



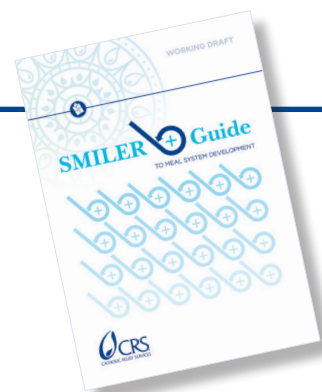
# SMILER



Catholic Relief Services recognizes the critical role of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, or MEAL, systems in program quality and impact. To optimize their value, CRS believes that MEAL systems must be grounded in project design; built by MEAL and program staff with participation from partner organizations and key stakeholders; and updated during implementation as activities progress and information needs evolve.

## SMILER+

SMILER stands for Simple Measurement of Indicators for Learning and Evidence-based Reporting. The 2020 SMILER update has been rebranded SMILER+. The “plus” denotes both the new content included in the guide and the evolution from M&E to MEAL.



SMILER+ is a participatory process that enables teams to develop MEAL systems that are responsive to context and contribute to adaptive program management.

## SMILER+ at a glance



Prioritizes the information needs of key stakeholders in the development of the MEAL system.



Maps the flow of monitoring data through collection, data management, analysis and use.



Develops the foundation of feedback, complaints and response mechanisms that inform programmatic decisions and uphold safeguarding policies.



Builds upon donor and agency MEAL requirements.



Integrates [CRS Responsible Data Values and Principles](#) into data collection and management.



Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of MEAL and program staff for MEAL system set-up, implementation and use.



Contributes to a strong enabling environment for MEAL by embedding key activities into program management.

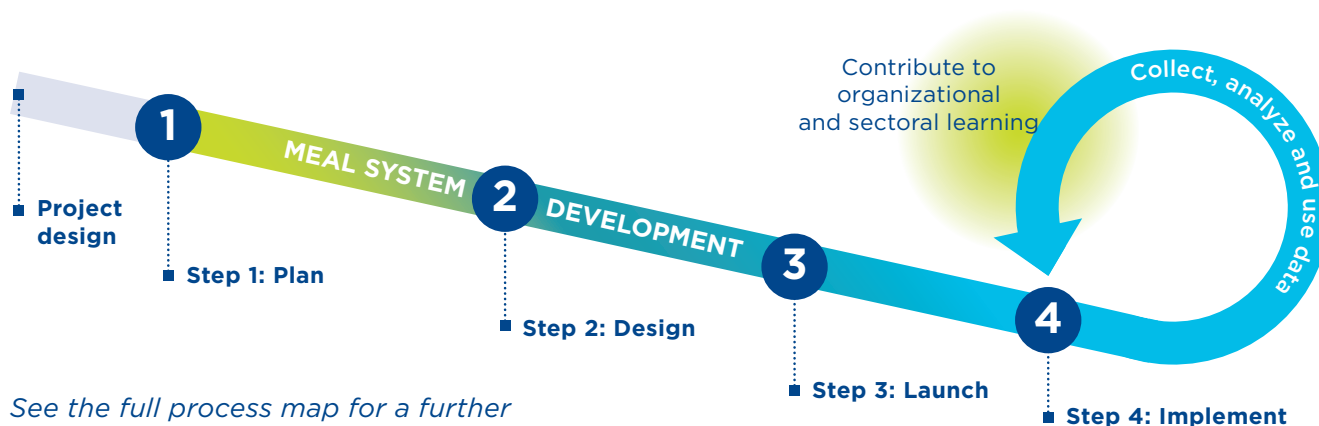


Focuses on project learning and data use for management decision-making, accountability to stakeholders, and reports and communication products.

SMILER+ MEAL systems are developed during a project's start-up phase. CRS recommends that MEAL systems be designed in participatory workshops to benefit from the contributions of and interactions between MEAL and sectoral staff, and CRS and partner organizations. The length and focus of SMILER+ workshops will vary based on project context, but they often last five days and follow a recommended sequence to produce a common set of MEAL system components. SMILER+ workshops should be facilitated by an experienced MEAL staff person who is able to help teams adapt MEAL good practices and ensure quality workshop processes.

Prior to SMILER+ workshops, teams must ensure that project logic is well-defined and that MEAL is supported by appropriate budget allocation and staffing. After the SMILER+ workshop, teams will finalize data collection forms and implement action plans associated with rolling out the MEAL system to staff, stakeholders and communities. During implementation, CRS and partner staff are encouraged to reflect on the MEAL system itself in order to identify and address gaps in quality or utility.

### SMILER+ Process map



As appropriate MEAL systems are responsive to context, SMILER+ is also intended to be adapted to the scope and scale of the project. SMILER+ will vary based on the inclusion of information and communications technology for development (ICT4D) or if existing MEAL forms are used in the MEAL system, for example. SMILER+ can also be applied outside of a workshop setting in an emergency response or in other contexts where workshops are not feasible.

### SMILER+ resources

- *SMILER+ workshop participants* should use the *SMILER+ Guide* to become familiar with each SMILER+ component and its role in the overall MEAL system.
- *Project teams* should refer to the SMILER+ workshop planning checklist to plan and prepare for successful SMILER+ workshops.
- *SMILER+ facilitators* can use facilitation materials and templates to create workshop agendas and session plans appropriate to a range of project contexts.
- *MEAL practitioners* can benefit from including SMILER+ in their approach to MEAL system development and integrating SMILER+ components into their organization's toolkit.

#### SMILER+ components

- Stakeholder communication plan
- Learning plan
- Data flow map(s)
- Feedback, complaints and response mechanism (FCRM) flowchart
- Data collection forms and instructions
- FCRM forms
- Reporting formats
- Reporting due dates table