



This guide assists AusAID staff, contractors and partners to prepare good quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks—which are necessary to ensure accountability ('to prove') and to promote learning ('to improve'). Supporting this guide is a Glossary of Key Terms (Appendix A); AusAID's M&E Quality Frame (Appendix B); illustrative formats that may add value for M&E frameworks (Appendix C). For AusAID staff, this guide can be used to ensure that M&E-related documents and processes are comprehensive (e.g. Terms of Reference, Activity Design Documents, appraisals etc.). For contractors and partners, this guide serves to define what AusAID means by 'M&E framework', and in particular, what constitutes good practice.

A **M&E framework** is documentation that describes how *people*, *data* and *time* interact so that the performance of AusAID-supported interventions can be meaningfully assessed and improved.

People involved are: i) persons/roles from/about whom data is obtained ('*source*'); ii) persons/roles responsible for capturing and analysing the data ('*responsible*'); iii) persons/roles to whom analysed information is supplied ('*recipient*'). These people may include AusAID staff, the implementation team, partner organisations, host government personnel, civil society groups and beneficiaries (direct and ultimate). Importantly, individuals may perform different roles—a single person may simultaneously be source, responsible and recipient for different data.

Data is needed to provide plausible evidence of change (both planned and unplanned); to provide information about the prevalence and consequence of risks and the status of design assumptions; to assess the quality of key relationships; and to highlight the intervention's impact on cross-cutting factors (gender, HIV/AIDS, environment etc.). This frequently involves the definition of *indicators*—quantitative/qualitative, short-term/medium-term. Practical *methods* for the capture, analysis and dissemination of the data must be defined.

Time schedules for the *capture*, *analysis* and *dissemination* of data must be established. This frequently involves the definition of key reports—content, format, author, audience, purpose and deadline.

To summarise, *data* concerning an intervention's performance (and risks and underlying assumptions) is obtained from key *sources*, by individuals/roles held *responsible*, who use defined *methods* of inquiry. The data is *analysed* and *disseminated* to information *recipients* who *utilise* it for the purposes of accountability and learning. This data *capture*, *analysis* and *dissemination* is defined for all levels of the design logic, and occur within strict *time* schedules, often culminating in the submission of key reports. The whole framework should be appropriate to the scope and value of the intervention—not overly complex or onerous to implement. It should also be periodically reviewed and improved.

In addition to these 'operational elements' of a M&E framework, good practice requires that appropriate consultation is undertaken with stakeholders directly affected by the anticipated changes. This consultation should foster ownership of the framework. An explicit strategy to strengthen partner M&E capacity and systems may be required.

A checklist based on AusAID's M&E framework quality criteria is provided opposite to guide good practice.

GOOD PRACTICE CHECKLIST

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Has there been adequate consultation with, and ownership by, those who may contribute to or use the information?

Partner M&E Capacity:

- Does the framework work through and/or contribute to strengthening partner organisation M&E systems?
- Have the partner's M&E systems been assessed and is a strategy in place to build capacity?

M&E Arrangements:

- Have M&E arrangements been appropriately defined prior to implementation?
- Will all the major changes that the intervention is designed to bring about be assessed?
- Is the M&E framework proportional to the activity expenditure and complexity?
- Is implementation team performance distinguished from the overall activity's performance?

Information Requirements:

- Is it clear what information is to be collected, when, where from and how?
- Are all levels in the design logic adequately addressed?
- Are existing data and systems to be appropriately used?

Responsibilities and Resourcing:

- Is it clear who will contribute to what and when?
- Is it clear how this will be paid for and resourced?

Learning and Accountability:

- Is there an appropriate balance between information for accountability and learning?

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Key Terms

Accountability	The obligations of partners to act according to clearly defined responsibilities, roles and performance expectations, often with respect to the prudent use of resources, delivery of quality outputs and the achievement of meaningful results.
Activity	An AusAID supported intervention (e.g. project, sector-wide program, co-financed initiative, facility etc.).
Appraisal	An overall assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential sustainability of a development intervention prior to a decision of funding.
Assumptions	Hypotheses about factors or risks that could affect the progress or success of a development intervention and that are considered to be largely outside of the control of the activity implementation team.
Baseline	An analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.
Beneficiaries	The individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.
Evaluability	Extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.
Evaluability Assessment	The early review of a proposed activity in order to ascertain whether its objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable.
Evaluation	The process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed intervention.
Goal	A Management by Objective term referring to the higher-order objective to which an intervention is intended to contribute. Analogous to the Results-based Management term 'impact'.
Impacts	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Impact may also be used as being analogous to 'goal'.
Indicator/Verifiable Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.
Intervention	An instrument for partner (donor and non-donor) support aimed to promote development.
Lessons Learned	Generalisations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.
Logframe	Management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the project/activity level. It involves identifying strategic elements (i.e., inputs, outputs, purpose and goal statements), their causal relationships and the underlying assumptions for these relationships to hold, indicators of progress, and the means of verification/methods of inquiry to gather this information on success and/or failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development intervention.
M&E Framework	Documentation prepared at entry to enable performance assessment of an intervention (i.e., Logframe, M&E section of ADD, risk matrix, responsibility matrix, implementation schedule, cost schedule, report schedule & formats, baseline data plan, mobilisation M&E plan). During implementation these resources will be supplemented with various reports, processes and structures required by AusAID (i.e., Annual Plans, SMTs, other reports,

	PCCs/tripartite meetings, TAGs/WB supervisory missions, contractor performance assessments, Post Monitoring Plans/CPRAMPs, Post visits, MTRs/Activity Implementation Reviews).
M&E Plan	A discrete/stand-alone document prepared during the start-up/mobilisation phase of an intervention that synthesises and refines M&E framework documentation prepared during the design phase.
Method of Inquiry/ Means of Verification	A defined tool or protocol for the capture of M&E data from identified subjects of inquiry.
Monitoring	A continuing function that uses systematic collection and analysis of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders, of an ongoing development intervention, with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.
Objective	Intended impact/effect contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other benefits to a society, community, or group of people via one or more interventions. Objective statements are conventionally made at Goal, Purpose and Output levels. NB AusAID also often uses Component Objectives/Component structures to assist with more complex activities.
Outcome	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term results of an intervention's outputs (N.B. a Results-based Management term, analogous to the Management by Objectives term, Purpose level statement).
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services delivered by a development intervention to direct beneficiaries.
Performance	The degree to which an intervention or a partner operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated objectives or plans.
Performance Measurement	A system for assessing performance of interventions against stated objectives.
Purpose	The publicly stated objectives to be achieved within the life of the development activity.
Recipients	For M&E purposes, the persons or roles identified as the recipients/users of M&E information.
Responsible	For M&E purposes, the persons/roles required to capture, analyse and report data.
Risk analysis	An analysis or an assessment of factors that affect or are likely to affect the successful achievement of an intervention's objectives. A detailed examination of the potential unwanted and negative consequences to human life, health, property, or the environment posed by development interventions; a systematic process to provide information regarding such undesirable consequences; the process of quantification of the probabilities and expected impacts for identified risks.
Source	Persons/roles identified as the subject of inquiry for M&E data.
Stakeholders	Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention or its evaluation.

APPENDIX B: M&E Quality Frame

This document supports the preparation of high quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for AusAID-supported activities¹. 'Quality' is defined in terms of six 'attributes', each with underlying detailed 'standards'. Different users may apply this quality frame at different levels of detail. For instance, the six attributes may be used as a checklist when approving expenditure or conducting peer reviews; the detailed standards may be used by those involved in activity design or implementation. The standards may not all be relevant in every situation, nor treated with the same level of detail.

1. Actively engage stakeholders in developing the M&E arrangements:

- i. Consult those who will contribute to and benefit from the M&E arrangements (this will normally include beneficiaries, partner country authorities and /or civil society).
- ii. Assemble evidence that all relevant stakeholders have ownership of the M&E arrangements.
- iii. Document how the M&E arrangements relate to other sectoral or national frameworks.
- iv. Harmonise M&E arrangements with other donors who are significantly involved in the same area of activity to avoid adding to the partner's "transaction costs".
- v. Ensure AusAID has advised all relevant parties of its expectations and provided adequate guidance about its requirements.

2. Verify partner M&E capacity and intent:

- i. Analyse the effectiveness of partner government/organisation's existing M&E systems.
- ii. Verify the capability of the contractor/partner to implement the M&E arrangements (where possible, review previous commitment to M&E, transparency and accountability).
- iii. Plan to use and strengthen (where appropriate) existing partner organisation accountability and lesson learning systems.
- iv. Articulate a clear strategy for building sustainable M&E capacity within the partner organisation(s) to address any deficiencies in capacity and/or intent.
- v. Ensure that AusAID has adequate resources (including staff time) to fulfil the defined M&E responsibilities.

3. Ensure M&E arrangements are comprehensive, coherent & efficient:

- i. Ensure appropriate progress has been made in developing the M&E arrangements prior to the start of implementation so that: (a) approval for funding activity implementation is based on a clear understanding of what is to be achieved and how it is to be measured; and (b) the implementing agency(s) is not given inappropriate scope for specifying its own responsibilities for M&E and its own performance assessment.
- ii. Ensure any further detailing of M&E arrangements, planned for early in the implementation phase, includes an "evaluability" assessment of the activity's design (i.e., coherence of the design logic and appropriateness of the indicators and means of verification).
- iii. Ensure that M&E arrangements at the strategy, program and sub-program levels are comprehensive, coherent and inter-related. Verify that there are no logical gaps, and that it is clear how M&E information will pass from one level to another.
- iv. Verify that M&E arrangements are proportional to activity expenditure and complexity, and are based on pragmatic and economical data requirements.
- v. Confirm that M&E arrangements do not confuse activity *outputs* (the activity deliverables for which the implementation team can generally be held accountable) and *outcomes* (which will often involve the cooperation of other partners, and hence are beyond the control of the implementation team) with the payment *milestones* of a managing contractor or a multilateral agency (which are normally specified separately in contract documents or co-financing agreement documents as appropriate).
- vi. Ensure M&E arrangements balance routine monitoring and analysis, periodic review/formative evaluation and summative/end-of-activity evaluation (i.e., Activity Completion Reporting rather than ex post evaluations that are an AusAID decision and not generally included in M&E Frameworks).
- vii. Consider and address the information needs of all relevant stakeholders.

4. Explicitly define information requirements:

- i. Verify that the underlying design logic is robust, and that evidence will be collected at all levels/stages of change.

¹ This Quality Frame was originally developed from a combination of The World Bank's "Ten Steps to a Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation System" (2004) and the DAC's "Managing for Development Results Principles in Action: Sourcebook on Emerging Good Practice" (2005). It was then refined following its application in four Quality Assurance Group (QAG) panels that studied eight M&E Frameworks.

- ii. Specify what information is to be collected and why, the frequency, methods and sources.
- iii. Consider baseline information needs, and provide for its collection.
- iv. Define methods to detect target group/beneficiary perceptions of change.
- v. Define methods to detect unplanned change.
- vi. Define indicators for goal (impact), purpose (outcomes) and output levels of the design logic in terms of quality, quantity and timing.
- vii. Employ an appropriate mix of short term and medium term change indicators (there is little point in only having indicators to be measured at the end of the intervention).
- viii. Where possible, use existing sources of information at the goal and purpose levels (i.e., the impacts and the outcomes expected). Avoid generating information solely for the funded activity.
- ix. Provide for monitoring of key design assumptions and major risks to successful implementation arising from the policy, political and institutional environment.
- x. Provide for monitoring key cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, environment, HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction).
- xi. Define an appropriate mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- xii. Give appropriate consideration to how the data will be collected (i.e., methods), stored, analysed and presented.
- xiii. Provide for monitoring the quality of key relationships.

5. Define M&E responsibilities and resources:

- i. Define who is responsible for the collection, storage, analysis, dissemination and utilisation of each data set (outputs, purpose (outcomes), goal (impacts), risks and assumptions/context).
- ii. Ensure the budget contains identifiable provision for monitoring and evaluation.
- iii. Document AusAID's role in the M&E arrangements and ensure this is appropriate for the circumstances and consistent with the program strategy.
- iv. Verify that AusAID plans to take advantage of strategic opportunities (e.g. major activity reviews and TAG visits) to assess progress and significant changes fostered.
- v. Ensure that implementers have not been given inappropriate scope to define success and how their own performance will be assessed.
- vi. Mainstream M&E responsibilities as a management function, rather than have it as the preserve of a dedicated unit or external consultants.
- vii. Identify the person(s)/role(s) (i.e. within AusAID and/or partner structures) that will be the point at which information generated will be used for accountability, management decisions or learning.

6. Ensure M&E arrangements accommodate the need for lesson learning and accountability:

- i. Balance the demands for accountability and learning/continuous improvement.
- ii. Verify that the M&E arrangements will enable informed decision-making by the implementing agency/contractor.
- iii. Ensure that all relevant stakeholders can contribute lessons and share in learning.
- iv. Define a system for incorporating lessons learned for continuous activity improvement.
- v. Define the frequency, content, purpose and audience of reporting.
- vi. Plan to subject M&E strategies, systems and tools to periodic review to promote ongoing improvements to the M&E arrangements.
- vii. Establish an appropriate degree of public transparency within the M&E arrangements.

APPENDIX C: Illustrative Formats

In addition to the succinct narrative addressing AusAID's M&E framework quality criteria, several key elements may appear in M&E framework documents: i) Logframe Matrix; ii) M&E Operations Plan; iii) Schedule of Reports; iv) Risk Matrix; v) Implementation Schedule; vi) M&E Strengthening Plan.

The following discussion and examples are illustrative (not obligatory formats) and should be used/modified as circumstances dictate.

Example Logframe Matrix (see AusGUIDE)

Design Logic	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal	Impact Indicators	Source/method	Development assumptions
Purpose (& Components, if appropriate)	Outcome Indicators	Source/method	Intervention assumptions
Outputs	Progress Indicators	Source/method	Management assumptions

A Logframe Matrix provides an overview of the intervention design logic, and the basis for performance measurement. The left-hand column succinctly articulates the 'theory of change'—the 'storyline' of the intervention. There is increasing recognition that this is best done when the key 'human actors', at each stage of the anticipated change process, are known. The right-hand column describes factors or events that may inhibit the various stages of change and are considered largely outside of the implementation team's control. The middle two columns present a rudimentary performance measurement framework.

A logframe prepared as part of the design phase may be revised in the course of developing a M&E framework to improve the 'evaluability' of the design logic. N.B. There is critique of the logframe, and corresponding calls for alternative approaches. From an M&E perspective, a logframe is just one way of representing the anticipated change fostered by an intervention. Irrespective of what 'tool' is used, the inherent causality (or logic) of the anticipated change should be clearly articulated and the underlying assumptions made explicit. Four general questions are relevant: i) 'What are we trying to achieve?'; ii) 'How will we know if we are successful?'; iii) 'Where is the information coming from to demonstrate success?'; iv) 'What factors might erode our success?'

Example M&E Operations Plan

System Element Design Logic	Data			People			Time		
	Indicator	Means of Verification/ Method of Capture	Method of Analysis	Source	Responsible	Recipient	Capture Frequency	Analysis Deadline	Report Submission
Goal									
<i>Development Risks</i>									
Purpose									
<i>Intervention Risks</i>									
Outputs									
<i>Management Risks</i>									

A M&E Operations Plan provides an overview of the operational elements of the M&E framework—the mechanics of how the M&E system will work. It should be clear how all the pieces of information fit together like a puzzle to provide a holistic picture of intervention performance; how the various stakeholders interact so that information flows; and the basis for timely management of the whole system. N.B the integration of risk management within performance monitoring is critical but commonly overlooked.

Example Schedule of Reports

Report	Content	Responsible	Frequency	Recipient

A Schedule of Reports can help to summarise how all the pieces of data are ultimately used. Ideally, routine internal reports should feed into periodic comprehensive reports, such as the Annual Report, or Activity Completion Report. There should be no redundant information—reports for ‘report’s sake’.

Example Risk Matrix (see AusGUIDE)

Risk Class	Risk Event	Potential Adverse Impact	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Management Strategy	Responsibility
Development Risks							
Intervention Risks							
Management Risks							

Likelihood: Low, Medium, High. Impact: Low, Medium, High. Risk level: 1=Low; 2=Moderately low; 3= Medium; 4=Moderately high; 5=High; 6=Extreme

A Risk Matrix identifies key risks at each stage of the ‘theory of change’, and describes any adverse impact on performance that could occur. An appropriate risk management strategy is proposed, based on the overall ‘risk level’ (calculated from the likelihood and impact). A person or role should be held responsible for implementing the risk management strategy. It is critical that risk monitoring be mainstreamed within M&E processes to ensure that risk management strategies can be initiated in a timely and proactive manner.

Example Implementation Schedule (see AusGUIDE)

Task	Time	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.1																	
Task A																	
Task B																	
Task C																	

An implementation schedule is a visual representation of how key tasks are to be implemented throughout the life of the intervention to ensure that each Output is delivered on time and to the required standard. Implementation schedules can be cross-referenced with cost schedules to verify that sufficient resources have been allocated to ensure quality results and that M&E tasks have adequate budget.

Example M&E Strengthening Plan

M&E Stakeholder/Role	Identified Weakness	Capacity Building Strategy				
		Method	Content	Location	Frequency	Responsibility

Good practice M&E requires that, where possible, existing sources of data and systems are used. Aside from possible cost savings, this approach is likely to foster ownership of intervention performance among partners. However, a pragmatic reality of this approach is that partner data and systems may be weak. For practical and ethical reasons, strengthening partner M&E capacity may be necessary. To ensure follow-through on capacity building commitments, it is necessary to specify the details of the capacity building strategy: who is the beneficiary of the capacity building? What are the identified weaknesses? How will the capacity building be provided? What particular topics/content will be delivered? Where will the capacity

building take place? How often will capacity building 'events' be facilitated? Who will be held responsible for the success of the capacity building?

M&E in Implementation

Whereas much of the foregoing is concerned with 'M&E at entry' (i.e. M&E planning at the design and start-up phases of interventions), M&E framework quality is relevant throughout the life of the intervention. Key documents, processes and structures, required by AusAID during implementation, that are variously concerned with promoting activity performance include:

- **Annual Plans:** should provide information about 'big picture' progress, and evidence that key risks are appropriately managed.
- **ACCs/PCCs/Tripartite Meetings:** should be informed by recent independent assessments/reviews of progress; address major issues as they arise; demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement; be genuinely accountable; make practical recommendations that are implemented.
- **Program Strategy Performance Assessment Framework:** should be informed by the M&E framework processes and data.
- **Program Monitoring Plan (formerly CPRAMP):** should appropriately assess the relative riskiness of the activity and provide for adequate monitoring by the Post.
- **Technical Advisory Group (TAG):** should be used frequently and strategically; provide valued assessment of progress; assess the quality of contract/agreement deliverables; and distil lessons for continuous improvement.
- **Simplified Monitoring Toolbox (SMT):** should enable structured monitoring of progress; foster continuous improvement; support corporate reporting requirements to Parliament.