- Supports data validation
- Provides for deeper learning and analysis
- **Allows for identification of unanticipated results**
- Supports communications

MEAL Plan

Data Collection: Consider qualitative and open-ended elements to data collection tools

- Supports data validation

- Provides for deeper learning and analysis

- Allows for identification of unanticipated results

- **Supports communications**

Qualitative data (think words rather than numbers) can provide excellent content for case studies for use in communications to help project stakeholders understand the impact of the project:

- e.g., local officials whose buy-in facilitates your project activities

- e.g., staff and volunteers who want to feel like they're making a real difference

- e.g., donors through fundraising communications

It also strengthens reporting when you can use a story to illustrate the impact displayed in a graph or chart.

MEAL Plan

What are your 'go to' data collection tools/methods?

QUANTITATIVE   **QUALITATIVE**

MEAL Plan

What are your 'go to' data collection tools/methods?

QUANTITATIVE

- Consulting official records
- Household Surveys
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice Surveys
- Pre-Post Training Assessments
- Closed Question Interviews
- Controlled Observation

QUALITATIVE

- Key Informant Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Rolling Profiles
- Open Ended Surveys
- Open Observation/Feedback*

*My current favourite question to ask is
"what surprised you about…"*

MEAL Plan

Tips for reviewing/strengthening Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)

- Revise according to updated Logic Model

- Review indicators

- Review targets

- Review data collection methods

- **Review timing**

Can you piggyback on other project activities for data collection opportunities?
> *e.g. if a group of women is already gathering for a training, could you use this as an opportunity for a focus group discussion?*

When will it be most useful to have the information from a learning perspective?
> *e.g. understanding whether your training was effective in building capacity after the first incidence would be helpful as it gives you a chance to strengthen your approach before next iteration*

When is it appropriate to ask participants to contribute to MEAL?
> *e.g. asking farmers to join a focus group during their busy harvest season would not be appropriate*

Annually does not necessarily mean in the month before your annual report

Baseline/Midline/Endline is generally acceptable for higher level results

MEAL Plan

Detailing plans for data collection, analysis, and learning

- **Which tool(s)?**
- Paper or digital?
- Consultant(s)?
- Stakeholder participation
- Learning & Improvement

Paid tools (e.g. Kinaki, Impact Mapper)

PROS: can be helpful if you're not comfortable with data, likely in the cloud so multiple users can access (possibly at additional cost)

CONS: cost (especially if not already in your budget), gone when funding ends

In House Tool (e.g. built in excel or google sheets)

PROS: free, allows you to really get to know the data, can build capacity for data analysis that can be applied to other current and future projects, completely customizable, accessible to all stakeholders

CONS: someone with excel skills (e.g. knowledge of pivot tables)

MEAL Plan

Detailing plans for data collection, analysis, and learning

- Which tool(s)?

- **Paper or digital?**

- Consultant(s)?

- Stakeholder participation

- Learning & Improvement

Paper

PROS: existing comfort of project staff, no barriers due to digital literacy

CONS: printing, secure storage of confidential information, risk of loss, onerous data entry, chance of data entry errors

Digital

PROS: secure, no extra data entry, easy to analyze

CONS: digital literacy barriers, connectivity, staff training required*

*Some tools (e.g., Kobo Toolbox) are not only free for NGOs, but also work offline

MEAL Plan

Detailing plans for data collection, analysis, and learning

- Which tool(s)?
- Paper or digital?
- **Consultant(s)?**
- Stakeholder participation
- Learning & Improvement

Do it all yourself

PROS: no additional cost, done by people intimately connected to your project

CONS: possible lack of objectivity/too close to see clearly, a lot of work which could be lower priority if also tasked with implementation

External consultants

PROS: expertise, external perspectives, perceived neutrality may solicit better/more honest data, ensures MEAL is someone's priority

CONS: lack of trust may limit information shared, cost

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Canadian or in-country? Data collection only or also doing tool design and data analysis? Deliverable specific or developmental approach?

MEAL Plan

Detailing plans for data collection, analysis, and learning

- Which tool(s)?

- Paper or digital?

- Consultant(s)?

- **Stakeholder participation**

- Learning & Improvement

Community stakeholders, including project participants (especially women and girls*) at all levels, including:

- Establishing indicators (ensuring they are relevant)

- Setting targets (ensuring they are meaningful)

- Collecting data

- Providing contextual input for understanding results (qualitative)

- Receiving communications about findings

Part of your Gender Strategy will be explaining how women and girls are participating in project design/implementation/MEAL

MEAL Plan

Detailing plans for data collection, analysis, and learning

- Which tool(s)?
- Paper or digital?
- Consultant(s)?
- Stakeholder participation
- **Learning & Improvement**

How will you draw learning from analyzed data?

> *e.g., Analysis of survey respondents show that only 60% of women farmers trained have improved their monthly income by midline.*

How will you determine what this means?

- Will you want to dig deeper to identify trends in the data *(e.g. is there a correlation with geography, post-training assessment scores, age, etc.)*
- Do you have any qualitative input you can draw on?
- Who are the right people to be part of the learning discussion?
- When do learning discussions take place?

MEAL Plan

Detailing plans for data collection, analysis, and learning

- Which tool(s)?
- Paper or digital?
- Consultant(s)?
- Stakeholder participation
- **Learning & Improvement**

How will you make decisions based on learnings?

How will decisions be made?

How will change(s) impact project implementation plans (e.g., work plan, budget)

How will change(s) impact the MEAL plan? How will you now monitor the change(s) to make sure the course correction is working?
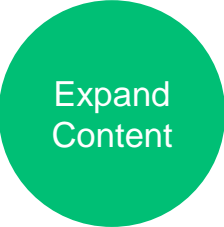
*How will decisions/changes be shared with all stakeholders?

*This should also be included in the Governance and Management Plan

*GAC has guidelines for making adjustments that impact
LM or budget which may require approval before moving forward

MEAL Plan

Sample Outline

1. Purpose - *what are you monitoring (hypothesis wording of Theory of Change)*

2. Methodology - *personnel/consultants' roles, list outcome level indicators (with definitions, additional contextual data required and identification of gender equality indicators), plans for collecting/storing/managing data, ethical considerations, ensuring GESI sensitivity of tools and approach, hardware and software etc.)*

3. Data Collection Tools - *table mapping info needed to tools, description of validation and any additional qualitative tools you will use for validation and learning, narrative of how tools will be designed and by whom, etc.*

4. Analysis and learning - *how data will be analyzed, who will participate in learning, when learning will take place, how decisions will be made, how adaptations will be communicated, etc.*

5. Community Participation - *how community stakeholders, especially those identified in GESI strategy, will participate in data collection, analysis and learning*

6. Benchmarking and Alignment - *narrative of benchmarking opportunities and alignment between project indicators and corporate/national/global KPIs*

MEAL Plan

Group Indicator Review Exercise

- Review the indicators:
  - ✓ Are they appropriate to level of change?
  - ✓ Do they centre perspectives of beneficiaries?
  - ✓ Are they ethical?
  - ✓ Are there problematic qualifiers?

- What disaggregation would you need to support learning and validation?

- How would you collect data efficiently?

- Think about considerations for GESI, equitable partnerships, and localization

Stakeholder Engagement/Roles

Relevant for MEAL, Governance, Workplan, and Communications

Responsible
Who will do the work and hold responsibility in the workplan)

Accountable
Who holds the ultimate authority for decision-making or has overall oversight

Consulted
Whose input is needed to inform the design of plans/activities or to contribute to learning/decision

Informed
Who needs to be kept up-to-date on progress or learnings

Sample RACI Matrix

Stakeholder	Project Design	Implementation	MEAL
Local MEAL Consultant	*Consulted*	*Informed*	*Responsible*
Community participants			
Organization's Executive Director			
Local implementing partner			
Project Manager			