



Conducting a Formative Process Evaluation on Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Activities, A Practical Resource

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Acknowledgments

This document describes an approach which has been developed and refined over the last 16 years in the context of 26 evaluations, including 17 mid-term or final evaluations conducted on long-term development activities funded by Food for Peace (which has merged with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance to form the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance).

The approach has really taken its current form, however, in the last few years with evaluations or reviews conducted in Malawi, Bangladesh and Uganda, and it continues to evolve as new experience is used to adapt the process.

Many members of the teams who implemented these evaluations have contributed to designing and adapting the process that is described, including Robert Groelsema, Jennifer Loucks, Amy Mintz, Bernard Crenn, Elena McEwan, Nicole Van Abel, Mara Mordini, Rukhsana Haider, Mark Langworthy, Jeanne Downen, Golam Kabir, Suzanne Nelson, Sadia Afroze Chowdhury, Rupert Best, Aaron Chassy, Amos Chigwenembe, Charlotte Germain-Aubrey, Mary Pat Kieffer, Mark Kumbukani Black, Mike Manske, Lucy Mungoni, Killian Mutiro, Amy Sunseri, Marit Wilkerson, and Anna Afferri. Their contributions have been invaluable and are highly appreciated. Hopefully, the process will continue to evolve so that programs and the groups with whom they work can benefit from effective and useful formative process evaluations.

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Cover picture taken in Bangladesh by Jeanne Downen, TANGO International

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CoP	Chief of Party
DFAP	Development Food Assistance Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PREP	Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SoW	Statement of Work
USG	United States Government

Practical Resource for Conducting Formative Process Evaluation of Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Programs

I. INTRODUCTION

Mid-Term Evaluations (MTEs) or Mid-Term Reviews for resilience¹ activities funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) are usually formative process evaluations. These evaluations are implemented between two and three years after an implementing partner receives an award or cooperative agreement, and their purpose is to generate recommendations for the remaining life of the activity to increase its effectiveness.

A wide range of approaches are currently being employed² to conduct process evaluations. These guidelines aim to improve the quality of future evaluations by describing an approach that has produced a useful product for a mid-term formative process evaluation.

Who should use this resource: This tool is intended for implementing partner and BHA staff who are responsible for organizing and implementing mid-term formative process evaluations of BHA-funded activities. In particular, this may include stakeholders who are drafting and reviewing Statements of Work (SoWs) for evaluations, evaluation team leaders, stakeholders supporting evaluations during their implementation, evaluation teams who are conducting evaluations, and implementing partner and BHA staff integrating lessons and recommendations from these evaluations into ongoing activity implementation and management.

How the document is organized: This document presents the process of organizing and implementing a mid-term evaluation. The next section, after defining terminology used in this document and key features of a formative process evaluation, provides an overview of developing the evaluation plan. The next three chapters describe the preparation phase of the evaluation, the in-country field work phase, and the post-field work processing and completion phase. The annexes contain examples of various tools used, including formats for an SoW (for use in BHA), an evaluation plan, an overall schedule, a fieldwork schedule and a zone schedule, examples of data collection tools, an illustrative verification workshop plan, and a final report format.

How to use this resource: This document provides detailed information on all steps in conducting a mid-term evaluation. Users are encouraged to apply this resource as is practical for the situation—in some cases, following this guide closely throughout all steps of an evaluation, and in others consulting specific sections or chapters for detailed guidance.

The suggestions laid out in this tool do not represent the only way to organize and implement a formative process evaluation. The time, financial resources, and human resources available for a specific evaluation may not be sufficient to implement the process as described, and the evaluation team leader will need to make adjustments as needed. Regardless of the particular

¹ Formerly called non-emergency or development activities.

² For a recent review of a number of evaluations, see IMPEL. (2020). *Learning from Evaluations: A Review of 16 Mid-Term Evaluations of USAID-funded Food Security Development Programs from 2015-2020*. Washington, DC: The Implementer-Led Evaluation & Learning Associate Award.

circumstances of any given planned evaluation, this tool offers a foundation upon which to organize and implement future evaluations.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Explanation of Terminology

This document refers to a number of concepts that can be described using a number of different terms. The following section explains the terms that this document will use.

1. Activity, Project, and Program. Over the years, the title for a resilience activity funded by the Office of Food for Peace, now part of BHA, has changed from Development Assistance Program, to Multi-Year Assistance Program, Development Food Assistance Program, Development Food Security Activity, and now Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA). An **activity** is an implementing mechanism that carries out an intervention or set of interventions to advance identified development result(s) in a given country or region, while a **project** is a group of activities designed and managed in a coordinated way to advance a USAID Mission's strategic goals. For the purpose of this tool, the term "activity" is used to refer to any long-term resilience program funded through BHA.

2. Plan or Protocol. The primary planning tool to organize and implement an evaluation can be referred to as a research protocol, protocol, implementation plan, evaluation design, or evaluation plan. In this document, the term "evaluation plan" will be used to refer to the specific planning tool that describes how an evaluation is to be implemented.

3. Evaluation Stakeholders. The stakeholders for any evaluation are 1) headquarters-based USAID staff, 2) field-based USAID staff, usually residing³ in-country, 3) the headquarters-based representatives of the implementing partner(s), 4) the in-country leadership for the implementing partner(s), 5) the staff directly implementing the activity, and 6) the team of evaluators and the team leader who will conduct the evaluation.. Please note that we address additional evaluation stakeholders, the participants and intermediaries, below. For the purpose of this tool, the terms "BHA" and "USAID Mission" will be used to refer to the first two stakeholders from the donor, respectively. The terms "Implementing Partner" and "Country Office" will be used to refer to the third and fourth stakeholders from the implementing partner, respectively, and, the terms "Activity Staff" and "Evaluation Team" will be used to refer to the last two stakeholders.

4. Activity Participants. Activity participants, for the purpose of this document, fall into one of two categories. One includes the people the activity is targeting and for whom the activity is expected to increase food security and resilience, usually members of households defined as food insecure or vulnerable.

The other type of participant is referred to as an intermediary. These are people who may not be food insecure or vulnerable, but who participate in the activity to benefit participants. Examples of intermediaries include community leaders, representatives of community-based organizations, government extension workers or other government representatives, and private sector representatives. Intermediaries are critical to the success of the activity and the

³ Not all field-based USAID staff reside in the country for which they are responsible. For example, USAID/Somalia staff reside in Nairobi even though the USAID Mission is in Mogadishu.

sustainability of activity outcomes, and formative process evaluations should obtain their views on how to improve the activity.

The terms "direct participant" and "indirect participant" help to distinguish between different types of participants in an activity. Direct participants come into direct contact with an intervention implemented by an activity. Indirect participants indirectly benefit from the activity. Examples of indirect participants include members of the household of a direct participant, other community members or people in neighboring communities who benefit through secondary adoption, or other community members who benefit from a structure such as a road that has been improved by an activity.

B. Formative Process Evaluations

USAID categorizes evaluations as either impact or performance evaluations.⁴ Impact evaluations measure changes in development outcomes that are attributable to a defined intervention, program, policy, or organization. Impact evaluations use models of cause and effect and require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual to control for factors other than the intervention that may account for observed changes. Performance evaluations can include a wide range of evaluation approaches that are intended to study the performance of an activity.

The guidelines described in this document are intended for a specific type of performance evaluation BHA uses, a formative process evaluation, which is conducted mid-way through an activity to generate recommendations for improving its effectiveness.

The primary focus of a formative process evaluation is the activity itself. The evaluation will generate a set of recommendations intended to enhance the implementation and improve the effectiveness of the activity. Therefore, the tone of a formative process evaluation should be set so that staff implementing the activity do not feel threatened, recognize that their work stands to benefit from the findings and recommendations, and are willing to show and discuss implementation challenges. The formative process evaluation will not judge whether the activity is a good investment.

A second feature of formative process evaluations is that a quantitative survey is not a mandatory part of the evaluation process, as it would be for a final impact evaluation of a BHA-funded activity.⁵ Formative process evaluations may include quantitative surveys, but most data are collected through qualitative methods complemented by existing quantitative data such as activity monitoring.

A third feature is that the approach to site selection for qualitative data collection in a formative process evaluation is likely to be purposive, rather than random or in proportion to the type of intervention in the overall portfolio. Sites are identified based on their anticipated utility in illustrating a particular challenge, lesson, or opportunity that an evaluation recommendation can address.

A fourth feature in formative process evaluation is the time allocated to investigate implementing systems. These systems include the management systems, partnerships, knowledge management systems (including monitoring and evaluation, or M&E), and resource

⁴ See ADS Chapter 201: Operational Policy for the Program Cycle: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/201.pdf>

⁵ While impact evaluations are not required for most USAID-funded activities, they are preferred when feasible. BHA-funded activities are evaluated with either impact evaluations that use experimental or quasi-experimental designs or with performance evaluations that assess outcomes using rigorous quantitative surveys.

management systems for finance, human resources, materials procurement, and management and commodities, as appropriate. This investigation will inform recommendations to make implementation systems more effective and efficient over the remainder of the activity.

C. Developing the Evaluation Plan

While an SoW for a formative process evaluation is important to initiate the planning process, the most critical document for ensuring a well-designed and implemented evaluation is the evaluation plan.

The evaluation plan is a working document that the evaluation team leader typically develops in three stages. The *first draft* is written after the SoW has been approved and the evaluation team members have been identified. RFSA leadership and the evaluation team members review this draft. Based on their input, the draft is revised into a *reviewable draft* that is as complete as possible, with annexes, and is reviewed by all other stakeholders, including BHA, the USAID Mission, the implementing partner, and the country office.

Based on input from these reviewers, a *working draft* of the evaluation plan is developed before the evaluation team assembles in-country to begin field work. The working draft continues to be refined over the first few days as more information is obtained from the RFSA and decisions are made around sampling and the schedules for field work.

The *final version* of the evaluation plan is included as an annex in the methodology section of the final report. More detail on the suggested content of the evaluation plan is provided in Section F, and Annex B provides an example format.

III. EVALUATION PROCESS PHASE I: PREPARATION

A. Definition of the Preparation Period: SoW to Team Arrival In-Country

Evaluations are conducted in phases, including a preparation phase, a data collection and preliminary analysis phase, and a product finalization phase. The first phase spans the time that the SoW for the evaluation is developed to when the working draft of the evaluation plan has been developed, before the evaluation team assembles in-country. The following sections describe key activities during the preparation phase.

B. Statement of Work

An SoW for a formative process evaluation describes the basic parameters for the evaluation. The management team for the activity usually develops it with technical support from the implementing partner headquarters and the country office. A good SoW provides sufficient detail to be able to identify members of the evaluation team and begin drafting an evaluation plan once the evaluation team leader has been identified. It is often used in a procurement process to identify consultants to fill positions on the evaluation team. A good SoW includes the following:

I. Overview of the activity. The SoW should set the stage with a description of the activity to be evaluated. This description should provide some general activity parameters, including the theory of change, the period of performance, the scale in terms of budget targets, and an

overview of the activity scope. This scope should describe the goal, purposes, and sub-purposes of the activity.

The SoW should provide an overview of the geographic targeting strategy, where the activity is being implemented and the locations of activity field offices. A table showing how targeted participants are allocated across different geographic zones with an indication of activity partners responsible for implementation in each zone is also useful, especially for enabling evaluation planners to decide how to allocate time during the evaluation.

The definition that the activity is using for identifying participants, including specific targeting criteria, is also important, as the evaluation will investigate how well the theory of change is mapping out the process that will induce the desired change for the participants that the program is targeting.

The overview of the activity should also describe its implementation approaches to produce outputs under each sub-purpose in the activity. This will facilitate identification of evaluation team members with appropriate experience and expertise and of tools to gather the appropriate data. The description of the implementation approach should especially focus on which participants are targeted for each output—for example, pregnant and lactating women from vulnerable households—and the anticipated intermediaries, such as community-based health workers. This will help the evaluation team select respondents appropriately. The implementation approaches should also describe cross-cutting themes and any ongoing or planned collaboration with other organizations during implementation, so that interviews with these organizations can also be included in the evaluation schedule.

Finally, the activity overview should describe the implementation systems that the activity is using. Even the best designed activity can falter if the implementation systems are not effective. As mentioned, implementation systems include the management systems, partnerships, knowledge management systems including monitoring and evaluation, and resource management systems (i.e., financial, human resources, materials procurement, and commodity).

Management systems include the activity's management structure, which depicts the activity management and technical teams and where these staff are based, as well as how planning and decision-making are conducted, for example through steering or advisory committees and periodic planning meetings. Management systems should also capture partnerships, including those between implementing and technical partners, and should describe partner responsibilities for various components and locations.

Knowledge management systems that the activity uses should also be described, especially for M&E, and also how the activity seeks out new ideas to test and how lessons learned and best practices generated by the activity are being captured and disseminated. Finally, the SoW should provide brief overviews of the financial management, human resource management, procurement/materials management, and commodity management systems.

2. Evaluation purpose and objectives. A second section of the SoW describes the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. Typically, the purpose of a formative process evaluation is to improve the effectiveness of the activity. Examples of evaluation recommendations include scaling up effective interventions, modifying interventions to improve effectiveness, suspending interventions that are not effective, proposing new pilot interventions to address any

contextual issues that may have arisen so far in the life of the activity, and improving the effectiveness of implementation systems.

While the overall purpose of a formative process evaluation—to improve activity effectiveness—is fairly consistent across evaluations, the SoW should describe specific objectives tailored to the needs of the activity. As mentioned earlier, the primary beneficiary stakeholder for a formative process evaluation is the activity itself. Because the activity has been implemented for some time by the time the evaluation is being planned, it has likely become apparent where problems exist either strategically or operationally. The formative process evaluation is an opportunity to address these problems with an external evaluation team which has no preconceived ideas about the activity. The specific objectives for the evaluation should focus on where the evaluation team needs to give attention. As activity staff develop the SoW, they should solicit input on areas for the evaluation focus from all stakeholders, including the country office, the headquarters of the implementing partner, the USAID Mission(s), and BHA.

Some features of activities typically appear in the specific objectives for a formative process evaluation because they are critical to implementation and are common sources of problems that activities face. These include:

- An objective that requires reviewing the overall strategy of the activity as reflected in the theory of change and logic structure, including targeting strategies, assumptions, and how contextual factors may require revisions in the strategy.
- An objective that requests a review of the intervention strategies for producing outputs, including the sequencing of interventions, how cross-cutting themes such as youth targeting, gender equity, and social and behavioral change (SBC) communications are being implemented and cross-purpose integration of interventions.
- An objective that asks the evaluation team to identify the emerging outcomes from the activity's outputs and assess their potential for sustainability.
- An objective that requests a review of the activity's implementation systems, including management systems, partnerships, knowledge management, and resource management for finance, human resources, and materials and commodities.

Other specific objectives defined for an evaluation would include topics of interest to activity stakeholders, such as gender or youth programming, or significant problems for the program not covered above, for example, mitigating the cultivation of dependencies or external national policy constraints affecting the activity.

Table I provides illustrative examples of the objectives common to most SoWs and additional specific objectives relevant to a specific activity. For each specific objective, key questions to guide the investigations should be listed to help evaluation team members develop the data collection tools they will use to begin the evaluation.

Table 1. Examples of Specific Objectives in a Scope of Work

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	
COMMON TO MOST SOWS	ILLUSTRATIVE ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES
<p>Overall Strategy: Assess the overall strategy of the activity in terms of its relevance for addressing food insecurity with participants, while considering contextual changes that may have occurred since the activity began. This will entail reviewing the strategies that ensure the activity reaches intended target groups, reviewing the theory of change, assessing the validity of implicit and explicit assumptions, and assessing risks posed during the design and implementation of the activity.</p>	<p>Collaborative Learning and Action Systems (for an activity facing challenges with its M&E systems). Assess the effectiveness of systems for M&E and for capturing and documenting lessons learned, including the extent to which they are used in modifying implementation and refining activity design.</p>
<p>Producing Outputs. Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of intervention delivery. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of intervention implementation, the sequencing of interventions, and integration of interventions across purposes.</p>	<p>Community Expectations (for an activity facing challenges working with high community expectations for handouts). Analyze the factors contributing to the development of high community-level expectations for handouts from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and formulate recommendations for mitigating this to facilitate better sustainability of outcomes.</p>
<p>Sustainability of Emerging Outcomes. Identify and analyze evidence of behavioral or systems change at the individual, household, community, and higher levels, including positive and negative changes as well as intended and unintended changes, directly and indirectly attributable to the interventions of the activity. Determine the extent to which these outcomes are likely to be sustained after the activity ends, focusing particularly on the resources required to sustain the outcomes, the skills and motivation of organizations and individuals who are expected to help sustain the outcomes, and the relationships needed to sustain the outcomes.</p>	<p>Social and Behavioral Change (for an activity that wants to be more effective at using SBC across all purposes). Analyze the overall SBC strategy and effectiveness of SBC interventions then provide guidance for expanding or modifying SBC approaches across the activity.</p>
<p>Implementation Systems. Review implementation systems, including management systems, partner relations, knowledge management systems including M&E, financial management systems, commodity management systems, human resource management systems, and materials management systems to identify recommendations for improving these systems.</p>	<p>Youth Engagement (for an activity that is having difficulty engaging significant numbers of youth). Analyze the systems for targeting youth and provide recommendations for expanding youth engagement.</p>

3. Overview of the evaluation process. SoWs for formative process evaluations should describe the key features of the evaluation process that is expected to be used. This would confirm that the evaluation will rely mostly on qualitative methods for primary data collection, but will also use quantitative data available from the activity or external sources, with a brief description of these data. To facilitate the selection of sites for site visits during the evaluation, a brief

overview of potential sampling frames for selecting locations should be provided. This is usually an overview of the information that is available from the activity's participant database.

Because the SoW will be used to identify members of the evaluation team, it should indicate how many team members and the types of expertise that will be required for the evaluation.

The SoW should also specify deliverables required over the course of the evaluation. These include the evaluation plan at the start of the field work, an in-country debriefing with the USAID Mission after the field work has been completed, a draft report at a reasonable time after the completion of the field work, a debriefing with BHA after the draft report has been circulated, and a final report that incorporates BHA feedback.

The SoW should also provide basic parameters on the shape of the final report, including the page limit, font, margins, and any other features that are required.

The SoW should include an illustrative time frame for the evaluation indicating when the evaluation is expected to be finalized and the target periods for each of the interim deliverables. This should clarify how much time is expected for evaluation preparation, in-country field work, and report finalization. This information will also facilitate recruitment of evaluation team members.

Finally, the roles and responsibilities for each of the stakeholders should be outlined, including the activity, the country office, the headquarters of the implementing partner, the USAID Mission, and BHA.

A format for an SoW is provided in Annex A; or see the USAID template on Learning Lab [here](#).

C. Team Formation

1. Skill requirements. A formative process evaluation that relies primarily on qualitative methods requires a team of experienced, perceptive investigators who can interview respondents and groups effectively, judge the quality and reliability of the information that is obtained, and make good decisions on when and how to explore new topics as they come up in interviews and discussions. A combination of experience encompassing program implementation, program management, program design, program technical support, program oversight, evaluation, and use of qualitative methods is invaluable. An evaluation team member with implementation experience as a program manager, program technical advisor, or in a field-based position overseeing a number of programs will be able to develop appropriate and feasible recommendations for a resilience program. Experience using qualitative methods in key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) or on-site observations of activities will guide development of recommendations that are based on good qualitative data. Finally, in-country experience where the evaluation is being implemented is also useful.

2. Representation. Recent evaluations have tested a modified approach in which the evaluation team is composed of a mix of independent consultants with representatives from the implementing partner, a significant partner in the activity, and representatives from USAID. This team composition adds value to the process by bringing donor views on current trends and interests directly into the process, as well as by cultivating advocates in the headquarters of the implementing partner and donor who can explain how recommendations were formulated when questions arise as the evaluation recommendations are being processed.

There are pros and cons to evaluation team staffing configurations that should be weighed and considered honestly:

- Evaluation independent consultants are likely to have significant professional experience in conducting evaluations that USAID and partner staff may not have.
- USAID and partner staff will need to pause their day-to-day duties while working on an evaluation. The time commitment of serving on an evaluation should not be taken lightly.
- Evaluation team members should be able to commit to staying in field and in-country as demanded by the evaluation schedule and planning. This includes post field work engagements with partners when critical feedback is discussed.
- Evaluation team members must take seriously the time commitment needed to write evaluation findings once they have returned home.

Another challenge the evaluation team should anticipate is that USAID staff must conform, unless specific exceptions can be negotiated, to United States Government (USG) security policies. This may limit options for hotel accommodations, which must be approved by the USAID Mission security office, and these evaluation members must travel only in USAID vehicles with USAID drivers during the field work, which can create logistical challenges.

3. Team diversity. Evaluation team diversity is extremely important. Both identity and experience can contribute to creating an intentionally diverse team that will lead to an improved evaluation. When assembling an evaluation team, intentionally seek out diversity in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, and in-country experience, in addition to any other important social or contextual identities that bring perspective and balance to the team (e.g. disability, age, etc.). Gender and racial/ethnic diversity should also be sought when recruiting data collectors. In many contexts, better data can be obtained when female team members interview female respondents and male team members interview male respondents.

4. Evaluation team leader. The most critical position on the evaluation team is the evaluation team leader, responsible for developing the evaluation plan, overseeing implementation of the field work, facilitating workshops and debriefings, and ensuring that the team meets deadlines for deliverables, especially the evaluation report. This position is best filled by an independent consultant who can focus 100 percent on the evaluation. An individual who is not an independent consultant can be designated team leader if a significant amount of time can be negotiated for them to be away from their normal responsibilities. In either case, the team leader should not have a vested interest in the activity to avoid any conflict of interest. The leader and all team members must submit a conflict of interest document that USAID will retain for files.

5. Team member level of effort. The evaluation team leader must be committed to the full evaluation period from preparation through finalization, with enough time during the preparation period to draft the evaluation plan (usually seven days) and enough time during the finalization period to assemble and complete the final report (usually ten days). All other team members should commit for some time during the preparation period to review the draft evaluation plan, review background documents, and develop the draft data collection tools. All team members should be present in-country from the first meeting of the evaluation team through the final USAID Mission debriefing, and evaluation team members need to have

sufficient time after the field work to draft their assigned sections for the report. In a few rare instances, the evaluation team may have a member who is completely focused on a single topic that does not require the full amount of time allocated for in-country field work, such as a team member focusing on commodity management systems. This team member needs some time during the preparation phase, some time in-country, and some time writing up their sections of the report. Table 2 provides an illustrative estimate of the level of effort required from different team members.

Table 2. Illustrative Level of Effort for Evaluation Team Members

Position	Work Days		
	Preparation Phase	In-Country Field Work	Finalization Phase
Evaluation Team Leader	5-7 days	Full period	10 days
Evaluation Team Member	2-3 days	Full period	5-7 days
Evaluation Team Member with Limited Investigation Responsibilities	1 day	As required	2 days

6. Observers. For some evaluations, one or more stakeholders such as BHA, the USAID Mission, or the implementing partner will want to delegate a staff member to be an observer for the evaluation. Observers do not participate as evaluation team members but may sit in on various meetings, interviews, discussions, and debriefings. They participate in the evaluation to provide independent observations on the process as well as, in some cases, to acquire experience with evaluation processes. Because they have not participated in the full process as a member of the evaluation team, however, there is a risk that they may unintentionally influence or disrupt the evaluation process or product. This sometimes becomes evident during the field work in communities when respondents hold back information because they are uncertain about who the observer is or why the observer is present. Furthermore, when it is clear that the observer is from the donor, respondents, especially at the community level, may be reluctant to be critical of the program. Because the threats to the process at the community-level are significant, observers should be discouraged from accompanying the evaluation team on community visits. In some cases, however, it is difficult to avoid having observers. Annex G includes a set of guidelines to reduce their potential for influencing the process.

7. Recruitment of team members. The number of evaluation team members required for an evaluation depends on the scope of the activity and is usually proposed in the SoW. Recruitment of evaluation team members can be time-consuming and challenging, as members of the team from USAID or the implementing partner have to be persuaded to join the team at the expense of leaving their current responsibilities for a fairly extensive period. This usually requires negotiation of internal arrangements to cover these responsibilities while they are on the team. Their recruitment is best facilitated by someone within their organization who can help negotiate this coverage.

Consultants for the evaluation team are recruited by the implementing partner for the activity, using their normal consultant recruitment process. The evaluation team leader, who determines team member responsibilities in developing the evaluation plan, can help ensure good coverage of all by being involved in recruiting evaluation team members. This is rarely possible, however, especially for an evaluation team leader who is an independent consultant. The evaluation team leader can advise as to how well someone being considered might match evaluation needs, but generally, evaluation team members are recruited by their home organization (USAID or the implementing partner).

8. Logistics coordinator. Ideally, the activity or country office for the implementing partner will provide someone who can be a dedicated logistics coordinator for the evaluation. This is particularly important for large teams, for example six or more evaluators and their translators. This person will arrange accommodations, coordinate with drivers, assign passengers to vehicles, mobilize passengers and drivers for departures, and arrange lunches. If it is not possible to have a dedicated logistics coordinator, this role should be assigned to a staff member in the activity or in the country office who is readily available for the evaluation.

D. Background Documentation

There is a tendency to overwhelm evaluation teams with background documentation given the abundance of information associated with an activity that is available. To ensure efficient use of time, the documentation should be prioritized and packaged for review by evaluation team members. This should include a set of required reading for all team members and reference documents that team members can review as needed.

1. Required reading. The following documents are usually required reading for all members of an evaluation team for an evaluation of a BHA-funded activity.

- The current approved activity technical narrative
- The most recent pipeline and resource estimate proposal (PREP) with the detailed implementation plan
- The current theory of change and logical framework
- The current indicator performance tracking table
- The activity's baseline report
- All annual results reports that the program has submitted
- All quarterly monitoring reports that the program has submitted
- Useful USAID documents such as the *Sustaining Development: A Synthesis of Results from a Four-Country Study of Sustainability and Exit Strategies among Development Food Assistance Programs Paper* by Rogers & Coats and the current USAID Evaluation Policy from 2011.

2. Other reference documents. The following documents are usually available and should be reviewed by team members when possible.

- Activity-specific strategic documents that describe components of the activity or cross-cutting strategies, such as SBC strategies, sustainability strategies, and so on.
- Other technical reports that may be available such as gender analysis reports, SBC formative research reports, value chain or marketing analysis reports, and so on.

- Relevant technical reports or sectoral strategies produced by government or other organizations.
- TDY reports from USAID visitors to the activity
- Reports from consultants who have provided technical support to the activity.
- PREPs for previous years.
- The full activity M&E plan.
- Knowledge management and learning background documents.
- Program implementation manuals developed by the activity (or training curricula and training materials in lieu of a program implementation manual).
- Participant registration data.
- Environmental mitigation and monitoring plan.
- BHA minimum standards for farmer field schools, village savings and loan associations, and community-led total sanitation.
- BHA checklists for asset reviews, irrigation, road assets, and elevated structures.

3. Document repository. Someone from the activity or implementing partner should be designated to manage a repository for the documents. For security reasons, USG staff cannot use their USG email address to access a non-USG repository like DropBox, and non-USG members of the evaluation team cannot access the USAID internal document repository without a USG email address, so whoever manages the document repository should find a way to ensure that all members of the evaluation team have access to soft copies of the documents. It is good practice for the activity to print out the required reading documents and assemble them into at least one physical folder that the evaluation team can access once they arrive in-country. Most team members will have reviewed the documents before arriving, but it is useful to have them available as hard copies for reference during the evaluation. Some activity management teams assemble all of the documents on flash drives that can be provided to evaluation team members once they arrive in-country. Evaluation team members will already have soft copies of the documents downloaded from the document repository so this is not critical, but it is convenient.

4. Emphasis on reading the documents. All members of the evaluation team must read the required documents before arriving in-country, and the evaluation team leader and the persons who recruited the evaluation team members need to emphasize this. The level of effort should account for this task.

E. Implementation Schedule Development

Three schedules are developed for an evaluation. These are:

1. An overall schedule that includes all phases of the evaluation
2. A schedule for the data collection and preliminary analysis phase covering the period when the evaluation team is in-country

3. Schedules for meetings, interviews, and FGDs to be organized in each of the geographic zones⁶ to be visited during data collection.

The first overall schedule for the evaluation should be developed as early as possible, because this will be used to recruit the evaluation team members. The evaluation team leader will usually take the lead on this, working closely with the person who developed the SoW and individuals who will be recruiting evaluation team members. The evaluation team leader, working with the activity management team, develops the second schedule and includes this in the draft evaluation plan under development during the preparation period. Schedules for activities taking place in the third schedule are developed shortly before the evaluation team plans to visit a particular geographic zone. This helps minimize the "coaching" of respondents, described in more detail in the section on site selection for data collection.

A couple of factors should be considered when developing schedules. First, once a reasonable schedule has been developed, it is important to minimize changes, especially for the overall schedule and the schedule for the in-country field work. Second, the schedules for the in-country field work need to account for national holidays and local perceptions on working outside of the normal work day.

Defining the overall schedule can be very challenging, and there is always pressure to reduce the time needed for various reasons. One is cost. A second reason is that the evaluation product may be needed by a certain date to inform another process, for example, preparing a PREP. A third motivation for compressing schedules is to minimize the time that evaluation team members who are coming from BHA or the implementing partner will need to be away from their normal responsibilities. Table 3 below illustrates an ideal amount of time for key steps in the evaluation process.

Table 3. Ideal Time Allocation for Key Steps in the Evaluation Process

EVALUATION STEP	IDEAL TIME
<i>Pre-Arrival Preparation Period</i>	
Development and approval of the SoW	1 month
Recruitment of evaluation team members	1 month
Development of the working draft evaluation plan	5 days
Document review by evaluation team members	2 days
Development of draft data collection tools by evaluation team members	1 day

⁶ Most activities are being implemented in different geographic zones corresponding to the administrative structure in the country where the evaluation is being implemented. Each zone will usually have its own management team under the leadership of a position that can be described as a zonal coordinator.

<i>In-Country Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis</i>	
Evaluation team meeting, activity orientation, USAID Mission orientation, stakeholder meetings, and other evaluation preparation in the capital	4 to 5 days, depending on how many stakeholders are based in the capital
Field visits to geographic zones: Zonal-level program orientation, zonal-level stakeholder interviews, community-level interviews and FGDs, and information processing	4 days per zone, excluding travel between zones
Pre-verification workshop data processing and prep	3 to 4 days depending on the scope of the activity/size of the evaluation team
Verification workshop	2 to 3 days, depending on scope of activity/size of the evaluation team
Post-verification workshop follow-up and data processing	3 days, excluding travel
Stakeholder debriefing	1 day to prepare, half day to present
USAID Mission debriefing	1 day to prepare, two hours to present
<i>Recommendations Finalization Phase</i>	
First draft of report for review by implementing partner and activity	1 month
Reviewable draft report for review by BHA and USAID Mission	2 weeks
Debriefing for Washington, D.C.-based stakeholders	1 day to prepare, two hours to present excluding travel
Final report	2 weeks

Though there are costs to the quality of the evaluation product if the schedule is shortened, sometimes this is unavoidable. If the time must be reduced, then the following options can be considered in order of preference.

4. Reduce the time in each zone down to three days by eliminating the analysis day.
5. Reduce the number of days in the capital after arrival to three days and conduct more interviews with capital-based stakeholders remotely.
6. Further reduce the amount of time in each zone to 2.5 days by limiting community visits to 1.5 days.
7. Reduce the amount of time for data processing and preparation before the verification workshop down to two days.
8. Reduce the amount of time for processing and preparation after the verification workshop to two days before the stakeholder debriefing.

As a last resort, if the time available in-country is so limited that the evaluation team is unable to analyze the data sufficiently to generate good preliminary recommendations, then the evaluation team can determine the best way to collaboratively conduct the data analysis after they leave the country. Once the evaluation team has derived recommendations from the analysis, the team (or at least some members) can return to the country to hold the verification workshop and debriefings. This should be considered as a last resort, however; it is better to hold discussions in the verification workshop while the field observations are still fresh. Furthermore, the costs for the evaluation will likely increase with the additional travel. In general, if the schedule for the evaluation is reduced from that shown in Table 3, time will be needed later to address concerns or issues raised by reviewers of the draft report. If there is sufficient time to undertake the full process, the product will more likely be well-received and completed in a timely way.

F. Preparation of the Draft Evaluation Plan

The draft evaluation plan is the key document for ensuring that an evaluation is planned and implemented effectively. It describes the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the roles and responsibilities of evaluation team members as well as different evaluation stakeholders, the information that will be obtained, the process to obtain information including sampling methodology and qualitative data collection methods, and the shape of the final product. Evaluation plan annexes include the evaluation schedules, data collection tools, the verification workshop plan, a summary report format, and the list of sites selected for data collection (added at the end of the field work). See Annex B for a sample format for an evaluation plan.

The evaluation plan is tailored for the specific evaluation and will undergo a number of revisions over the course of the evaluation.

After the SoW has been approved and the team leader for the evaluation identified, the evaluation team leader develops the *first draft* of the plan with support from the Chief of Party (CoP) for the activity. This first draft, while not fully complete, should provide enough information to convey how the evaluation will be organized. This draft is shared with evaluation team members and the activity management team for feedback, which is incorporated in a second draft, a *reviewable draft*, which is shared with the major stakeholders for the evaluation, including BHA and the implementing partner headquarters, to obtain approvals to proceed with the evaluation. While this review is happening, evaluation team members begin working on draft topical outlines to guide interviews and FGDs (see Section III.G for more detail on topical outlines and Annex D for examples of topical outlines).

Stakeholder feedback on the reviewable draft and the draft data collection tools developed by evaluation team members are incorporated in a *working draft* of the evaluation plan that is complete enough to organize and implement the evaluation. This draft provides the basis for discussions that are held with the activity after the evaluation team has assembled in-country.

A *final draft* of the evaluation plan is prepared at the end of the evaluation for incorporation into the final methodology report. This plan contains updated schedules, the data collection tools used, the full list of sites visited for data collection, and explanations of any changes to the approach during the course of implementing the evaluation. The following sections briefly describe the different sections of the evaluation plan.

1. Evaluation purpose and objectives. The evaluation purpose and objectives in the evaluation plan are taken directly from the SoW. However, certain features of activity implementation are critical for formative evaluations. If specific objectives around these do not appear in the objectives described in the SoW, they should be added to the evaluation plan. These features include 1) the overall activity strategy including theory of change, logical framework, and targeting, 2) production of outputs, including technical approaches, intervention implementation, and quality of outputs, 3) emerging outcomes and their likely sustainability, and 4) implementation systems, including management, partnerships, knowledge management, and resource management.

2. Activity description. The activity description section in the evaluation plan starts from the description in the SoW, but more detail is added on the activity outputs and the different types of participants (intermediaries and beneficiaries) under each component of the activity. The description of outputs and participants will help ensure that the evaluation team reviews all of the activity's outputs, and interviews or FGDs are scheduled with all of the key participants. In preparing this section, the evaluation team leader will usually begin with a review of what was proposed in the original technical application and then will work with the activity CoP to identify which of the proposed outputs and participants are still being targeted, which have been dropped, and which new outputs or participants have been included since the activity began.

A table, such as that shown below, is prepared for each purpose in the activity, showing the different types of participants or sites with target numbers. This is useful not only for scheduling interviews and FGDs, but also for developing data collection tools, getting a sense for how well the activity is achieving output targets, and seeing how well the activity's monitoring systems are working.

Table 4: Illustrative Table in the Evaluation Plan for Showing Participants and Sites

Type of Participant/Site (Examples provided for a governance and gender purpose)	Current Total	Membership/Sex		Life of Award Target
		Female	Male	
Village disaster management committees trained				
Government extension workers receiving support				
Community leaders trained				
Community-based monitors trained				
Private sector & civil society organizations supported to contribute to government plans				
Women and youth trained in leadership				
Women and youth facilitated to participate in community decision-making structures				

Community influencers trained to promote positive gender norms				
Male change agents trained on gender equity				

In addition to the information on outputs and participants, more detailed information is provided on the activity's technical and implementing partners under each purpose, mainly to ensure that the evaluation team schedules interviews with all of the major partners.

3. Evaluation team. This section of the evaluation plan describes the members of the evaluation team and their responsibilities. While team members will have been recruited to fill specific technical needs, the evaluation team leader may also ask them to lead other investigations in the evaluation related to cross-cutting themes or implementation systems. Also, in some cases, an evaluation team may have more than one member investigating topics that overlap, such as two members looking at components under a single purpose. Responsibilities should be clearly delineated among team members. After consultations on these overlaps and the other responsibilities that may be assigned to different team members, the evaluation team leader will complete a table for the evaluation plan like Table 5 below which describes evaluation team member responsibilities. The most important feature of the table is that it shows all of the major components of activity and identifies an evaluation team member to coordinate investigations in each specific area. Note that the evaluation team member is responsible for both coordinating and conducting the investigations on a topic. As cross-cutting themes and implementation systems cut across the activity, all team members will be expected to provide observations and participate in discussions in areas outside of their assigned areas of responsibility.

Table 5: Illustrative Table in the Evaluation Plan Showing Evaluation Team Member Responsibilities

INVESTIGATION TOPIC	TEAM MEMBER
<i>Overall Program Design</i>	
Theory of change, including risks and assumption	
Targeting of beneficiaries	
Collective impact at the Goal level	
Collective effect under Purpose 1	
Collective effect under Purpose 2	
Collective effect at the Purpose 3	
Collective effect at the Purpose 4	
<i>Inputs, Implementation, Outputs, Outcomes, and Sustainability</i>	
Intermediate Outcome I.I.I.	

Intermediate Outcome 1.1.2.	
Intermediate Outcome 1.2.1.	
Intermediate Outcome 1.2.2.	
Intermediate Outcome 2.1.1.	
Intermediate Outcome 2.1.2.	
Intermediate Outcome 2.2.1.	
Intermediate Outcome 2.2.2.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.1.1.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.1.2.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.2.1.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.2.2.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.2.3.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.2.4.	
Intermediate Outcome 3.2.5.	
<i>Cross-Cutting Topics</i>	
Environmental compliance & climate risk management	
Gender equity	
Youth equality & integration	
Social and behavioral change	
Other:	
<i>Implementation Systems and Resource Management</i>	
Management & partnerships	
Collaborative learning and action (including M&E)	
Program integration	
Coordination and linkages	
Financial management systems	
Human Resource Management Systems	
Commodity management systems	
Materials & equipment management systems	

While the assignment of responsibilities will depend on the composition of the evaluation team, it is usually a good idea to have each team member be responsible for at least one topic outside of an intermediate outcome to balance the workload and facilitate team building. An evaluation team member who only investigates the intermediate outcomes under a single purpose tends to not contribute much to other investigations. If that person has other investigation responsibilities, she or he will understand the importance of contributing to other investigations.

4. Information sources. This section of the evaluation plan describes the sources of information that the evaluation will use to address the key questions for each specific objective that has been defined for the evaluation. KIIs, FGDs, and other documentation should be listed under these sources. The key questions for the evaluation’s specific objectives will have been provided in the SoW.

5. Evaluation process. The evaluation plan describes the process to meet the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the key dates for major events and activities. This section is organized by the three phases of the evaluation as described above: the preparation phase, the data collection and preliminary analysis phase, and the recommendations finalization phase.

Under the preparation phase, the evaluation plan describes the preparation of the evaluation plan, the background document review, the development of data collection tools (described in the next section), and the preparation for site selection (described later in this section).

The data collection and preliminary analysis description includes an overview of the key meetings that will be scheduled, the field data collection process, the preliminary analysis process, the verification workshop, the post-workshop processing, and the debriefings that will be held before the evaluation team disperses, with dates specified for each. More detail on these events and processes is provided in Section IV.

The recommendations finalization section describes the process and target dates for producing drafts of the report and debriefings. Section V provides more detail on these steps in the process.

6. Qualitative data collection and analysis. The evaluation plan provides guidance to ensure that accurate qualitative information is collected efficiently and analyzed effectively. Section IV.H discusses these guidelines in detail.

7. Stakeholder responsibilities. This section of the evaluation plan describes the responsibilities of the activity and the country office for supporting the evaluation. Some of the key points typically in this section are listed below.

- The country office for the implementing partner is responsible for ensuring that any approvals required from the country government where the evaluation will take place are obtained.
- Activity staff should serve as informants for the evaluation and support the evaluation process by supplying lists of activity sites, sharing documents, advising about local protocols, making orientation presentations to the evaluation team, arranging meetings with the stakeholders, and making logistical arrangements. Activity staff should not be involved in conducting interviews or FGDs, as this could unduly influence the information from respondents.

- The country office for the implementing agency should recruit independent professional translators, with one translator for each evaluation team member. These translators should have some relevant development experience to converse using current development terminology while also supporting evaluation team members to understand the country context.
- The activity will ensure that activity partners are informed of the process (by sharing the reviewable draft of the evaluation plan), and activity partners will be expected to make staff available when possible for interviews and other consultations with the evaluation team.
- The activity, with support from the country office, will facilitate in-country travel and logistical arrangements for the evaluation team members including vehicles, printing/copying, access to databases, work space, and venues for meetings and workshops.
- Note that USG staff will usually require independent logistical support for travel, and the USAID Mission will arrange accommodation as per USG security policies. Any arrangements for this should be described in the evaluation plan.
- The country office for the implementing partner will provide a security briefing to all members of the evaluation team for the areas where the team will be traveling. USG members of the evaluation team will also have a separate security briefing with the USAID Mission.

8. Summary report format. A brief description of the format for the summary report should be provided in the evaluation plan with an illustrative example in an annex.

9. Annexes. The annexes to the evaluation plan include the information shown in Table 6 below. Not all annexes appear in every version of the evaluation plan, as some of the annexes will be developed over time.

The full evaluation schedule should appear in its final form, however, with the first draft of the evaluation plan. The in-country field work schedule for the time that the evaluation team is in-country should be mostly finalized in the working draft of the plan.

The schedules for the actual interviews and FGDs in each geographic zone are not finalized until shortly before the evaluation team arrives in the zone so the final versions of the schedules will only show up in the final draft of the evaluation plan that is prepared for the methodology report.

Evaluation team members will develop the draft data collection tools for the reviewable draft, and a revised draft of the tools will be included in the working draft of the evaluation plan after the team has had initial discussions with the activity staff in-country during the first few days after arrival. Because data collection tools tend to evolve over the course of the field work, the final versions of the tools will be included in the final draft of the evaluation plan that goes in the methodology report.

An illustration of a verification workshop plan is provided in the first draft of the plan. If there are substantial changes in this plan at the time the workshop is implemented, then the final version should go into the methodology report. The evaluation plan also provides an illustrative example of the summary report in the first draft. Because the report itself is the final product, there is no need for this illustrative format to be finalized.

Finally, the evaluation plan should list the sites selected for data collection. These sites, however, will not be known until shortly before the evaluation team arrives in a geographic zone to conduct interviews and FGDs, so it only the final draft of the evaluation plan will have this complete annex.

Table 6. Annexes for the Evaluation Plan

ANNEX	VERSIONS OF THE EVALUATION PLAN			
	FIRST DRAFT	REVIEWABLE DRAFT	WORKING DRAFT	FINAL DRAFT for Methodology Report
Full Evaluation Schedule	Final			
Full Field Work Schedule	Draft	Draft	Final	
Data Collection Schedule in Each Zone	---	---	---	Final
Data Collection Tools	---	Draft	Final	Revised Final
Verification Workshop Plan	Illustrative			Final, if necessary
Summary Report Format	Illustrative	Nothing necessary after illustrative		
Sites Selected for Data Collection	---	---	---	Final

G. Development of Draft Data Collection Tools

Qualitative data in a formative process evaluation will be collected primarily through KIs and FGDs with implementing staff, activity participants (beneficiaries and intermediaries), non-participants living in communities targeted by the activity, and partners including implementing partners, technical partners, government partners, and private sector partners. In addition to conducting interviews and discussions, evaluation team members will visit work sites and activity events such as training sessions with participants to observe the quality of the work. Topical outlines guide interviews, FGDs, and site visits, and evaluation team members will develop theirs by listing the topics that could be covered in an interview or FGD. Annex D contains examples of various forms of topical outlines. It is worth noting that all topical outlines begin with an introduction that reminds evaluators to explain the purpose of the interview or FGD and to obtain informed consent from respondents to participate.

The biggest challenge in developing topical outlines is culling them to only solicit the specific information from a respondent that will benefit the evaluation. This is especially important because there is a time limit that needs to be observed in interviews, usually one hour, and in FGDs, usually no more than one and a half hours.

While there is no standard format for a topical outline, there is a recommended sequencing of questions, as shown below.

1. Are you familiar with the activity?
2. How would you describe what the activity seeks to accomplish?
3. How have you participated in this activity? For how long have you been involved?
4. Please describe how you or others have benefited from the activity.
5. Please describe how you or others have been negatively affected by the activity.
6. Who, in your opinion, has benefited most from the activity?
7. Are there other people who should be benefiting from the activity but are not? Please describe them for us.
8. What constraints do you believe inhibit the activity from fully accomplishing its purposes?
9. What suggestions do you have for addressing these constraints or otherwise enabling the activity to have greater impact?

Open-Ended Questions

In drafting topical outlines, evaluation team members should use open-ended questions. Open-ended questions facilitate better qualitative data collection by eliciting responses that will be more explanatory and may point to additional topics that need to be investigated. For example, asking "did you participate in the activity?" is far less useful than asking "how have you participated in the activity?"

The first draft of the data collection tools should be developed by the evaluation team for the reviewable draft of the evaluation plan. These drafts should be shared with the evaluation team leader who will assess their practicality and identify any key informants or groups that may have been overlooked. The drafts should be revised based on the team leader's feedback and should appear in the working draft of the evaluation plan. Once the evaluation team has arrived in-country, the tools will be further reviewed with activity staff and revised if necessary. The topical outlines tend to evolve over

time as they are being used to collect data. If they change significantly over the course of implementing the evaluation, final versions of the tools should be included in the final draft of the evaluation plan that goes into the methodology report.

H. Preparing for Site Selection for Data Collection

The sample of sites that the evaluation team will visit in each geographic zone will be developed only after the evaluation team leader has arrived in-country. However, other key tasks need to be undertaken to ensure expeditious site selection once the evaluation team leader arrives. The first step is for the team leader to acquire a good understanding of the sample frame from which sites will be selected. This sample frame will be the activity's database which lists locations and participants. The evaluation team leader should communicate with the activity management team to understand how this database is structured as well as how current the information is.

The second significant task to prepare for site selection is to agree with the program on the criteria that will be used to select a sample of sites that reflects where and with whom the activity is working. Some possible criteria include:

- *Accessibility:* Implementation challenges and effectiveness can differ significantly between communities that are easily accessible and communities that are more remote and difficult to reach either because of seasonal factors, infrastructure, or terrain. Evaluation teams should strive to visit a mix of remote and accessible sites to identify the unique challenges and opportunities in each setting.
- *Livelihoods zones:* Activities are often implemented across different livelihood zones, which are geographic areas where economic activities and household livelihoods strategies are fairly uniform. An activity, for example, could be implemented in one geographic zone characterized by low population densities, limited infrastructure, and heavy dependence on semi-subsistence agriculture, another area in which fishing is predominant, and a third area with high population densities, fragmented land holdings, and heavy dependence on daily wage labor. The effectiveness of the activity's interventions can differ substantially across these zones. If an implementing partner is working in multiple livelihood zones, then it will be important to ensure that sites are selected across all of the different zones.
- *Intensity of intervention:* Some communities may only participate in a single component of the activity while others may participate in several or even all components. Activity effectiveness is likely to vary in each case.
- *Perceived performance:* Some activity databases include information on perceived performance of groups or communities, and it is important that the evaluation team see a cross-section of different performance categories when this information is available.
- *Ethnicity:* Some activities may be working with different ethnic groups, and the evaluation team should visit a representative sample to identify particular challenges or opportunities affecting implementation and effectiveness related to ethnicity.
- *Previous programs:* Some activities may be working with people who have participated in previous resilience programs and others who are participating for the first time. Because challenges and effectiveness may differ between these groups, a sample of sites should be selected from each for the evaluation team to visit.

The evaluation team leader should work with the activity's CoP to agree on criteria, after which plans can be made for ensuring that complete information on these criteria is available by the time the evaluation team leader arrives in-country. The activity's database is an excellent resource for information to help identify criteria for site selection, though it might not be exhaustive. By the time the evaluation team leader arrives in-country, the activity management team should have updated the activity's database of sites to show information for each site relevant to the selection criteria and the types of activities being implemented in each site to facilitate scheduling of site visits.

I. Scheduling Initial Meetings

Data collection for the evaluation will begin shortly after the evaluation team assembles in-country, usually in meetings scheduled with stakeholders in the capital or at the main activity office. Decisions on meetings (how many, areas of focus, etc.) and participants should be arranged before the evaluation team travels to the country. Some meetings are common to all process evaluations, such as the orientation meeting with USAID to be attended by all evaluation team members, and meetings with activity partners that are based in the activity's location for brief orientation meetings for the evaluation team leader and any interested

evaluation team members. In addition to these, evaluation team members may see a need to schedule meetings with representatives from key government offices, the private sector, other donors, or other development projects based in the location. Each team member should be asked to identify their interests in having these meetings arranged and communicate this at least a week before arriving in-country. Given that the time for meetings in the capital will be limited, evaluation team members should prioritize their meeting requests, limited to usually no more than three in a day for a period of usually no more than two days in the capital. In practice, however, not all evaluation team members will be able to identify stakeholders with whom they would like to meet before having a chance to review documentation and meet with activity staff, so activity management teams should be asked to arrange meetings with those stakeholders that they know are important to the activity.

J. Scheduling Zonal-Level Meetings with Stakeholders

In each zone that the evaluation team will visit, a half day will be set aside for interviews with zone-based stakeholders for each team member. For team members investigating topics which will require interviews with multiple zone-based stakeholders—for example, investigating value-chain development, or parts of the activity that may be strengthening government or private sector services—more time can be scheduled at the zone level and less time at the community-level. All team members should specify which meetings that they would like to have organized with stakeholders at the zone-level at least three days before the team is expected to arrive in the zone. Given that the time available for meetings in the zone will be limited, the request for meetings from each evaluation team member should limit meeting requests to a prioritized list that can be completed in the time available.

IV. EVALUATION PROCESS PHASE 2: DATA COLLECTION AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

A. Definition of the Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis Period: Team Assembly In-Country to Dispersion after the USAID Mission Debriefing

The second phase of a formative process evaluation covers the period from the time that the evaluation team arrives in-country to the time the team disperses after the USAID Mission debriefing to continue processing data remotely and assemble the report. The following sections describe key activities during this data collection and preliminary analysis phase.

B. Initial Evaluation Team Meeting

The first event in this stage of the evaluation after the evaluation team has assembled in-country is an evaluation team meeting. The purpose of this meeting is for the team leader to provide an update and orientation to evaluation team members and set the tone for the evaluation. In this meeting, team members will introduce themselves and talk a little about their backgrounds. The evaluation team leader will then provide an overview of the evaluation process, including the upcoming meeting schedules, logistics, and tasks that need to be completed before the team departs for data collection in the field. The team leader will also answer any questions that team members may have. Some of the important points that the evaluation team leader should raise in this meeting are listed below.

The product is for the activity. It is important to emphasize that the evaluation should produce a set of prioritized, realistic recommendations intended to benefit the activity; it is not for the donor or the implementing agency headquarters. All evaluation team members should be encouraged to highlight this point in their interactions with the implementing staff and participants, thereby encouraging respondents to discuss their observations about what is working well and what is not working well in the activity.

Evaluation team member identification. Evaluation team members need to remove their current "hats" while in-country working on the evaluation. While their current hat might be, for example, an M&E specialist for BHA working in Washington, D.C. or a chief technical advisor for the implementing partner based in their headquarters, they should put on a new hat, "evaluation team member." Respondents at all levels should interact with the evaluation team members with a focus on the evaluation process and product, and they should not be tailoring their responses to their perception of the evaluation team member as representing the donor or the implementing partner headquarters. Team members themselves also need to focus on how to solve problems or capitalize on opportunities for the activity, not on what is most relevant for their previous role. At this point in the evaluation process, the responsibility of the evaluation team is to have the best interests of the activity in mind, not the best interests of the donor or implementing partner headquarters.

All evaluation team members are encouraged to carefully consider and do their best to set aside any biases they may have developed in their professional experience and any previous experiences with similar activities. There will be opportunities later in the evaluation process for these perspectives to be brought into the evaluation process after the evaluation team has formulated the prioritized recommendations. In this initial meeting, evaluation team members should introduce themselves as the evaluation team member responsible for coordinating investigations on a specific topic(s) in the evaluation. They should not mention their organizational affiliation or position.

Assigned responsibilities. In providing an overview of the evaluation process, the evaluation team leader should discuss each team member's investigation responsibilities to be sure that everyone is clear on who is taking the lead on which topics and provide additional clarity if needed. If some members express discomfort with the assignments, a reallocation of the responsibilities can be discussed in this meeting.

Team effort. The evaluation team leader should emphasize that the evaluation will be a team effort. Many topics cut across or reinforce the activity, for example, the cross-cutting themes, the cross-purpose integration of interventions, and implementation systems. While one evaluation team member will have been assigned responsibility to coordinate investigations for these topics, all members of the team will be expected to contribute the data they have collected as relevant and participate in discussions that are analyzing the data for these topics. It is important that any team member's observations on a topic outside of her/his assigned responsibilities be communicated to the team member who is responsible for that topic. Once the data collection starts, team

Team Building: Logistics

As much as possible, evaluation team members should stay in the same accommodations and travel together to conduct meetings and field visits. This is not always possible when USG staff on the evaluation team are required to stay in specific accommodation or use USAID vehicles that do not allow non-USAID staff as passengers. It is important, however, for the team to bond and have opportunities to interact outside of structured meetings and events.

members will have a formal opportunity in each geographic zone to share observations, but team members also should be encouraged to share observations as they arise with other team members and not to wait for this meeting. There are opportunities to share observations and ideas as the team travels or during other periods. Similarly, all evaluation team members will be involved in prioritizing recommendations later in the process after the verification workshop.

This initial team meeting is primarily for the evaluation team, and usually only evaluation team members attend. However, the activity's CoP and observers are welcome to attend if they request.

C. Orientation Meeting with the USAID Mission

In the first few days after the evaluation team has arrived in-country, a meeting should be held with representatives of the USAID Mission. In this meeting, the evaluation team will be introduced, the team leader will provide an overview of the evaluation process, and the evaluation team will answer any questions that the USAID Mission may have about the evaluation. The evaluation team leader should then ask if the USAID Mission would like the team to investigate any particular issues; USAID may also want to note any expectations for the evaluation and particular problems or opportunities for the activity that they feel should be addressed. In addition, if USAID Mission observers are planning to accompany the evaluators, the logistics of this and the guidelines for observers should be discussed. To avoid overburdening the logistics coordinator for the evaluation, observers should have their own logistics arrangements. Generally, after this meeting, the evaluation team leader will draft meeting notes to serve as a reference later for verifying that the key interests from the USAID Mission have been addressed by the evaluation.

As mentioned above, a date and time for this meeting should have been scheduled before the team arrives in-country. All members of the evaluation team will attend this meeting. The CoP for the activity may also attend if relations are regular and transparent, or she/he may not attend if the USAID Mission can provide more candid input if no one from the implementing partner is in attendance. The evaluation team leader should discuss this with the CoP and the leadership of the country office before the meeting.

While not critical for this particular meeting, evaluation team members should still be encouraged to introduce themselves as "evaluation team members," as recommended above. USAID Mission participants may want to know who is who in terms of organization affiliation, but it is good practice for team members to begin using this way of introducing themselves.

D. Activity Orientation

As soon as possible after the evaluation team has arrived in-country and after the first evaluation team meeting, the activity management team should hold an orientation for the evaluation team. This is usually a half-day meeting where the activity management team is based, either the capital city or a major town in the program area if the management team is field-based. The activity management team can decide best how to organize the presentation, and there is no limitation on participation apart from those imposed by the logistics of bringing staff from the field. Participants could also include selected representatives from implementing and technical partners, evaluation observers, and anyone else from the implementing partner likely to be involved in implementing or supporting the evaluation.

The orientation is meant to clarify for the evaluation team the activity's technical approaches, outputs, beneficiaries and intermediaries participating in different activity components, staffing structure, stakeholders who should be interviewed to understand the outcomes of the activity, and additional data sources to support the evaluation, such as monitoring databases. The agenda for this meeting should include introductions of participants, including the evaluation team and their assignments, a brief overview by the evaluation team leader on the evaluation process (see the paragraph below listing the key points that need to be made in this overview), an overview of the strategy of the activity, an overview of the activity's resources (money and staff), a map showing geographic locations, a description of the interventions and outputs under each component, a description of the roles and responsibilities of partners, and a description of the key implementation or design challenges. Prior to arriving in-country, the evaluation team members will have reviewed background documentation and may have questions which can be clarified at this meeting. Discussions will also be held around 1) the draft topical outlines that have been developed and included as an annex in the working draft of the evaluation plan, 2) the process that will be used to select sites for the qualitative interviews, and 3) the logistics for field visits.

The evaluation team leader should emphasize the following points in this meeting:

The product is for the benefit of the activity. This meeting is an opportunity to reinforce the idea that the product of the evaluation—a set of prioritized recommendations—is primarily for the activity, not the donor nor the headquarters of the implementing partner.

The goal of the evaluation team is to generate realistic and achievable recommendations to enable the activity to adapt and improve by the final evaluation. Having a great activity is the goal of both the evaluation team and activity staff, so we need to work together to solve problems for the activity and capitalize on opportunities. This formative process evaluation will not be making an official judgment on the quality of the activity. The sole purpose of the formative evaluation is to support the activity.

The activity will realize the greatest benefits through identification of problems and opportunities. All activities have implementation or strategic challenges. Challenges that are not exposed until the final evaluation instead of earlier will be more problematic and of limited use for the activity. To best support the activity, implementing staff should honestly discuss their observations about what is working well and what is not. The formative evaluation is an opportunity to fix problems, so they should be brought out, laid on the table, and discussed during this evaluation to inform appropriate recommendations. The point should be stressed that information provided in interviews and FGDs will remain confidential.

E. Activity Partner Meetings

The evaluation team should meet with the leadership of implementing and technical partners, including the lead staff member from each partner who is working in the activity and the organizational leadership that is overseeing the activity. If these stakeholders are based in the capital city, then these meetings should be scheduled shortly after the team assembles in-country. If they are based in the field, then meetings should be held early in the field work after the team arrives in the geographic zone where the stakeholder is based. The evaluation team leader is the point person for these meetings, but other evaluation team members can also attend, particularly with technical partners responsible for the technical component assigned to

the evaluation team member. If a key technical partner is based outside of the country where the evaluation is being conducted, interviews can be conducted by internet video conferencing, by phone, or as a last resort, by email with a short questionnaire tailored for the partner around the question sequencing discussed in the section on development of draft data collection tools. In this meeting with each partner, the evaluation team will provide an overview of the evaluation process including the data collection schedule and stakeholder briefing. To increase the partner’s confidence in the goals and methodology of the process, the evaluation team leader should be available to answer any questions about any stage of the evaluation. Once these have been discussed, the evaluation team leader should ask the partner if they would like the team to investigate any specific topics.

F. Other Stakeholder Meetings in the Capital

During the first few days in the capital before the evaluation team departs to the program area for field data collection, interviews should be scheduled for data collection with stakeholders that are based in the capital. These include technical partners, government offices, and private sector stakeholders. If evaluation team members during their background document review have identified key stakeholders with whom they need to meet, they should send requests for the meetings to the activity management team. Key stakeholders based in the capital may also have been identified during the activity orientation meeting; if so, meetings with the relevant evaluation team members should also be scheduled, if possible, before the team goes to the field. If not, there may be an opportunity to schedule these meetings after the Verification Workshop when the team returns to the capital for the stakeholder and USAID Mission debriefings. During these meetings, evaluation team members can use the relevant topical outline developed for the stakeholder to begin the process of collecting qualitative data. Stakeholders to interview should be chosen strategically, given the limited time likely to be available for the meetings. Evaluation team members should consult with the activity management team and technical staff to decide which meetings to prioritize.

G. Site Selection for Data Collection and Development of Zonal Fieldwork Schedules

Evaluation organizers of formative process evaluations are sometimes reluctant to rely too much on activity managers to select the sites for field visits for an evaluation. They may believe that implementers will want the evaluators to produce the best view possible about the activity and will therefore avoid directing the evaluation team to visit particularly problematic locations. This, however, is not in the best interests of the activity, the organizations implementing the activity and participants in the activity. Just as all activities are achieving at least some benefit, all activities also have implementation challenges and problems. Formative process evaluations are opportunities to fix these problems and

Visiting Sites Without Advance Notice

In some contexts, it may be possible for the evaluation team to visit some sites without advance notice; this is a particularly good approach where there is evidence that too much coaching of respondents is happening. The challenge is to find the right people to interview. If interviews need to be held with shopkeepers, child caregivers, or unemployed youth, for example, it should always be possible to find some people like this in a site. However, for other community members who are out on their farms, on boats, or otherwise engaged in off-site meetings or livelihoods activities, it may be difficult and time-consuming to find the right people to talk to. If community leaders are available, they can facilitate identification of respondents themselves or by appointing someone to serve as a guide.

address the challenges, and this point needs to be continually stressed by the evaluation team to encourage respondents to be open and frank about what is working and what is not working and to be interested in using the experience and expertise of the evaluation team to try to address these. The point should also be made with respondents that, if the problems do not get addressed by the time of the final evaluation, final evaluators will most likely find them and criticize implementers for not addressing them earlier. The activity that has successfully used a formative evaluation to improve its effectiveness is likely to have greater impact.

For a formative process evaluation, the sample of sites should be purposively, not randomly selected, to allow the evaluation team to best observe what is working and what is not working, as well as any particularly innovative approaches that are being used. As described previously, the evaluation’s recommendations will propose scaling up successful interventions, modifying interventions to be more effective, suspending less successful interventions, piloting new interventions relevant for participants, and improving the effectiveness of implementation systems.

In selecting sites for field visits, a balance is needed between making the names of the sites known to the implementing staff, who work directly with activity participants, and providing enough time for arrangements to be made in a site for the planned interviews and FGDs. The earlier that selected sites are known, the more likely respondent coaching is going to happen. The message that the evaluation team needs to see problems and is not there to audit or assess the activity does not always reach the participants and respondents at the field level. Front-line staff and their supervisors will want to make their work look good, and they may perceive an opportunity to coach respondents on answers to give to the evaluation team that will make them look good. On the other hand, the evaluation team may not find the people that they want to interview if they have not given adequate notice to the activity managers who need to identify respondents. Some organization of groups and individuals needs to occur before the evaluation team arrives in a site. A good sampling process that strikes this balance is shown in Table 7. Steps 1 and 2 in the table have already been discussed in the section on preparing for site selection for data collection, and the remaining steps in the table are discussed in more detail in the next sections.

Table 7. Steps in the Process of Selecting Sites for Data Collection and Developing Fieldwork Schedules

No.	STEP	TIMING	WHO IS INVOLVED
1	Agree on criteria for sample selection	Before arrival in-country	Team Leader and CoP
2	Update activity database, if necessary, to show criteria for sites		CoP and Activity's M&E staff
3	Initial meeting to identify preliminary sites for data collection	Soon after team leader arrives in-country	Team Leader, CoP and activity's M&E staff
4	Communication of sites in each zone to be visited	Four days before zonal data collection scheduled	Team Leader

5	Draft schedule for field visits in the zone	Three days before zonal data collection scheduled	Zonal Coordinator for the activity
6	Matching evaluation team members to sites and specifying interviews and FGDs for each site in the zonal schedule	Two days before zonal data collection scheduled	Evaluation Team members
7	Final schedule developed		Zonal Coordinator for the program
8	Front-line implementing staff organize people from the community for interviews and FGDs		Front-line staff for the program
9	Steps 4 through 8 replicated for each Zone according to the timing shown.		

I. Initial meeting to identify preliminary sites. Shortly after arriving in-country, the evaluation team leader should schedule a meeting with the activity's CoP, the staff member responsible for managing the activity's database, and one or more staff members who are familiar with the geographic zones the evaluation team will visit for data collection. The criteria for sample selection will have already been determined during the preparation phase, and the activity's participants database will have been updated or organized to display the classification of sites by the agreed upon criteria. In developing the evaluation plan, the evaluation team leader, in consultation with the CoP, will have identified a preliminary number of sites to visit in each geographic zone based on the selection criteria, the time available for the field work, and the size of the evaluation team (see example in text box). The target number of total sites assumes that a team of two or three evaluators who will be collecting data and their translators can visit two sites per day. Experience has shown that travel logistics and field visits in a site proceed more smoothly when evaluation teams are smaller, and a large group of visitors can be overwhelming to a community.

In addition to having decided on a total number of sites to be visited, the evaluation team leader will also have set a proportional target for the number of sites to be visited for the selection criteria that have been identified (see example in text box). In this initial meeting to identify sites, the sites will be selected for each of the zones to be visited.

Example: Setting a Target Number of Total Sites for Data Collection

Assuming that the overall schedule for an evaluation has allocated 16 days for field visits for data collection to four geographic zones with an evaluation team that has six members, the total number of sites for field visits can be calculated as follows.

The evaluation team will spend four days in each zone, two of which (or four half-days) will be allocated for village visits. The other two days in each district will be for a district orientation/staff interviews (1/2 day), district stakeholder interviews (1/2 day), and team data processing (1 day).

For each site, three evaluators will be scheduled for a visit. So, over two days of village visits, the team will visit two villages per half day (one group of three evaluators going to one village and the other group of three going to the other village) for a total of eight villages in the zone over four half-days.

So, eight villages will need to be identified in each zone for a total of 32 villages across the four zones in the activity.

In selecting sites, the evaluation team leader will propose a site and allow the CoP and her/his staff to indicate what there is to see in the site. If, for example, the proposed site is too similar to a previous site that has been proposed or would require too much time to reach, the evaluation team leader can propose a different site. Not all sites selected need to have every component of the activity. In fact, observing some sites with few interventions present can help to understand the range of operating environments. However, the evaluation team leader needs to ensure that the sites selected have enough interventions for evaluation team members to see the most critical components of the activity in the geographic zone. Before finalizing this preliminary list of sites, the evaluation team leader should ask the program CoP whether any particular sites in the zone should be considered because important new approaches are being piloted or the activity is facing particularly significant challenges. Once the sites have been selected for each geographic zone, the activity management team should be asked to provide information on the types of interventions being implemented in each site.

The list of sites selected for each geographic zone is not communicated immediately to all of the activity's zonal coordinators, but is only sent to the zonal coordinator in the zone that will be visited first. The lists for the other zones will be sent, as indicated in the table, about four days before the evaluation team plans to visit the zone.

2. Communication of sites in first zone and development of a draft schedule. About four days before the evaluation team is scheduled to visit the first geographic zone, the sites selected for that zone should be communicated to the activity's zonal coordinator. The coordinator will be asked to develop a draft field schedule for visiting these sites in the time allocated for that district, assuming that the evaluation team will be divided into smaller groups of two or three evaluators and that a site visit will require a half day. She or he will take into account the locations of the selected sites and the logistics of getting team members and their translators to the sites.

At this point, it is not yet known which evaluation team members will be going to which site; the evaluation team leader will determine that after the zonal coordinator has developed the draft schedule for visiting the sites. Usually problems are identified at this point with the sites that have been selected. Some sites may require too much time to reach, for example, those that can only be reached by foot. Others may be difficult to reach because roads or bridges are impassible. Sometimes it is only the front-line staff who can really attest to the difficulty in reaching a site.

Example: Setting a Target Number of Sites for a Specific Selection Criterion

Assume that "accessibility" has been agreed upon as one of the selection criteria for site selection, and the activity's database can display each site in a specific geographic zone as either easily accessible year round (25% of the villages in the zone), accessible most of the year (50% of the villages in the zone), or difficult to access especially during the rainy season (25% of the villages in the zone). The proportional number of sites to select for field visits for that zone would be calculated by applying these percentages to the total number of sites to be selected for the zone. Using the earlier example which calculated 8 total villages to visit in a zone, 2 of these should be selected from the easily accessible villages, 4 from the moderately accessible villages and 2 from the difficult to access villages.

In some cases, zonal coordinators may want to remove a site from the list if the activity is having severe implementation problems. The zonal coordinator will communicate these concerns to the evaluation team leader who will verify from other sources that the accessibility challenges exist before selecting a replacement village.

The evaluation team leader should try to include at least one remote site as long as it can be visited in a full day. In cases in which it appears that the zonal coordinator wants to remove a site because it is problematic, the evaluation team leader should explain the value in having the team visit this site to be able to generate recommendations to fix the problems. The zonal coordinator will also be given the opportunity to propose sites in which particularly innovative approaches are being tested or challenges are particularly acute.

Once the sites have been agreed upon, the zonal coordinator should develop the schedule for site visits and indicate what events, if any, the activity has already scheduled in each site (or a nearby site) on the day of the scheduled visit. The expected turnaround time for developing the draft schedule is one day for the zonal coordinator to develop the schedule for visiting the selected locations after receiving the list of sites, so this is very intensive process involving a fair amount of communication between the evaluation team leader and the zonal coordinator and between the zonal coordinator and his implementation team.

3. Matching sites to evaluation team members and specifying interviews and FGDs. Once the evaluation team leader has the draft schedule, he or she will determine which team members will travel to which sites based on information from the activity management team on the interventions in each site and events that the activity has already planned in each site (or a nearby site). While it is relatively rare for a planned event such as a training or a group meeting to coincide with an evaluation team member's visit, this provides a great opportunity, for the evaluator to observe implementation firsthand. Some evaluation team members will have responsibilities for cross-cutting themes or investigating implementing systems, and they may need to have more time with implementing staff and less time visiting communities. The evaluation team leader should consult with team members in deciding where they need to spend their time in a zone.

Once the evaluation team leader has assigned sites in consultation with team members, team members should indicate the types of interviews and focus groups they intend to organize in each of their assigned sites. In general, an evaluation team member can expect to have about three hours for data collection per half-day site visit, so the evaluation team member should not request more interviews or FGDs than can be accomplished in the time available.

The turnaround time for team members to submit their requests for interviews and focus groups is also one day from the time the evaluation team leader receives the draft schedule from the zonal coordinator. The evaluation team leader will update the schedule with the assignment of sites to the evaluation team members and their requests for interviews and focus groups, and send this to the program's zonal coordinator.

4. Final schedule for the zonal fieldwork developed. The zonal coordinator will finalize the schedule for the field visit by adding any logistics information, typically vehicle assignments and accommodation arrangements. She or he will also communicate the schedule to zonal program staff with instructions for front-line staff to ensure the requested participants will be available as noted in the schedule. Ideally, front-line staff will go to the selected sites the day before the visit is scheduled to organize respondents for the visit. This is a short turn around and some key respondents may not be available, but any earlier communications invites potential coaching of respondents.

H. Data Collection Tools and Approaches

Qualitative data are collected primarily through KIs and FGDs with implementing staff, activity participants (beneficiaries and intermediaries), persons in the same community who are not participating in the activity (non-participants), and activity partners including consortium, technical, government, and private sector partners. In addition to conducting interviews and FGDs, evaluation team members will observe implementation of interventions and physical sites where the activity has made investments. The evaluators should only observe regularly scheduled program activities, ensuring that they were not organized just for the evaluation. During the course of conducting an FGD or interview, an evaluator should ask about what is happening at the moment relative to the discussion, for example, what is going on in farm fields or with an income-generating activity or a food-for-work/food-for-assets activity. At the end of the discussion, the evaluator should visit an ongoing microenterprise, farmer's field, or household practicing some specific behavior relevant to the activity to help verify what has been reported and pose additional follow-up questions.

KIs are normally held with between one to four persons, ideally no more than two, and these interviews typically last no more than one hour.

FGDs generally have five to no more than ten persons. They are called focus groups because all of the members belong to a specific category, so evaluators should ensure that participants meet the desired common criterion, i.e., members of a savings group, farmers who received seed from the activity, lead mothers, lead fathers, and so on. FGDs should last around an hour and a half and should not extend beyond two hours.

Before beginning an interview or discussion, the evaluator should introduce themselves (without specifying organization affiliation) and their translator and explain the purpose of the visit. Key points to make are that this is an opportunity to improve the quality of the activity and the evaluation wants to get the perspectives of the respondents on what is working well and what is not working well in the program. Evaluators should stress the importance of obtaining useful information that reflects reality and inform respondents that their responses will be kept confidential.

Both interviews and discussions should be held in secluded locations so that bystanders or passersby cannot influence the discussions. The evaluation team should seek the consent from the participants at the beginning of the discussion and should not record any names in order to maintain confidentiality. If portable recording devices are used, the device should be shown to

Dealing with Community Expectations

Occasionally, in some contexts in which NGOs have been distributing materials, or "handouts," to participants to facilitate recovery from conflict or disasters, respondents in an interview or FGD will orient their responses more around what they believe they need to say to get more "handouts." The data collected, as a result, are not very useful for the evaluation. Evaluators can pre-empt this by reinforcing the purpose of the evaluation and bringing the discussion back to what the activity is doing or can do to permanently change people's lives for the better.

Large Focus Groups

Despite guidance provided to front-line staff in the selection of respondents for a focus group discussion, the number of people who want to participate occasionally exceeds the ideal number of participants (no more than 10). Rather than trying to continue with the whole group, the evaluator should thank the large group for coming but explain that it is better to speak to a smaller group so everyone has a chance to talk. A subset of the large group can be identified by asking who meets the criteria for the focus group and then randomly choosing a small group from this subset. Translators can be very valuable in facilitating this. Once the small group has been identified, a different, secluded location should be identified for the discussion.

respondents and not activated until after respondents have consented to its use and after they have introduced themselves so that no names will be recorded.

Front-line staff with community-based facilitators and community leaders select the community-level respondents for interviews and FGDs. The time available to do this is very limited since the field work schedule indicating the day on which the evaluation team will visit the community will only have been finalized one to three days before front-line staff who are making arrangements in the community are expected to travel to the community.

The evaluation team leader should stress with the activity's zonal coordinator that she or he needs to ensure front-line staff making these arrangements understand 1) the purpose of the evaluation and its potential benefit to the activity, 2) the number of respondents to identify for interviews (one to four) or FGDs (five to ten), 3) that the respondents must clearly match the description of the type of key informant or focus group that has been requested, and 4) the best respondents to provide accurate information, positive or negative, must be recruited.

Assessing the Quality of Responses

With every respondent, the evaluator must judge the quality of the response. Is the respondent giving the evaluator an honest, truthful response? Is the respondent saying what she or he thinks the evaluator wants to hear? Is the respondent repeating what she or he has been coached to say, presumably by community leaders or by activity staff? Is the respondent saying things in ways that she or he thinks will induce the activity to provide more direct benefits? As an evaluator acquires more experience collecting qualitative data, she or he will become more adept at detecting falsehoods. The use of an odd term by respondents or reports from respondents that all is well sometimes indicate coaching. Extreme descriptions by respondents on how bad things are usually indicate a response that is trying to generate more assistance. In analyzing information, evaluators should give more credence to responses perceived to be truthful and honest and less to responses that seem to have ulterior motives.

In each zone, the evaluation team leader should consult with team members after the first community field visits to discuss the quality of the respondents that have been identified. If there are problems with group size or the quality of the responses, or evidence of coaching, the evaluation team leader should meet with the zonal coordinator to discuss reinforcing the guidance to front-line staff. If these problems appear in the first zone visited, the evaluation team leader should reinforce the need to provide guidance to front-line staff with zonal coordinators in subsequent zones that will be visited.

As mentioned earlier, a topical outline will guide data collection in qualitative interviews and FGDs. This tool includes key thematic questions and should be tailored to the types of participants and approaches the activity is using. Different topical outlines should be used, for example, with implementing staff and partners, with activity intermediaries, with activity beneficiaries, and with non-participants, although all will be organized around the sequencing described earlier.

The questions in a topical outline are fairly general and used to stimulate discussion. Evaluators should keep in mind at all times that the purpose of the information gathering is to understand what the activity has done, what changes have occurred as a result, what has helped or hindered achievement of these changes, and how likely the changes are to be sustained after the activity ends. The evaluator will be free to explore in more depth any relevant topics that come up during each discussion. The evaluator is also free to skip particular questions on a

topical outline if it is apparent that the respondent has no relevant information for those questions.

For each question, the evaluator should have an idea about what kind of response to expect, based on a review of the background documents, but should avoid leading the respondent to make these responses. After a respondent has completed answering a question and an expected topic has not come up, the interviewer/facilitator can then ask...what about this?... noting that the respondent did not spontaneously report on the topic.

Generally, the evaluator takes her or his own notes for the interview or discussion. It can be prohibitively expensive to hire notetakers, and translators need to focus on translation and not note-taking. Program staff should not serve as note-takers because their presence might influence the response from informants or discussion participants. During the evaluation team processing day described in the next section in each zone, the evaluator can review her or his notes.

The evaluation team should be proactive and intentional about their data analysis approach. Rigorous methods and best-practice guidance can help the evaluation team identify emergent patterns and themes from qualitative data, which may in turn generate solid recommendations.⁷

I. Orienting Translators

As previously mentioned, the country office for the implementing agency is responsible for recruiting translators for the evaluation. After the evaluation team members have developed the topical outlines and before the fieldwork commences at the community level, the evaluation team leader should organize an orientation for the translators. This should be scheduled at a location convenient for the translators, either at the activity's main office or in each zone.

In this meeting, the evaluation team leader should provide an overview of the evaluation purpose, process, and schedule. The team leader should also explain that translators in a formative process evaluation are considered part of the evaluation team, and their role is to make sure that respondents understand a question that the evaluator asks and that the evaluator understands the response. Verbatim translation is not important for a formative process evaluation. It is the understanding that is important, and translators are welcome to contribute clarifications on questions or responses and even make suggestions to the evaluator on additional questions that might help clarify the understanding. Translators, however, should not ask their own questions during interviews and FGDs.

The translator should be introduced to the evaluation team member for whom she or he will be translating. In addition, the translator and evaluation team member should review the topical outline together to address any questions that the translator may have about how to translate a term or concept.

In recruiting translators, the country office should try to achieve gender diversity, and in matching translators to evaluation team members, it is useful when possible to have female translators paired with male evaluation team members and male translators paired with female evaluation team members to facilitate gender-related contextual understanding.

⁷ See, for example, the sections on qualitative data analysis contained in the [USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Technical Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities V2.0](#).

Because translators are considered part of the evaluation team and will have had key roles in interviews and FGDs, they can add extensive value to discussions in the Verification Workshop, and at least some of the more effective translators should be invited to attend this workshop.

J. Zonal Data Collection Processes

During zonal data collection, evaluators should interview a wide range of respondents, including implementing staff, representatives from activity partners based in the zone, government and private sector stakeholders, community leaders, and community-level participants. The sequencing of data collection facilitates triangulation of information, rotating among different sources of information to identify patterns that likely reflect reality, over a period of at least four days. **The table below illustrates an ideal sequencing, but it often has to be adjusted to accommodate travel time, holidays, and weekends, and to accommodate respondents' schedules.** Government informants, for example, have to be scheduled on a working day. Sabbath days (usually Friday or Sunday depending on the context) and holidays should be used for evaluation team processing days, rather than for interviews or FGDs. More detail on each of the events in the sequence is provided in the sections which follow.

Table 8. Ideal Sequencing for Zonal-Level Data Collection

PERIOD		EVENT	PURPOSE
Day 1	First Half	Activity Orientation & Staff Interviews	Understand opportunities & challenges in the zone and implementation differences relative to other zones; data collection from implementing staff
	Second Half	Community Interviews & FGDs	Data collection from community-based respondents, initial information gathering at the community level
Day 2	First Half	Zone-based Stakeholder Interviews	Data collection from zone-based stakeholders, identification of information to gather in future community visits, verification of initial information gathered at the community level.
	Second Half	Community Interviews & FGDs	Additional data collection from community-based respondents, verification of information obtained from zone-based stakeholders
Day 3	Full Day	Information Processing by Evaluation Team & Evaluation Team Meeting	Evaluation team members work individually to process data collected, identifying patterns and gray areas that need further investigation, sharing observations among team members, and discussing problems for the team

Day 4	First Half	Community Interviews & FGDs	Additional data collection from community-based respondents to clarify gray areas identified in preliminary analysis
	Second Half	Community Interviews & FGDs, Zone-based Stakeholder Interviews, Zonal Debriefing (Evaluation Team Leader)	Additional data collection as necessary from program staff, community-based respondents, or zonal-based stakeholders, and verification with program staff of the major patterns observed (zonal debriefing)

Day 1: First Half with Implementing Staff. The evaluation team’s first meeting in a zone is with the program staff who are based there, including as many staff as possible without causing undue logistical strain on the program. The purpose of this meeting is to understand similarities and differences in implementation among different zones, to identify major challenges and opportunities in the zone, and to interview program staff based in the zone. The agenda for this meeting usually includes:

1. Introductions of all attendees and an explanation of the purpose and objectives of the evaluation by the evaluation team leader
2. Review of the schedule for activities in the district including the meetings that have been scheduled with zone-based stakeholders
3. Separate meetings between individual evaluation team members and implementing staff by sector
4. A reconvening of the full group to discuss the unique features of and challenges for the activity in the zone.

In explaining the purpose of the evaluation after the introductions, the evaluation team leader should emphasize the key as discussed previously in the section describing the program orientation that the 1) the product of the evaluation is for the activity, 2) the objective is to support the activity with realistic, actionable recommendations that can improve the activity, which would be evident after the final evaluation, and 3) the evaluation team must see both problems and opportunities in the activity to generate the most useful recommendations. The team leader should also provide a quick overview of the overall evaluation schedule, noting that a key event in the process is the Verification Workshop and that select members of implementing staff will be invited to participate.

After the introductions, the evaluation team and program staff will review the schedule for the zone and discuss the arrangements for community visits and for the meetings with zone-based stakeholders. This discussion is held at this stage, shortly after the team has arrived, in case the schedule needs to be adjusted or to allow time for implementing staff to arrange interviews with additional respondents who were not initially identified at either the community or zone levels. There needs to be some flexibility in the zone-level scheduling, especially early in the process, usually with the first zone visited, as evaluation team members may realize that they omitted some critical respondents and need to adjust the schedule to add time for those interviews.

Once the zone schedule has been reviewed, the group should break up into individuals or small groups for evaluation team members to begin interviewing staff. It is not necessary to schedule specific interviews beforehand. Decisions can be made at the meeting on who will interview whom. If there are key staff who are not attending the meeting, time can be used later in the zone visit on either the team processing day or the last half day to hold these interviews. The whole group should agree on a time window for conducting these initial staff interviews, leaving enough time at the end of the half day period for the group to reconvene for a half hour to discuss the unique features of the zone and challenges for the activity. There will always be complaints⁸ that there is not enough time for these interviews, but there will be opportunities for follow-up discussions with implementing staff, as at least some will be accompanying the evaluation team to the field for community visits. The evaluator and staff member can talk during travel or during down time in the community while waiting for respondents to assemble.

The discussion on the activity's unique features and specific challenges is held at the end of the meeting because experience has shown that when it is scheduled earlier, it tends to consume more time than it should at the expense of other agenda items. The evaluation team leader should speak directly with each zonal activity coordinator about preparing a presentation to focus on these two topics usually, but not always, with presentation software, that can be given in less than 15 minutes. The evaluation team leader should stress that the evaluation team will have reviewed background documentation and have an understanding of activity achievements to pre-empt a lengthy discussion of this in the zone presentation. The zonal coordinator can prepare a handout showing quantitative achievements, but those will not be discussed in this meeting.

Day 1: Second Half with Communities. The second half of the first day in a zone is allocated for the first set of visits to communities for data collection. Usually all evaluation team members participate in these first field visits. Occasionally, however, an evaluation team may have someone dedicated to investigating implementing systems, in which case this person must interview a wider range of implementing staff, including the zonal coordinator, M&E staff, and administrative support staff responsible for logistics, procurement, finance, commodity management, and human resources. Because the evaluation team will already likely be in the zonal activity office in the morning, this person can stay behind in the afternoon to continue interviewing staff. To understand field perspectives on implementing systems, however, she or he must visit communities later in the zonal schedule.

This first set of community-level visits tests the logistical arrangements that have been made for the evaluation, and the evaluation team leader should monitor how well these are working and follow up on any problems that may have arisen with drivers, vehicles, getting evaluators and their translators to be prompt with departures, or getting implementing staff to serve their proper function, e.g., arranging respondents for interviews and FGDs, not influencing interviews or discussions but being available for consultations afterward, etc.

Day 2: First Half with Zone-based Stakeholders. The first half of the second day in a zone is allocated for interviews with zone-based stakeholders including government staff, private sector representatives, or activity partners based in the zone. This is scheduled in the morning, when

⁸ Throughout the evaluation process, there are often complaints that there is not enough time, for example, for meetings in the capital, for zonal field visits, for preparing for the Verification Workshop, or for the Verification Workshop itself, but it is just extremely difficult to expand the time window for the evaluation.

respondents are more likely to be available. It is also scheduled after at least one set of community field visits have been held and before the final set of community field visits are scheduled. Having these interviews after the first set of community visits provides evaluation team members with some firsthand observations that they can discuss with the zone-based stakeholders. Subsequent community field visits will then provide an opportunity to investigate any information that has come up in the stakeholder interviews. Usually implementing staff will facilitate introductions to these stakeholders, but after that they should step out and allow the evaluator to discuss the activity with the stakeholder. As with any qualitative data collection, evaluators need to judge the quality of the responses received.

Day 2: Second Half with Communities. The second half of the second day in a zone is allocated for the second set of visits to communities for data collection.

Day 3: Data Analysis. On day 3, there are normally no field visits or interviews scheduled. The evaluation team will spend this time processing the data they have obtained so far in the zone. Working individually, they will expand their notes, begin documenting emerging patterns, and identify gray areas that require further investigation. Sometimes the interviews and discussions that have been conducted will lead to the identification of additional types of participants, and the evaluation team member will work with implementing staff to try to arrange to interview these respondents either on this day or day 4. The evaluation team leader should schedule a one- to two-hour (depending on the team size) team meeting at some point in the day to share observations and patterns that seem to be emerging and discuss any logistical problems encountered. Some guidelines on qualitative research advise having meetings like this every day, but experience has shown that trying to schedule time for this at the end of a long day of intensive interviews and discussions is not very productive and tends to drain the energy of evaluation team members, a risk for an evaluation that has a long period of data collection. A single meeting in each zone held at time when the evaluation team has a reasonable energy level has been shown to be more effective.

Day 4: First Half with Communities. The first half of the fourth day in a zone is allocated for additional visits to communities for data collection. In some cases, a community may have been included in the sample that requires extensive travel, and the members of the evaluation team visiting this community may require the full day to conduct their data collection.

Day 4: Second Half for Additional Data Collection and Zone Debriefing. On this last half day, additional data collection will be conducted with community respondents, implementing staff, or zone-based stakeholders, depending on the needs of individual evaluation team members. Near the end of the afternoon, the evaluation team leader and any team members available will meet with the zonal activity coordinator and available implementing staff for a one hour debriefing on the evaluation visit. The evaluation team will not have drawn any specific conclusions yet, as data collection and processing is still ongoing. However, some patterns will likely have emerged from the data collection so far in the zone, and the evaluation team leader will present these as preliminary thoughts to implementing staff in the zone for discussion. Before the debriefing, the team leader should consult with team members about these patterns or any other topics to discuss. Because not all evaluation team members will likely attend this meeting, someone—either an evaluation team member or an activity staff member—should be designated to take notes that can be shared with those who were unable to attend.

K. Preliminary Data Processing and Preparation for the Verification Workshop

An evaluation team analyzes the data they collect at multiple points during the evaluation process to identify problems or opportunities that the evaluation recommendations can address. As the evaluation team members hold interviews and FGDs, they will probe and explore topics in more depth with respondents to ensure clear understanding. This represents the first level of analysis.

A second level of analysis occurs when an evaluator cross-references responses from interviews and discussions with existing databases and other secondary sources of information. Examples of the latter include the Indicator Performance Tracking Table, monitoring data for savings and lending groups, growth monitoring and promotion statistics from community-based health centers, commodity distribution records, statistics on the performance of marketing groups, information on food for assets construction projects, and so on. The evaluator will also query implementing staff for clarifications on information after field visits. Based on this analysis, each evaluator will formulate his/her own key observations relative to the assigned topics.

A third level of analysis occurs when evaluation team members share and discuss information. This occurs at the evaluation team meeting scheduled for each zone, through the sharing of observations among team members over the course of data collection, and in discussions immediately before the Verification Workshop, when the evaluation team is processing information individually and sharing information with other team members. The advantage of qualitative methods is that they allow for real-time analysis of the information. As individual team members receive information from other team members that they may not have had a chance to discuss with respondents, they will have the opportunity to do so when they go again to conduct interviews/discussions.

Analysis Suggestions

In analyzing data, a useful practice is to set up the format for the PowerPoint presentations that the evaluator will use in the Verification Workshop as a platform to document your data and findings. As ideas emerge on key observations and preliminary recommendations from discussions with other members, field work interviews, discussions and observations, and the review of field notes and recordings on the analysis day, these can be inserted into the presentation and expanded on as the analysis continues.

Occasionally, evaluation team members are asked to write up their field notes and submit them to the contracting entity for the evaluation. This can take an extraordinary amount of time, and the notes generally do not get used for anything after they have been submitted. Contractors say that they need the evidence to support the evaluation conclusions, and evaluators perceive this as mostly a check on whether or not they are doing good work. In fact, the quality of their work will be evident in the quality of the recommendations produced.

A fourth level of analysis occurs in the Verification Workshop, where evaluators present preliminary observations and findings to program implementation staff. If implementing staff seriously question a particular observation, this can be further discussed and analyzed in the workshop and afterwards to better understand the situation.

Finally, a fifth level of analysis occurs after the evaluation team has dispersed and begun assembling the content that will go into the draft report. Team members will have the opportunity to analyze the information that has been gathered in more depth as they are writing.

1. Data analysis and formulation of recommendations. At the end of the period in which the evaluation team conducts zonal visits, a three- to four-day period is set aside for the evaluation team to continue processing data and to prepare for the Verification Workshop. In the Verification Workshop, the evaluation team will present initial observations and preliminary recommendations emerging from the analysis to implementing staff to ensure that the observations reflect reality and discuss the recommendations. Further detail on this process is described in the section below for the Verification Workshop.

In this analysis period before the workshop, the evaluation team will continue analyzing information to distill major observations and recommendations that they will present for discussion at the Verification Workshop. Evaluation team member will use this time to finalize their PowerPoint presentation(s) for the workshop. The work space for the evaluation team during this period should be reasonably close to the activity's management office so that team members can consult with activity staff as they conduct the analysis. Ideally, it is also close to the venue for the Verification Workshop to save on travel time.

During the first half of this period, evaluation team members work individually on their processing. Next, a half day or full day meeting, depending on the size of the evaluation team, is held to share preliminary recommendations. The purposes of this meeting are to 1) refine recommendations based on suggestions from other team members, 2) eliminate duplication of recommendations, 3) resolve tensions between recommendations when two team members propose recommendations that may be contradictory, and 4) identify needs for further discussion on recommendations that are related.

It is important keep the presentations and discussion only to the recommendations, as there simply will not be enough time to discuss observations. After the team meeting, evaluation team members continue refining their observations and recommendations, seeking out additional information if necessary, and holding short meetings with other team members to discuss coordinating related recommendations.

2. Characteristics of good recommendations. Evaluators should consider the following when formulating their recommendations:

First, the recommendation should be designed to increase the effectiveness of a program. A recommendation in the spirit of "keep doing what you are already doing" without offering specifics about what is going well will not be useful for the activity.

Second, the recommendation should be achievable in the time remaining in the life of the activity and with the resources that are available. A recommendation that proposes a major, expensive overhaul of an activity may sound good on paper but will be worthless if the activity lacks the time, capacity, or finances to implement it.

Third, because an activity will likely have already fully allocated its budget to planned interventions, a recommendation that requires investment of activity funds must include suggestions about where these funds should come from, i.e., which other interventions should be reduced or eliminated to release funding for the new recommendation.

3. PowerPoint presentations. The PowerPoint presentations that are being prepared for the Verification Workshop are the key product at this particular point in the evaluation process, but they will continue to be critical for the remainder of the process.

The PowerPoint presentations that the evaluation team members prepare for the Verification Workshop will inform the final product of the evaluation, which is the report of prioritized recommendations. After the workshop, each team member will update the presentation based on discussions and send the updated presentation to the evaluation team leader. Evaluation team members will present all recommendations that are being considered in the Verification Workshop, and then these will be winnowed to a small set of prioritized recommendations. Once these prioritized recommendations have been identified, all relevant slides will be culled and consolidated into a single presentation that will be used in the stakeholder debriefing.

This presentation will be further refined based on discussions at the stakeholder debriefing, and a condensed version of the presentation to fit in the time available will be prepared for the USAID Mission debriefing. The final report is structured around the prioritized list of recommendations. Evaluation team members will write their assigned sections, drawing mostly on information from the slides they prepared for their updated Verification Workshop presentations.

L. Verification Workshop

The Verification Workshop is one of the most important steps in the evaluation process. In this two- to three-day workshop, the evaluation team will share major observations and the preliminary recommendations resulting from the evaluation investigations up to this point with implementing staff to ensure that the observations reflect reality and the recommendations are appropriate and feasible.

Two major outputs are targeted for the workshop: 1) agreement on the validity of the key observations assembled so far from the evaluation, and 2) refinement of the recommendations being considered for the remaining life of the program. At the end of the workshop, workshop participants provide additional information to facilitate the prioritization of recommendations, as described in more detail in the section below.

I. Participants. Verification Workshops tend to be large, usually at least 35 participants but more often closer to 50. Participants in this workshop should be limited to the evaluation team, some translators, and the implementing staff for the activity. The workshop is not a debriefing on a final product by the evaluation team, but rather another opportunity for the evaluation team to further gather and analyze information. The evaluation team will be presenting initial observations and a broad range of preliminary recommendations. The workshop will be used to verify that the observations are accurate and to further refine the recommendations.

Other stakeholders, such as observers and other representatives of the implementing partner or the donor, are not included to ensure that discussions between the evaluation team and implementing staff are as frank and transparent as possible. Also, if other participants are present in the workshop, time is often lost explaining observations, or they may introduce their own observations and recommendations. Some of these may be valid, and these stakeholders will have an opportunity later during the Stakeholder Debriefing to provide this input; however, the focus at this point in the evaluation process is for the evaluation team to further refine the product that is emerging.

In selecting who from the implementing staff should participate in the Verification Workshop, it is most important to have participants who will have good contributions to make, i.e., the staff with good knowledge and ideas and the personalities to be able to make their points in a

workshop context. Language is also a constraint because the time will not allow for extensive translation. There will always be representation parameters that need to be met on participation (for example, every partner in the activity should be represented), but partners should be advised to fill their slots with their best doers and thinkers.

2. Preparation. Each evaluation team member will have sessions in the workshop for each of their assigned topics in which they will present key observations and associated recommendations. There is no prioritization of recommendations at this point in the process, and evaluation team members should present all of the recommendations that they are considering. While the final report for the evaluation will contain a short list of prioritized recommendations—usually between 15 and 25—the total number of recommendations presented and discussed during the Verification Workshop is often between 50 and 100.

3. Facilitation and note-taking. The evaluation team leader and/or other evaluation team members with the requisite skills facilitate the workshop. In planning the workshop, the evaluation team can decide who will facilitate which session. As mentioned earlier, there is always pressure to reduce the time for the evaluation. If the time available for analysis and workshop preparation has been reduced to the point that evaluation team members need to use time during the workshop to prepare their presentations, then an outside facilitator for the workshop should be identified. For each session, a team member who is not presenting must be designated to take notes for the presenter on the discussion in the session.

4. Setting the tone. It is critical to set the proper tone for the workshop in the first session. The evaluation team leader should provide a clear presentation on the purpose, objectives, and flow for the workshop, and should emphasize that the doors are closed with only the evaluation team and implementing staff in the room.

The information that the evaluation team will present is preliminary, and it is important to emphasize to implementing staff that they should not hesitate to speak up if something inaccurate is presented or if a recommendation being considered is infeasible given the time or resources available for the activity. Similarly, if recommendations are presented that the activity is already doing or planning to do, participants should note this as well.

For stimulating discussion, evaluation team members should avoid editing information to be diplomatic. There is value in presenting seemingly harsh recommendations as long as they are supported by observations. If participants accept the observations and recommendations, then the observations are likely to be true and the recommendations are worth considering. On the other hand, if there is significant push back by workshop participants on observations or recommendations, then the evaluation team may need to do more work to get at the reality. The idea is to “shake the tree” in the workshop to see what falls out.

5. Workshop flow. An illustrative Verification Workshop Plan showing the various sessions in the flow of the workshop is provided in Annex E. The workshop plan provides an estimate of the time allocated for each session so that presenters can prepare presentations to fit the time, allowing significant time for discussion in the session. The facilitators need to manage the time, allowing some sessions to exceed the time allotment if the discussion is productive and cutting off the discussions that are no longer useful. The evaluation team should meet at the end of each day to discuss any changes in sessions or timing that are necessary for the following day.

6. Outputs summary slides. In the first session after the introductions in the workshop, a single slide is presented showing the activity goal and purposes with the outputs under each purpose shown in white colored slides. The purpose for this slide is twofold: to roughly show the activity logic, and for the evaluation team to use later for reference when presenting their opinions to implementing staff on how well the program seems to be moving toward achieving the intended outcomes.

A session near the end of the workshop will describe observations/recommendations around the theory of change, targeting, and projected outcomes. The last two slides of this presentation are devoted to one slide, explaining that, while it is too early to really assess how well the activity is going to achieve sustainable outcomes, the evaluation team nonetheless can offer insight on how well the program seems to be moving to this end. The final slide presents the earlier slide on activity strategy showing outputs but with the output boxes now color-coded in green (likely to achieve intended outcomes with significant numbers of people), yellow (needs attention but with some adjustments could achieve the intended outcomes), or red (not likely to achieve intended outcomes without significant changes). This session always results in lively debate, but it is important for the evaluation team to reinforce ideas on what the program is doing well or not well, and the evaluation team's opinion is usually appreciated.

7. Obtaining additional information in the workshop. In addition to capturing the most important points made in each session, the evaluation team will use a number of other opportunities to gather additional information from workshop participants. In the first introduction session in the workshop, participants will be asked to write down a short answer to a question like that shown below:

If you had the power to change anything in the activity to enable it to have greater impact or to use resources more efficiently, what one thing would you change?

As participants introduce themselves, they will hand their answer to an evaluation team member and not present or discuss it. The evaluation team will review and summarize these answers to ensure that recommendations have considered the areas identified.

In workshop settings, not everyone gets a chance to express their ideas. Therefore, at the end of each session in the workshop, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express. These will be gathered before the next session begins and given to the presenting evaluation team member to consider.

8. Obtaining information from participants for prioritization. In the last session of the workshop before the participants disperse, they should be asked to respond to the following question:

In your opinion, which three recommendations are most important? Why? Which three recommendations are least important? Why? What additional recommendations would you suggest be considered by the evaluation team?

To facilitate this session, the recommendations that evaluation team members have presented should be written and posted somewhere in the room for easy reference. To facilitate processing the information, different colored note cards can be provided to distinguish between high priority, low priority, and new recommendations to consider.

9. Identification of "gray areas." At various times in the workshop, an evaluation team member and workshop participants may disagree on an evaluation observation that has been presented. In addition, workshop participants may have introduced information that the evaluation team needs to consider in formulating recommendations. For lack of a better term, these are called "gray areas," and a parking bay (sheet of flipchart paper) is posted to capture these topics when they arise in the workshop. If the disagreement on an observation cannot be resolved in the workshop, then it is written in the parking bay along with the information sources that can help to clarify the observation. Similarly, new topics raised by participants will also be posted in the parking bay with the relevant information sources. In the last session of the workshop, the topics in the parking bay are reviewed and arrangements made for the evaluation team member to interview or review the sources of information identified.

M. Post-Workshop Processing

Following the Verification Workshop, a period of two to three days should be allocated for post-workshop processing. Specifically, the following tasks will be undertaken:

1. Revision of PowerPoint presentations. Immediately after the workshop, evaluation team members will further process their PowerPoint presentations to reflect the discussions held in the workshop and prepare them for presentations at the Stakeholder Debriefing and the USAID Mission Debriefing. They should send these updated presentations to the evaluation team leader.

2. Additional data collection. Individual evaluation team members should investigate the "gray areas" identified in the workshop and conduct any additional follow-up or delayed interviews at this time. If the follow-up data collection results in changes in the observations or recommendations, they should add them to the updated PowerPoint for that topic and send to the revised PowerPoint to the evaluation team leader, who will review the modified recommendations for consistency.

3. Prioritization of recommendations and identification of themes. The evaluation team should collate the responses from participants in the workshop's last session in which they noted high priority, low priority, and new recommendations. The evaluation team should review participants suggested new recommendations to see whether they merit consideration. They can do this when the team meets later to prioritize recommendations and identify themes as described below.

Shortly after the completion of the workshop, the evaluation team leader should meet with the CoP and sector/purpose leads for the activity to discuss the activity management team's perspective on the prioritization of recommendations. Including sector leads or core management team allows the CoP to agree to prioritizations with "sound advice" from people who are responsible for making sure the different components are moving well and can connect the dots more easily. The evaluation team leader typically will have assembled a full list of the recommendations made in the workshop in preparation for this meeting, and the CoP and core management will be asked to go through the list to identify those recommendations they consider most likely to be implementable in the time remaining with the resources available and to significantly improve the effectiveness of the program. The CoP and core management should also identify recommendations that the activity is already implementing. An easy way to gather this input is to give the CoP and his/her team some time to go through the

recommendations and indicate "high priority," "moderate priority," "low priority—already being implemented," or "low priority — infeasible or not likely to have impact" for each recommendation.

After the CoP and core management team input has been gathered, the evaluation team should prioritize recommendations and identify themes. The first step is to obtain individual evaluation team member input into the prioritization. This is usually done by having each team member select the 10 most important, high priority recommendations from among all of those presented in the workshop. The results of this voting should be tabulated.

From the three sources of prioritized information, i.e., workshop participants, activity management, and the evaluation team members, the evaluation team should identify the most frequently mentioned recommendations. This is not always a simple process, as the three sources may have different priorities and may have vested interests in either voting or not voting for a good recommendation. Because the evaluation team is an objective observer, the views of the evaluation team should be given the most weight. A recommendation that has been prioritized by only one source should generally not be included in the list of prioritized recommendations.

The goal of this exercise is to narrow the list of recommendations made in the Verification Workshop to between 15 and 25 high priority recommendations. Once the evaluation team has achieved that, the next step is to cluster these into themes to facilitate implementation of the type of change that the evaluation team is seeking to improve activity effectiveness. The identification of themes allows the activity to address the full problem reflected in the recommendations and to consider additional actions to address the theme. Usually, four or five themes are sufficient to encompass the priority recommendations. The following themes have been identified in recent evaluations.

- Reducing Program Scope and Scale
- Thinking Strategically
- Ensuring Program Quality
- Improving Program Quality in Key Areas
- Producing More Life-Changing Outcomes
- Focusing on Adolescents and Youth
- Sustaining Outcomes
- Addressing Governance
- Improving Collaborative Learning and Action for Adaptive Management
- Upgrading Monitoring and Evaluation Systems
- Facilitating Better Cross-Purpose Integration
- Using Food Strategically
- Improving Implementation Quality
- Improving Planning and Budgeting
- Revising the Organizational Structure
- Addressing Major Staffing Issues
- Refining Implementation Systems

4. Preparation for the stakeholder debriefing. The last task in this period is to prepare the PowerPoint presentation for the Stakeholder Debriefing. The presentation for this debriefing should include the following information.

Background Information. There should be a single slide showing the purpose of the debriefing, a single slide providing an overview of the evaluation process, and a single slide showing the evaluation team members with their assigned topics in the evaluation.

Program History, Operating Context, and Summary of Program Progress. This section begins with slides showing the activity history and major constraints to implementation. A single slide illustrating the goal, intermediate results, and outputs under each should be displayed to provide an overview of the program's strategy. In this slide, the outputs should be shown in white boxes. The same slide will be shown at the end of the presentation with color codes indicating the evaluation team's assessment of the likely outcomes that each output will generate, as discussed below. Activity progress highlighting significant achievements should be briefly summarized. The evaluation team leader should obtain content for these slides from evaluation team members.

Major Themes and Priority Recommendations. In this section of the presentation, the major themes that have been identified along with the recommendations under each are presented. For each theme, a short description of the theme is provided. Each recommendation under the theme should be explained with two slides: one showing observations that led to the recommendation, and the other presenting the recommendation. Given the limited time available for the presentation, the information needs to be clear and concise.

Projected Program Outcomes. As in the Verification Workshop, two slides in the stakeholder debriefing presentation are devoted to explaining the color codes, and then showing the activity strategy and outputs but with color-coded output boxes in green, yellow or red (see the section on outputs summary slides). The Stakeholder Debriefing will be the last event at which these slides are presented, as by this point they will have met their purpose of sharing information with the program and key stakeholders on what is working well and what needs attention.

N. Stakeholder Debriefing

The Stakeholder Debriefing is another structured opportunity to obtain feedback from a different level of respondents on the set of prioritized recommendations for the remaining life of the activity. This debriefing is usually scheduled to last a half day, and participants include the leadership from the country office of the implementing partner, the leadership from the activity partners, and representatives from other stakeholders, such as government agencies or technical partners. Up until recently, donor representatives were not invited to this debriefing because a separate debriefing is scheduled with the USAID Mission the day after the Stakeholder Debriefing. Experience has shown, however, that the USAID Mission debriefings are usually limited to two hours or less, which does not allow much time for discussion on observations and recommendations. There are some USAID Mission representatives, however, who have responsibilities for directly monitoring and supporting the activity and would benefit from, and add value to, discussions on observations and the resulting recommendations. These USAID Mission representatives who have direct responsibilities for the activity are invited to attend the Stakeholder Debriefing.

The presentation that has been prepared as described in the previous section will be made, and presenters should note in the opening session that this debriefing will encapsulate highlights of evaluation findings and recommendations. The final report will contain much more detail on the prioritized recommendations, and an annex in the report will describe additional recommendations that are relevant but did not make the prioritized list.

In this debriefing, different evaluation team members will present their areas of investigation as relevant. Other members of the team should be designated to take notes on the discussion. A short evaluation team meeting is held after the debriefing to discuss key points raised and the implications for the product. Any necessary changes are made to the Stakeholder Debriefing presentation, and the team leader pares this presentation down to fit in the time scheduled for the USAID Mission debriefing.

Reviewing the Notes from the USAID Mission Orientation Meeting

After first arriving in-country, an initial orientation meeting was held with the USAID Mission (see page 24). The notes from this meeting should be reviewed before the stakeholder debriefing to determine how the evaluation has covered the points raised by the USAID Mission. Since the representatives of the mission who likely raised these issues will be at either the stakeholder debriefing or the USAID Mission debriefing, the evaluation team should be prepared to explain how the issues have been addressed if questions are raised.

O. USAID Mission Debriefing

Unlike the stakeholder debriefing which allows time for discussion, the USAID Mission Debriefing is more akin to a presentation of the product to the Mission. At least 90 minutes should be allocated, though the debriefing should never exceed two hours. Given the time limitation, there will not be much opportunity for extensive discussion, so the presentation needs to be clear and concise to fit within the time available. To save time, the evaluation team leader will make the whole presentation, deferring to evaluation team members when questions arise. The participants include all members of the evaluation team, a representative of the senior leadership of the country office (usually a country director or country representative), and the activity's CoP. The USAID Mission decides who will attend from their side, usually one or more department heads, sometimes the Mission Director or Deputy Director, and on very rare occasions, the U.S. Ambassador.

V. EVALUATION PROCESS PHASE 3: RECOMMENDATIONS FINALIZATION

A. Definition of the Recommendations Finalization Period: Team Dispersion to Final Report

This last phase of a formative process evaluation covers the period from the time that the evaluation team disperses after the USAID Mission Debriefing to the time the final report is submitted. If the evaluation process has been effective up to this point resulting in a prioritized list of recommendations with supporting observations, the work during this phase involves mainly writing up the product, fleshing out observations with more detail, and refining recommendation statements. The following sections describe key activities during this phase.

B. Report Format

When deciding on final format for deliverables, focus on what the activity can use and apply toward improvement. An illustrative report format is provided in Annex F; or see the USAID evaluation report template on Learning Lab [here](#). The report is usually prepared in two volumes: a summary report and a methodology report. The summary report of around 30 pages contains the following.

- An abstract
- A short executive summary (usually no more than two pages)—if possible translated into the local working language(s).
- The evaluation purpose and questions.
- Background information (usually around two pages) that provides an overview of the activity being evaluated, contextual factors that have affected implementation positively or negatively, and a brief description of the evaluation methodology (a more detailed description of the methodology is included in the second volume).
- A summary of activity progress (usually around 10 pages) describing key processes and achievements under each purpose, the cross-cutting themes, targeting and theory of change, and implementing systems.
- A description of the key themes (one paragraph) that the evaluation has identified with the recommendations under each theme. Each recommendation be explained with a clear statement and include the key observations supporting the recommendation and suggestions for operationalizing the recommendation. This should be no more than one page.
- A description of what are termed higher-level observations that emerged from the evaluation, usually no more than a half page per observation. These are critical constraints that are affecting the activity but are beyond the control of the activity. They can include topics that may be of interest to BHA programming, for example, the effect of U.S. government regulations on activity implementation; topics that may be of interest to the USAID Mission, for example, local policies affecting activity implementation; or topics that are relevant for the implementing partner, for example, finding a balance in local partner relations to produce results while also building local capacities.
- Short concluding remarks, mainly to highlight the major themes, but also to encourage the activity management team and staff.
- Annexes including:
 - A list of the prioritized recommendations (to provide a complete list of the recommendations for the activity management team to pull out as necessary).
 - A list of other recommendations generated by the evaluation that have value but did not make the prioritized list (each has a description of the observations that led to the recommendation, a statement of the recommendation, and suggestions for how to operationalize the recommendation).

- A financial summary table which shows cost centers and expenditures for each against different budget sources. The burn rate for the activity is shown in the last line. The evaluation team member investigating financial management systems can request information for this table from the activity’s financial manager at the time he/she is interviewed.
- A discussion of how sites were selected for inclusion in the evaluation.
- Signed disclosures of conflict of interest from the evaluation team members.
- Summary information about evaluation team members, including qualifications, experience, and role on the team.

The second volume of the report is a methodology report that contains the initial SoW, the final updated version of the evaluation plan, and the list of persons interviewed and sites visited for data collection in the evaluation. This last component of the methodology report has undergone changes in recent years due to the rising sensitivity toward informant confidentiality. It is important for the methodology to show who was interviewed during the evaluation and how many people total were consulted, but names are no longer shown in this list. For key informants, only the position is indicated. For FGDs, the number of participants in the discussion disaggregated by sex is listed. To be able to compile this list for the report, the evaluation team leader should provide a format in the first evaluation team meeting for all members to use. The methodology report should also include the data collection and analysis tools and a statement of limitations.

C. First Draft Report

The first draft of the report only includes the Summary Report with its annexes. The activity management team, implementing staff, and staff supporting the activity from the implementing partner's country office and headquarters review this draft.

1. Writing assignments. The evaluation team leader should establish writing assignments and page targets for different sections of the report early, even as early as the first meeting of the evaluation team after the team has assembled in-country, but certainly no later than when the data collection in the field has been completed and the evaluation team convenes to analyze information and prepare for the Verification Workshop.

2. Setting a target date for the first draft. After the USAID Debriefing, a final short evaluation team meeting should be held, mainly to discuss the next steps toward producing the evaluation report. Based on the target dates that have already been set in the overall schedule for producing the first draft of the report, the reviewable draft, and the final report, the evaluation team will agree on a target date for team members to send their content for the first draft to the evaluation team leader. Usually three to four weeks are allowed from the time the evaluation team disperses to the time the first draft report is circulated.

3. First draft reviewers. As mentioned, the first draft of the Summary Report is primarily for the activity and the implementing partner to review. The draft will also be shared, of course, with the evaluation team members. In some cases, the evaluation team leader may have had to change some of the content received from an evaluation team member, and she/he will discuss this remotely with the evaluation team member affected before the first draft is distributed for review.

D. Reviewable Draft Report

BHA reviews the reviewable draft, which includes both volumes of the report, and usually shares the draft with the USAID Mission. This draft incorporates feedback from the activity and the implementing partner on the first draft. The evaluation team leader is responsible for revising the first draft but will call on the team for support in addressing critical feedback. Usually 10 days to two weeks are allowed for the team to provide feedback and the team leader to incorporate this into a reviewable draft. The reviewable draft is sent to the implementing agency who will submit it to BHA for comment.

E. Debriefing at BHA HQ

The evaluation schedule will usually include a debriefing in Washington, D.C. on the evaluation with U.S.-based stakeholders from BHA and the implementing partner to obtain their feedback for the final report. This debriefing is scheduled after the reviewable draft has been sent out and before the final report is due. Attendees include BHA staff responsible for the activity and anyone else who is interested from BHA. From the implementing partner side, the HQ-based staff responsible for the activity attend as well as anyone who is interested. Someone from the implementing partner will usually take notes at the meeting. The evaluation team leader will give the presentation, but any other evaluation team members who are available can attend.

F. Final Report

The final report for the evaluation incorporates both the written feedback from BHA on the reviewable draft of the report as well as feedback from the BHA debriefing. The evaluation team leader will revise the report and submit it to the implementing partner for submission to BHA. If additional comments are received after the final draft has been submitted, then a revised final report can be prepared.

BHA should develop a post-evaluation action plan upon creation of an evaluation with a designated point of contact who will be overseeing implementation of the action plan.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A:

SCOPE OF WORK

LOGOS

MID TERM EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK OR STATEMENT OF WORK

Implementing Agency/Country

Program Name

Program ID

Date

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2. Logical Framework

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3. Theory of Change

Figure 1: Summary of the Theory of Change

4. Program Coverage and Context

Figure 2: Map of Program Geographical Coverage

Table 2: Targeted Beneficiaries and Total Population by Geographic Zone

5. Key Activities

Purpose 1: _____

Purpose 2: _____

Purpose 3: _____

Purpose 4: _____

6. Program Partners and Management Structure

B. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

1. Evaluation Purpose

2. Specific Objectives and Key Questions

3. Evaluation Methodology

4. Deliverables

5. Illustrative Timeline

Table 3: Evaluation Calendar

6. Evaluation Team Composition, Roles and Responsibilities

7. Program Responsibilities for Supporting the Evaluation

ANNEX B: FORMAT FOR AN EVALUATION PLAN

LOGOS

Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the _____ Program

USAID-funded Title II Resilience Food Security Activity in _____ led by

Award Number: _____

MTE EVALUATION PLAN

First Draft Date Submitted

Reviewable Draft Date Submitted

Working Draft Date Finalized

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Annex E: List of Sites Selected for Data Collection

TABLES AND FIGURES

No table of contents entries found.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Evaluation Plan for the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Resilience Food Security Activity Implementing Agency

I. INTRODUCTION

II. MTE PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

A. Purpose

The MTE is a formative process evaluation intended to review the progress of the program in producing planned outputs, to assess the intended and unintended effects that are appearing as a result of these outputs, and to examine the quality of various processes being used to implement the program to formulate recommendations to be implemented in the remaining life of the program. These recommendations will be oriented around (a) scaling up effective interventions, (b) modifying interventions to improve effectiveness, (c) suspending interventions that are not effective enough relative to investment, (d) piloting new interventions relevant for participants, or (e) improving the effectiveness of implementation systems. The evaluation process will ensure that the recommendations can be reasonably implemented within the time frame remaining and with the resources available to the program. The ultimate purpose of the MTE is to enhance the **effectiveness** of the program in addressing the food/nutrition security and resilience of (describe the program's participants) while making the most **efficient** use of resources available to the program.

B. Specific Objectives

III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Program Overview

Goal

Targeted participants

Implementation period

Program value

Commodities and their use

Overview of lead agency and partners

Table I: Goal, Purposes and Sub-Purposes

GOAL:			
Purpose 1			
Sub-Purpose 1.1:	Sub-Purpose 1.2:	Sub-Purpose 1.3:	Sub-Purpose 1.4:
Purpose 2:			
Sub-Purpose 2.1:	Sub-Purpose 2.2:	Sub-Purpose 2.3:	
Purpose 3:			
Sub-Purpose 3.1:		Sub-Purpose 3.2:	
Purpose 4:			
Sub-Purpose 4.1:		Sub-Purpose 4.2:	

I. Purpose 1: _____

Major Outputs.

Types of Participants. Table X outlines the different types of participants engaged and sites developed under Purpose 1. The MTE will conduct interviews or FGDs with representatives from each of these different types of participants and visit a sample of sites.

Table X: Participants and Sites in the _____

Program under Purpose 1: _____

Type of Participant/Site	Current Total	Membership/Sex		LOA Target
		Female	Male	

2. Purpose 2: _____

Major Outputs.

Types of Participants. Table X outlines the different types of participants engaged and sites developed under Purpose 1. The MTE will conduct interviews or FGDs with representatives from each of these different types of participants and visit a sample of sites.

Table X: Participants and Sites in the _____

Program under Purpose 2: _____

Type of Participant/Site	Current Total	Membership/Sex		LOA Target
		Female	Male	

3. Purpose 3: _____

Major Outputs.

Types of Participants. Table X outlines the different types of participants engaged and sites developed under Purpose 1. The MTE will conduct interviews or FGDs with representatives from each of these different types of participants and visit a sample of sites.

Table X: Participants and Sites in the _____

Program under Purpose 3: _____

Type of Participant/Site	Current Total	Membership/Sex		LOA Target
		Female	Male	

4. Purpose 4: _____

Major Outputs.

Types of Participants. Table X outlines the different types of participants engaged and sites developed under Purpose I. The MTE will conduct interviews or FGDs with representatives from each of these different types of participants and visit a sample of sites.

Table X: Participants and Sites in the _____

Program under Purpose 4: _____

Type of Participant/Site	Current Total	Membership/Sex		LOA Target
		Female	Male	

6. Cross-Cutting Themes.

7. Partner Roles and Responsibilities.

Table 2: Consortium Partners for the _____ Program

ORGANIZATION	LEAD AGENCY	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES	TECHNICAL QUALITY COORDINATION
(Lead Agency)	Leadership, Representation, Finance, M&E, & Compliance		

Other Technical Partners.

IV. EVALUATION TEAM

The MTE will be implemented by a team of development professionals as described below.

A. Team Members

 (MTE Team Leader). Summary of experience and responsibilities assigned for this evaluation.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

Table X: MTE Team Member Responsibilities

INVESTIGATION TOPIC	TEAM MEMBER
<i>Overall Program Design</i>	
Theory of Change, including risks and assumption	
Targeting of Beneficiaries	
Collective Impact at the Goal Level	
Collective Effect at the Purpose level - P1	
Collective Effect at the Purpose level - P2	
Collective Effect at the Purpose level - P3	
Collective Effect at the Purpose level - P4	
<i>Inputs, implementation, Outputs, Outcomes and Sustainability</i>	
SP 1.1	
SP 1.2	
SP 1.3	
SP 1.4	
SP 2.1	
SP 2.1	
SP 2.3	

SP 3.1	
SP 3.2	
SP 4.1	
SP 4.2.	
SP 5.1	
SP 5.2	
<i>Cross-Cutting Themes</i>	
Gender Equity	
Targeting of Youth	
Governance	
Addressing Sources of Environmental Risk	
Other:	
<i>Implementation Systems and Resource Management</i>	
Management & Partnerships	
Collaborative Learning and Action	
Program Integration	
Coordination and Collaboration	
Financial Management Systems	
Commodity Management Systems	
Human Resource Management Systems	
Materials & Equipment Management Systems	

Table X does not specify sustainability as a specific area of investigation for any one MTE team member. All team members assigned responsibilities for analyzing the outcomes of the program will be responsible for analyzing the sustainability of the outcomes being achieved by the program.

V. INFORMATION SOURCES

A. Objective 1: _____

B. Objective 2: _____

C. Objective 3: _____

D. Objective 4: _____

E. Objective 5: _____

F. Objective 6: _____

VI. EVALUATION PROCESS

A. Phase 1: MTE Preparation (Period)

1. MTE Evaluation Plan.

2. Background Document Review.

3. Data Collection Tools.

4. Site Selection.

5. Key Meetings.

B. Phase 2: Data Collection & Preliminary Analysis (Period)

1. Program Orientation Meeting (Date).

2. Meetings with Program Stakeholders in the Capital (Dates).

3. Field Data Collection, (Dates).

4. Information Processing & Preparation for the Verification Workshop (Dates).

5. Verification Workshop (Dates).

6. Post-Workshop Processing (Dates).

7. Stakeholder Debriefing (Date).

8. USAID Mission Debriefing (Date).

C. Phase 3: Evaluation Recommendations Finalization (Period)

1. Draft Report (Target Date).

2. Debriefing at BHA HQ (Target Window).

3. Final Report (Target Date).

VII. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

A. Composition of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

B. Topical Outlines or Checklists

C. Observation of Program Activities

D. Zone-Level Data Collection

E. Other Data Collection

F. Sampling and Participant Selection

Table XX: Allocation of Sample Sites by Zone

Implementing Partner	Zone	Targeted HH	Percent of Total	Minimum Sample Sites	Percent of Sample
TOTAL					

G. Data Analysis

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULES

The complete schedule for implementing the MTE is provided in Annex A. A preliminary schedule for site visits is also included in Annex A. A more detailed schedule for field visits and stakeholder meetings will be added to the plan after the MTE Team Leader has worked with the program management team to develop the logistical plans.

IX. IMPLEMENTING AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

X. MTE SUMMARY REPORT

An illustrative format for the report is provided in Annex D

ANNEXES

Annex A: Schedules (Overall, Field Work and Zone)

Annex B: Topical Outlines

Annex C: Illustrative Verification Workshop Plan

Annex D: Illustrative MTE Final Report Format

Annex E: Sites Selected

ANNEX C: ILLUSTRATIVE SCHEDULES (OVERALL, FIELD WORK AND ZONE)

Illustrative Overall Schedule

#	Step	Responsible Person (s)	Date(s)	Comments
EVALUATION PREPARATION PHASE				
1	Initial conference call for planning MTE			Initial call to introduce the Team Leader and begin discussions on organizing the MTE
2	Provision of initial background documentation			List of requested background documents sent to CoP by the MTE Team Leader and the drop box fully populated by the CoP
3	Development of First Draft of Evaluation Plan	MTE Team Leader		This incomplete draft is for internal review by the evaluation team and the program management team.
4	Review background documentation and development of draft data collection tools	MTE Team Members		Draft tools sent to the MTE team leader to be reviewed and incorporated in the Evaluation Plan
5	Completion of Reviewable Draft of Evaluation Plan	MTE Team Leader		This draft of the plan will include the description of the methodology, draft tools, and preliminary operational plan for the evaluation for review by BHA and the implementing agency.
6	Completion of Working Draft Evaluation Plan	MTE Team Leader		Draft plan revised, incorporating feedback received and updated with more complete operational plan
7	Categorization of participating communities and unions by criteria specified in the Evaluation Plan	Program CoP		

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS PHASE				
8	Evaluation Team Assembles In-Country	MTE Team Members		Team members coming from outside the country should arrive by (Date)
9	MTE Team meeting	MTE Team Leader		Team members meet face-to-face for the first time to get acquainted and the MTE team leader answers any questions members have on the evaluation process
10	Preliminary selection of field work sites	MTE Team Leader with Program CoP		Field work sites will be selected jointly by MTE Team Leader and the Program as per the Evaluation Plan
11	Orientation meeting with USAID Mission	Country Office		To clarify evaluation process and begin obtaining information. Meeting attended by MTE Team and Program CoP.
12	Program Orientation	CoP & Key Staff		This is an orientation provided by program for the evaluation team to further clarify program activities, stakeholders, best practices, and challenges. The orientation will be followed by interviews with implementation staff conducted by individual MTE Team members.
13	Meetings with program stakeholders in the capital	MTE Team Members		Individual meetings by MTE Team members with implementing partners, technical partners, government stakeholders, private sector stakeholders, and others based in the capital as specified in Evaluation Plan
14	Field visits to zones selected for the MTE	MTE Team Members		Field visits to ____ zones. Four days per zone, with one day devoted to program orientation and zone-based stakeholder interviews, two days for community visits, and one day for data processing by the evaluation team. A more detailed schedule for the field work follows.
15	Information processing and preparation for Verification Workshop	MTE Team Members		Information processing and preparation of PowerPoints for Verification Workshop (note that a draft workshop plan is included in Annex C).
16	Verification Workshop	MTE Team with Program Implementing Staff		Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to program implementers for verification and refinement, identification of "Gray Areas" for further investigation, and information gathering to facilitate recommendation prioritization.

17	Post-workshop processing	MTE Team Members		Revision of PowerPoint presentations, additional data collection, prioritization of recommendations into a shortlist, identification of themes and preparation of Stakeholder Debriefing
18	Stakeholder debriefing	MTE Team Members, Leadership of program partners & other key stakeholders		Half Day workshop with leadership of implementing partners, and technical partners to discuss observations, themes and priority recommendations
19	Post-stakeholder debriefing processing	MTE Team Members		Revision of Stakeholder Debriefing and preparation of USAID Mission Debriefing
20	Debriefing with USAID Mission	MTE Team Leader		A brief presentation (never more than two hours) of the MTE product provided to representatives of the USAID Mission
EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS FINALIZATION PHASE				
21	First Draft report completed	MTE Team Members		MTE Team members continue analysis and development of content for the Evaluation Report and MTE Team Leader consolidates sections into draft report for review by program and implementing agency
22	Reviewable Draft report completed	MTE Team Leader		First Draft report revised based on feedback, complete Reviewable Draft Report developed and submitted by the implementing agency to BHA
22	Debriefing to D.C.-based stakeholders	Implementing Agency HQ & MTE Team Leader		Evaluation final recommendations and findings presented to BHA staff in Washington, D.C.
23	Final Report submitted	MTE Team Leader		Draft incorporates written feedback received on Reviewable Draft and verbal feedback from D.C. debriefing

Illustrative Schedule for Field Visits Across All Zones

(Note that the teams will change each day depending on the site assignments for team members. This schedule shows the same sequence in each zone; but in reality, the sequence will likely be different in each zone depending on when weekends/holidays occur and when certain key informants such as government staff are available)

DATE	MORNING ACTIVITIES	AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES	EVENING ACTIVITIES (if any)
	Travel to First Zone		
	Zone Program Orientation and Staff Interviews	Team A (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____	
		Team B (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____	
	Interviews with Zone-based Stakeholders	Team A: Field visit to _____	
		Team B: Field visit to _____	
	<i>Evaluation Team Data Processing</i>		
	Team A: Field visit to _____	Community field visits for _____ Additional Stakeholder interviews for _____ Additional Staff Interviews for _____	
	Team B: Field visit to _____	MTE team Leader and _____ giving Zone Debriefing	
	Travel to Second Zone		
	Zone Program Orientation and Staff Interviews	Team A (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____	
		Team B (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____	

	Interviews with Zone-based Stakeholders	Team A: Field visit to _____ _____	
		Team B: Field visit to _____ _____	
	<i>Evaluation Team Data Processing</i>		
	Team A: Field visit to _____	Community field visits for _____ Additional Stakeholder interviews for _____ Additional Staff Interviews for _____	
	Team B: Field visit to _____	MTE Team Leader and _____ giving Zone Debriefing	
	Travel to Third Zone		
	Zone Program Orientation and Staff Interviews	Team A (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____ _____	
		Team B (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____ _____	
	Interviews with Zone-based Stakeholders	Team A: Field visit to _____	
		Team B: Field visit to _____	
	<i>Evaluation Team Data Processing</i>		
	Team A: Field visit to _____	Community field visits for _____ Additional Stakeholder interviews for _____ Additional Staff Interviews for _____	
	Team B: Field visit to _____	MTE team Leader and _____ giving Zone Debriefing	

	Travel to Fourth Zone		
	Zone Program Orientation and Staff Interviews	Team A (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____	
		Team B (2-3 Evaluation team members): Field visit to _____	
	Interviews with Zone-based Stakeholders	Team A: Field visit to _____	
		Team B: Field visit to _____	
	<i>Evaluation Team Data Processing</i>		
	Team A: Field visit to _____	Community field visits for _____ Additional Stakeholder interviews for _____ Additional Staff Interviews for _____	
	Team B: Field visit to _____	MTE Team Leader and _____ giving Zone Debriefing	

Illustrative Fieldwork Schedule for a Zone Covering a Period that includes a Sunday

Friday (Date)

MORNING

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Zone Program Office	All Team Members	Zone Program Orientation	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Traveling time:
		Program Staff Interviews to be arranged at the program orientation		

AFTERNOON

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Team 1 (Location)				
_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. <i>Direct Observation of</i> _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. FGDs with _____ 3. FGD with _____		
Team 2 (Location)				
_____ Village		1. FGD with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. Interview with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. FGD with _____ 2. FGD with _____		
Team 3 (Location)				

_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. FGDs with _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. Direct Observation of _____		

Team 4 Zone HQ				
Zone HQ		1. Continue Interviews with program staff/Partners 2. KII with _____ (Zone-Based Stakeholder)	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. Continue Interviews with program staff		

Saturday (Date)

MORNING

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Team 1: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. Observation of _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. KII with _____		

Team 2: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. FGD with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____		
		1. FGD with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. KII with _____ 4. Observation of _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	One Team Member and a translator, Travel time =
Team 3: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. Observation of _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Three Team Members and three translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. KII with _____		
		1. KII with _____ 2. FGD with _____		

AFTERNOON

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Team 1: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. Observation of _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. KII with _____		
Team 2: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. FGD with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Three Team Members and three translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____		
		1. FGD with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. KII with _____ 4. Observation of _____		

Team 3: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. FGD with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. FGD with _____	Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	One Team Member and a translator, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____		Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. FGD with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. KII with _____ 4. Observation of _____		

Sunday (Date)

ALL DAY

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Zone Program Office Evaluation Team Workspace or Hotel	All Team Members	Data Analysis	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Times when driver(s) needed:

Monday (Date)

MORNING

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Zone Headquarters		Schedule to be finalized during the zone program orientation		

AFTERNOON

LOCATION	MTE TEAM MEMBER	ACTIVITY	DRIVER/VEHICLE	COMMENT
Team 1: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. FGDs with _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. FGD with _____ 3. <i>Direct Observation of</i> _____		
Team 2: (Location)				
_____ Village		1. KII with _____ 2. Observation of _____ 3. FGD with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Two Team Members and two translators, Travel time =
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. KII with _____		
Team 3: (Location)				
Zone Headquarters		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. KII with _____	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	One Team Member and a translator
		1. KII with _____ 2. KII with _____ 3. KII with _____		

Team 4: (Location)				
Zone Program Office	(Team Leader)	Stakeholder & Staff Interviews	(Driver Name) (Driver Phone #) (Vehicle #)	Note: Other MTE team members will join exit debriefing near the end of the day
		Exit Debriefing		
		Continue KII with program staff		

ANNEX D: EXAMPLES OF TOPICAL OUTLINES

Sustainability TOPICAL OUTLINE (Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The sustainability of the outcomes being achieved by the _____ Program is an area of investigation that will be covered by each team member who is investigating the outcomes being achieved by the program for specific purposes and sub-purpose. The following questions are intended to guide interviews and discussions around analyzing sustainability when the discussions/interviews reach that point.

1. For the changes that you have described as having been facilitated by the program, how permanent are the changes?
2. What resources are required to sustain the changes? Where do those resources come from now? Where will they come from after the program has ended?
3. What relationships, such as for technical support, inputs, marketing, social capital or political capital, are required to sustain the changes? What role has the program had in developing or facilitating these relationships? After the program ends, how do you think these relationships will change?
4. How happy are beneficiaries and intermediaries with the changes? How motivated will they be to continue to maintain or support the changes?
5. What are the biggest threats to sustaining the changes induced by the program? How can these threats be addressed?

BASIC TOPICAL OUTLINE For Investigations Related To A Purpose Or Cross-Cutting Theme (Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

(This core should appear in the topical outline, but it is usually expanded with more detail by the evaluation team member leading the investigations)

PURPOSE I: _____

Sub-Purposes I.1: _____, **I.2:** _____

& I.3: _____

(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The purpose of the investigations using the following questions is to obtain information to be able to formulate recommendations for the remaining life of the program. These recommendations will be oriented around (a) scaling up effective interventions, (b) modifying interventions to improve effectiveness, (c) suspending interventions that are not effective enough relative to investment, (d) or piloting new interventions relevant for participants. The questions are designed to be able to:

1. Assess the quality of the outputs produced under this purpose
2. Identify the outcomes being generated by these outputs
3. Assess the quality of the approaches used by the program
4. Judge the potential sustainability of the outcomes that have been achieved

Information will be gathered through KIIs, FGDs, or large group discussions with program participants, interviews with program implementation staff and program managers, and observation of program activities and outputs.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED WITH COMMUNITY-LEVEL PARTICIPANTS AND INTERMEDIARIES

The following persons or groups at the community level will be engaged in interviews or FGDs:

(List)

Following are the major activities being undertaken under Sub-Purposes 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3. These will be discussed with participants as relevant for the respondent.

(List)

The general sequencing of questions is as follows:

1. Are you familiar with the _____ Program?
2. How would you describe what this program seeks to accomplish?
3. How have you or other members of your household participated in this program? For how long have you/they been involved?
4. Please describe how you or members of your family have benefited from the program. How sustainable are these benefits?
5. Please describe how you or members of your family have been negatively affected by the program.
6. Who, in your opinion, has benefited most from the program?
7. Are there other people who should be benefiting from the program but are not? Please describe them for us.
8. What constraints do you believe inhibit the program from fully accomplishing its purposes?
9. What suggestions do you have for addressing these constraints or otherwise enabling the program to have greater impact?

TOPICS TO BE COVERED WITH PROGRAM MANAGERS, IMPLEMENTATION STAFF AND INTERMEDIARIES

The following managers, staff, government stakeholders or private sector representatives associated with Purpose I will be interviewed:

(List)

The general sequencing of questions is as follows:

1. Explain your understanding of the strategy for the _____ Program, i.e., how is the program expected to achieve Purpose 1?
2. What are the main activities being implemented (check against the list provided above)?
3. What is working well and why?
4. What is not working well and why? How are the challenges being addressed?
5. Who, in your opinion, has benefited most from the program?
6. Are there other people who should be benefiting from the program but are not? Please describe them for us.
7. What have been the major changes that you have observed with poor or extreme poor households as a result of the program? What is the likelihood that these changes remain after the program ends?
8. Where changes are slow or not evident, what are the obstacles to change?
9. What changes in the way the program is being implemented would make it more effective in achieving its outputs and outcomes?

**Environmental Compliance
TOPICAL OUTLINE
(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)**

The following questions are focused on data collection for the environmental compliance analysis and should be asked of program managers and those staff who are responsible for environmental compliance. In general, we want to inquire on what potential environmental impacts have been identified by the program and how has the program addressed these. Did the program plan well in terms of staffing, budgeting, and monitoring for environmental compliance?

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How has the Initial Environmental Exam been used since it was first developed? Have any environmental compliance conditions been set by BHA based on the Initial Environmental Exam? How has the program dealt with these?
2. Who is responsible for environmental compliance in the program?
3. Has the program developed an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan? What environmental issues have been identified and how is the program addressing these?
4. What other work has been done by the program and/or the local Mission relative to identifying environmental concerns of the program? What issues have been identified? How is the program dealing with these?
5. Is the program working in or near any protected areas? How does the program ensure minimal negative environmental effects?

6. Is the program working with any agricultural chemicals either directly or through intermediaries? Has a Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Plan been completed? How has the program addressed any environmental concerns associated with these agricultural chemicals?

IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEMS

Context & Operating Environment TOPICAL OUTLINE

(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The following topics should be covered in interviews with representatives of program partners, implementation staff, and participants.

1. Since the _____ Program began implementation, what changes have occurred in the operating context (e.g., major events like disasters, slow onset events like climate change, government policy changes, etc.) that have affected program implementation, either positively or negatively?
2. How did these specifically affect implementation? What did the program do to adapt to these changes?
3. How have these changes affected the food insecurity or resilience of participants? What other groups are becoming more food insecure or are having reduced resilience as a result of these contextual changes?
4. Given these changes in the operating environment, which program activities seem most irrelevant now in terms of having impact on the lives of participants?
5. What suggestions do you have for adapting the program's strategy or implementation systems in order to be better able to respond to changes in the operating context?

Targeting

TOPICAL OUTLINE

(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The following topics should be covered in interviews with representatives of program partners, implementation staff, and participants.

Topics for Program Managers and Implementation Staff

1. Please explain your understanding of the _____ Program's strategy for targeting communities and for targeting participants from these communities.
2. How effective has this targeting strategy been, i.e., have the right people/communities been reached by the program or are their other communities/people that should have been targeted but were not? Who is not being reached well enough by the program? Why?
3. Are there any mechanisms put in place to gather community feedback on targeting including inclusion and exclusion errors?

4. In what ways did the program respond to problems with beneficiary selection that were observed? How effective were these responses? What more could have been done to resolve problems?
5. How does the program monitor and manage targeting issues such as changes in the list of target communities, movement of program beneficiaries out of the target communities, non-participation of selected beneficiaries in program activities?

Topics for Beneficiaries and Intermediaries

6. What are the characteristics of the individuals and households who are benefiting from the activities of the _____ Program in your community? (after asking generally, probe about participants)
7. Do you think that the activities of the _____ Program are effectively helping the most vulnerable individuals and households in your community? Why or why not?
8. Are there individuals or households in your community who are benefiting from the program but are not the most vulnerable in your community? What are the characteristics of these individuals and households? How have they been able to be included in the program?

Management TOPICAL OUTLINE (Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The following topics should be covered in interviews with program managers at the level of the program as well as in each zone, as well as with those staff from major partners who are responsible for overseeing the program.

1. What structures are used to manage implementation of the _____ Program across all the partners, including staffing of management teams and implementing partners, steering or advisory committees, meetings of managers, and so on?
2. What is the history of these management structures, including turnover of personnel in key positions, restructuring or other changes?
3. Who is responsible for the overall vision for the program? How well has the vision been articulated? How effectively has this vision been imparted to staff within the different partners?
4. Who is responsible for the vision within each implementing partner organization? Are the visions of the individual partners generally coherent with each other and with the vision at the program level? If not, how are the differences managed?
5. If there are differences, what effect has this had on program delivery?
6. How are operational plans developed for the program? What has worked well in this process? What has not worked well?
7. How are problems with implementation identified, analyzed and solved? How is information generated by the program's M&E systems used for decision-making? What has worked well in terms of problem-solving? What has not worked well?

8. Please describe the working relationships between the Program's CoP, program technical coordinators and senior leadership in your organization's Headquarters. How much management responsibility is devolved and how much is exercised from HQ?
9. Please describe the working relationships between the CoP and zone-based managerial staff in the field. How much management responsibility is devolved to the field and how much is exercised by the CoP?
10. What kinds of information are communicated (i) within the lead organization at different levels, (ii) among implementing partners at different levels, (iii) with BHA? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
11. How well has the program communicated with external stakeholders, e.g., ministry officials (national and local), other donors and UN agencies, other NGOs with similar programs and programs in the country? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
12. What have been the biggest challenges relative to administrative support for the program in the areas of financial management, commodity management, human resource management, procurement, transport or anything else related to program management?
13. What solutions have been devised to address these challenges? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
14. What changes would you propose to improve program management in the remaining life of the program?

**Partnership
TOPICAL OUTLINE
(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)**

These questions should be asked of representatives of the major partner organizations, as shown in the table. Due to time limitations, the MTE may not be able to reach out to all other partners face-to-face and may send the questions requesting responses by email.

TYPE OF PARTNER	PARTNERS
Lead Agency	
Implementing Partners	
Major Technical Partners	
Other Partners	

1. In terms of working with the lead agency, what did you like about the relationship with them? What didn't you like and how would you like to see that changed in the remaining life of the program?
 2. Relative to relationships with implementing partners, what has worked well in terms of working together to achieve outcomes or making more effective use of resources? What has not worked well? What would you like to see done differently in the remaining life of the program with regard to partnership relationships with implementing partners?
 3. What other partnership relationships have been important for the program? What has worked well in these relationships? What has not worked well? What would you like to see done differently in the remaining life of the program with regard to partnership relationships with these other organizations?
 4. How do you feel about how major strategic or problem-solving decisions were made in the program? How much influence did you have on the decisions? How informed were you on the reasoning behind the decisions that were made?
 5. How would you describe your overall level of satisfaction with the program? What would you suggest be done differently in future programs like _____?
-

**Collaborative Learning and Action
TOPICAL OUTLINE
(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)**

The purpose of the investigation is to;

- Assess the adequacy and quality of the collaborative learning and action processes used in the _____ Program
- Review systems for capturing and documenting lessons learned and assess the extent to which they are used in program implementation and refining program design
- Assess the use of monitoring and evaluation information in managing for results, adjusting program strategies and overall program decision-making
- Assess how well the program is seeking out, testing and adapting new ideas and approaches to enhance program implementation effectiveness
- Assess opportunities for improving effectiveness of M&E systems

The following topics should be covered in interviews with program managers, staff responsible for M&E and learning, as well as with those staff from major partners who are responsible for overseeing the program.

Structure and Capacity of the M&E System

- How does the M&E system work? Who is responsible for what? Who collects data? How often? How does the data/information flow from implementing partners to the lead agency?

- Is the M&E Unit adequately staffed? What are the challenges with regards to human resources? Workload of the staff?
- What has been done so far to develop M&E capacity? Did the lead agency provide any M&E training to implementing partners? What is the role of implementing partners in M&E? What is working well? What is not working? Where are the gaps?

Utilization of M&E Products/Information (or how have the program's management and technical specialists used data generated by the program to inform programmatic decisions, referral and follow-up?)

- What is the contribution of M&E to the program?
- How does the program monitor progress against the implementation plans? What has worked well? What has not worked so well? Why?
- Do you have any mechanisms to know whether the outputs being achieved are turning to outcomes? Do you have evidence to show that this is happening?
- How is M&E informing the programmatic decisions that have been made? Do you have any evidence of using M&E to make any programmatic adjustment?
- How has the program strategy or approach changed as a result of information generated by the program's M&E systems?
- How is feedback provided back down the reporting chain on program monitoring reports? What has worked well? What has not worked so well? Why?

Beneficiary Accountability

- How were the program staff oriented on the basic principles and practices of beneficiary accountability?
- How did program staff consult with male and female beneficiaries in one or more communities to define indicators for program success following startup? How soon after startup?
- What kind of feedback and response channel(s) did program staff establish with members of targeted communities? How soon was it established? How well does the channel reflect the preferences of the targeted communities?
- How do program staff document and respond to community feedback (including constituent voice) received? Through what kind of media? In what language? And how frequently?

Stakeholder Reporting

- How effective are the program's reporting systems in meeting USAID requirements?
- How do program staff communicate performance monitoring findings to key stakeholders? How frequently?

Knowledge In

- Who is responsible for bringing new ideas and approaches into the program from outside sources? How is this responsibility formalized and monitored?

- What new ideas and approaches have been brought into the program from outside the program? Who can be credited for bringing these into the program? Which of these have been most useful? Which have not been very useful? Why?

Knowledge Out

- Who is responsible for identifying, documenting and disseminating knowledge out of the program?
- How does the program identify best practices and lessons learned? Please provide some examples.
- How do these get documented and disseminated?
- What is working well as far as identifying, documenting and disseminating lessons learned and best practices from the program's experiences?
- How can the program do a better job of capturing and disseminating lessons learned and best practices being generated by the program?

M&E System Improvements

- What lessons learned relative to M&E have emerged from the experience of the program up to now?
- What is your recommendation to improve the system at various levels? At partner level? At the lead agency level?
- What recommendations do you have for improving M&E system efficiency?
- What recommendations do you have for improving M&E system effectiveness?

Program Layering, Integration, Coordination and Collaboration TOPICAL OUTLINE (Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The following topics should be covered in interviews with program managers at the level of the program as well as in each zone, as well as with those staff from major partners who are responsible for overseeing the program.

Across Purposes within the Program

- The _____ Program is designed to be implemented as an integrated set of activities for different beneficiary categories within each target community. Activities, outputs and their related lower level outcomes under each higher level outcome are designed to be mutually reinforcing to other outcomes, within and across the five purposes. To what extent do you think the program succeeded in this?
- What potential synergies within the program were not sufficiently capitalized upon in terms of complementary activities that could produce benefits for all households within a target community, not only those of the beneficiaries of a specific program purpose? Why?
- How would you describe the synergies/complementarities within the outputs under different program purposes?

- What suggestion do you have for changes in program design and implementation methods that might make it possible to realize a greater degree of synergy across different program purposes at community level in the remaining life of the program?

With Other Organizations

- How well does the _____ Program coordinate with other NGOs operating in the country who are implementing similar activities, especially those who are operating in the same geographic zones? What is working well? What is not working well? Why?
- How does the program coordinate and collaborate with the other USAID-funded programs in the country? What is working well? What has not worked well? Why?
- With which technical networks in the country does the program interact? What has been the benefit of these interactions?
- What suggestions would you make for building or strengthening relationships with other organizations that could enhance the effectiveness of the ___ program?

**Financial Management
TOPICAL OUTLINE
(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)**

The following topics should be discussed with finance managers of the lead agency and implementing partners in the partner head offices as well as in the zonal field offices.

Budget Questions

- What is the current LOA approved budget? How has this been revised since program start-up?
- What are expenditures through the most recent reporting period in FY _____?
- What percentage of the approved budget has been spent through this period?
- How are budgets prepared and compiled? What works well? What does not work well?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the program's budgeting processes?
- The following table should be completed (the table line items can be modified as needed).

Cash Expenditure Summary Through _____ (US\$)

Cost Center	CDF	202e	ITSH	Government Contribution	Cost Share	Total
Lead Agency						
Implementing Partners (listed individually)						
Total Direct Costs						

NICRA for Lead Agency						
NICRA for any Implementing Partners (listed individually)						
TOTAL Expenses through _____						
TOTAL LOA Budget at Time of Approval						
Current Amended LOA Budget						
Percent of Current LOA Budget Spent by _____						

Cash Flow

- How is cash for program implementation being provided to partners?
- How effective has cash flow been managed in the program? Have there been any significant delays in cash flow either from the donor to the lead agency or from the lead agency to the implementing partners? What was the cause of the delays? What changes were made in managing cash flow?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the cash flow systems in the program?

Reporting

- How do financial reports for the program get prepared?
- What problems have occurred with financial reporting and how have these been resolved?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the financial reporting systems in the program?

Government Commitment

- What is the government's financial commitment to the program and how is this being met?
- What percentage of the government commitment will be achieved by _____?

Cost Share

- What is the cost-share commitment and how is this being met?
- What percentage of the cost-share commitment will be achieved by _____?
- What other forms of cost-share have arisen since the program was initiated? How are these being reported?

Audits

- What audits have been completed on program funding since the program was initiated?
- What have been the audit findings?
- How have these been addressed?

**Commodity Management
TOPICAL OUTLINE
(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)**

The following topics will be covered in interviews with commodity management staff.

Pipeline

- How does the food pipeline work? Who is responsible for call forwards, port off-loading and transport to the port warehouse, inland transport, and distribution to end users?
- What problems or changes have occurred with call forwards and how were these managed?
- What problems have occurred with port commodity management and how were these managed?
- What problems have occurred with inland transport and how were these managed?
- What problems have occurred with warehousing/final distribution and how were these managed?
- What lessons have you learned with your commodity management?
- What losses have occurred and how did these occur? What was the effect of the losses on the program as well as on subsequent call forwards? What changes were made in commodity management systems in response to the losses?

The following tables should be completed.

LOA Commodity Summary (MT)

Period	Total
FY XX	
FY XX	
FY XX	
FY XX (Through _____)	
Cumulative disbursements through _____	
Original Proposed LOA Quantities	
Revised LOA Quantities	
Percentage of Revised LOA Quantities Received Through _____	

Commodity Loss Summary (MT)

Fiscal Year	Amount Called Forward	Ocean Losses	Amount Received in Country	Inland Losses	Percent Lost
FY XX					
FY XX					
FY XX					
FY XX Thru Qtr X					
TOTAL					

Reporting

- How are commodity reports prepared?
- What problems have occurred in report preparation and how have these been managed?
- What has been the response from the donor on commodity reports?

Rations

- How are ration composition and quantities calculated?
- How have they changed over the life of the program?
- How do recipients accept the ration commodity?
- How have rations been used by recipients?
- What changes should be considered relative to ration composition or quantities? Why should these changes be considered?

Human Resource Management TOPICAL OUTLINE (Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The following topics should be covered in interviews with those responsible at different levels for human resource management.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

- What significant challenges has the program faced relative to human resources? How did the program deal with these challenges?
- How many positions total are there in the program? How many vacancies are there at this point in time?

- What percentage of the total staff positions in the program are held by women? What percentage of the management positions in the program are held by women? What strategies has the program used to be able to recruit and retain female staff? What works well? What more can be done?
- How would you describe staff turnover in the program? How has this affected program implementation?
- In general, what has worked well and what has not worked well relative to hiring and retaining staff in the program?

Staff Capacity Building and Performance Management

- What types of activities has the program undertaken to build staff capacities to be able to work effectively?
- How would you describe the systems in the program for motivating staff and facilitating high levels of performance? What has worked well? What has not worked well?

Materials and Equipment Management

TOPICAL OUTLINES

(Evaluation Team Member Leading the Investigations)

The following topics will be covered, as relevant, in interviews with staff from all partners who are directly responsible for managing administrative support for the _____ Program, particularly related to materials and equipment procurement, management and logistics.

1. What systems and policies are in place for ensuring effective procurement, utilization and maintenance of materials and equipment authorized for the program within your organization?
2. What is working well?
3. What problems have occurred relative to procurement, inventory, management, maintenance and logistics?
4. How have these problems affected the program?
5. What changes would you recommend be made to these systems to make them more effective?

ANNEX E: ILLUSTRATIVE VERIFICATION WORKSHOP PLAN

_____ Mid-Term Evaluation (Dates) (Venue)

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

Based on information obtained from field work and other interviews undertaken thus far, the MTE Team has started formulating observations and recommendations for the remaining life of the _____ Program around what is working well and what can be improved in the program. These will be shared in the Verification Workshop with implementation staff and discussed further to ensure that the observations reflect reality and the recommendations are appropriate and feasible.

WORKSHOP OUTPUTS

Two major outputs are targeted for the workshop. These are (1) agreement on the key observations assembled so far from the MTE and (2) refinement of recommendations being considered for the remaining life of the program.

WORKSHOP FLOW

DAY 1, (Day)

SESSION 1-1: Introductions, Workshop Purpose, Objectives and Plan, Logistics (1/2 hour, Team Leader)

Participants will introduce themselves, and the workshop purpose, objectives, and agenda will be presented, along with details on logistics for the workshop. Participants will be asked to write a short answer to the following question on a small slip of paper:

If you had the power to change anything in the _____ Program to enable it to have greater impact or to use program resources more efficiently, what one thing would you change?

Participants will not present their answers. Workshop facilitators will collect the answers for review by the MTE Team later.

SESSION 1-2: History & Operating Context (1/2 hour, Team Member)

Key events in the history of the program will be presented and discussed for clarity and completeness, ensuring that major events in the life of the program that have affected implementation have been captured. Observations on contextual factors that have influenced the program will also be presented, along with observations on how the program adapted to these. Finally, emerging contextual issues will be discussed, along with possible actions that the program could take to be positioned to adapt effectively to these. In preparation for the next session, a brief overview of the program strategy will also be presented.

SESSION 1-3: Purpose 1 (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating Purpose 1 of the program will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 1-4: Purpose 2 (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating Purpose 2 of the program will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 1-5: Purpose 3 (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating Purpose 3 of the program will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 1-6: Purpose 4 (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating Purpose 4 of the program will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

DAY 2, (Day)**SESSION 2-1: Recap of the Previous Day's Discussions and Stage Setting for Day 2 (¼ hour, Team Leader).**

A brief summary of the previous day's discussions will be provided along with some introductory information to set the stage for day two of the workshop.

SESSION 2-2: Cross-Cutting Theme: _____ (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating the cross-cutting theme of _____ will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 2-3: Cross-Cutting Theme: _____ (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating the cross-cutting theme of _____ will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 2-4: Cross-Cutting Theme: _____ (Time Allotment, Team Member)

The MTE Team member responsible for investigating the cross-cutting theme of _____ will present an overview of key observations and preliminary recommendations. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 2-5: Overall Program Design - Theory of Change, Targeting, & Program Outcomes (Time Allotment, Team Member)

In the previous sessions, an overall picture for the program has been presented in terms of key observations on outputs and resulting outcomes as well as activities associated with the cross-cutting themes. In this session, the evaluation team will present (1) a summary of observations on targeting in terms of who is benefiting from the program, (2) an overall assessment on the program-level outcomes collectively across the Purposes toward achieving the program's Goal, and (3) the implications for the program's Theory of Change. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 2-6: Implementation Systems (Time Allotment(s), Team Member(s))

The MTE Team investigated the program's implementation systems, including the management systems, partner relations, collaborative learning and action systems, program layering, sequencing, integration, coordination and collaboration, financial resource management, commodity resources management, human resource management, and material resource management. The MTE Team member(s) responsible for these investigations will present overviews of the key observations and recommendations being considered for addressing challenges in these systems that are affecting implementation or for capitalizing on strengths that have been observed. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to jot down on anonymous note cards any additional thoughts or observations that they did not have a chance to express in the session relative to the topic.

SESSION 2-9: Next Steps (1/4 hour, Team Leader).

Over the course of the workshop, some topics may have emerged from the discussions that represent areas that need to be further investigated by the MTE Team. In this final session of the day, participants will discuss these topics and agree on how best to obtain information to resolve the questions that have arisen. In addition, participants will be asked to write on a small slip of paper short answers to the following questions and will be asked to leave their answers with a MTE team member before they leave the workshop:

In your opinion, what three recommendations are most important? Why? What three recommendations are least important? Why? What additional recommendations would you suggest be considered by the MTE team?

ANNEX F: ILLUSTRATIVE MTE REPORT FORMAT**VOLUME I: SUMMARY REPORT**

(The length of this report should not exceed 30 pages, excluding Annexes.)

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2 Pages)

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (2 Pages) (An overview of the program including program history, participants, theory of change, logical framework, geographic coverage, and resources, a description of contextual factors affecting program implementation or outcomes, and a brief overview of the MTE Methodology.)

III. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM PROGRESS (10 Pages) (Key processes and achievements under each purpose, the cross-cutting themes, targeting and theory of change, and implementing systems.)

IV. THEMES AND PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS (A description of the key themes identified by the evaluation with the recommendations under each theme. For each recommendation the key observations supporting the recommendation, a clear statement for the recommendation, and suggestions for operationalizing the recommendation are provided in no more than one page per recommendation.)

V. HIGHER LEVEL OBSERVATIONS (A description of critical constraints that are affecting the program but are beyond the control of the program itself that emerged from the evaluation, usually no more than a half page per observation.)

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS (1/2 Page)**ANNEXES**

Annex A: Full List of Prioritized Recommendations Organized by Theme

Annex B: Other Recommendations

Annex C: Financial Summary Table

VOLUME II: METHODOLOGY REPORT

(The length of this report is unlimited.)

I. REPORT LAYOUT**II. INITIAL SCOPE OF WORK****III. EVALUATION PLAN****IV. PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND SITES VISITED**

ANNEX G: GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVERS

GROUND RULES FOR OBSERVERS

The _____ Program intends to conduct a mid-term evaluation in _____ of 202X. The evaluation will be conducted by a team composed of _____ and independent evaluators led by an independent team leader. The USAID Mission activity managers and _____ HQ staff, who are not on the MTE team, can participate as observers of the MTE. Following are some ground rules that we would like these observers to follow as they provide support to the MTE team conducting the evaluation.

- The main priority for logistical support provided by the Country Office for the MTE will be for the core evaluation team. Staff from the country office will be responsible for organizing the logistical needs of the MTE team, and the logistics for observers will be considered only after the logistics for the core team have been organized. Observers are asked to utilize the services of their own organizations to arrange logistics for them for the MTE.
- During the field work, observers are asked not to engage core team members while they are conducting interviews or FGDs, nor should they ask questions directly of respondents during interviews or FGDs without obtaining permission from the evaluation team member doing the interviews to do so. After the interview or discussion has been completed, observers are free to hold discussions with the evaluation team member.
- Observers are free to attend MTE team meetings and any evening discussions that are scheduled.
- Observers will **not** be allowed to attend the Verification Workshop.
- Observers who are HQ staff from the implementing agency or directly responsible for overseeing the program from the USAID Mission are welcome to attend the Stakeholder Debriefing scheduled for _____, and observers who are USAID staff not directly responsible for the program are welcome to attend the USAID Mission Debriefing scheduled for _____.
- Observers are requested to participate as much as possible in the full evaluation process so that they acquire a reasonably complete picture of the product being developed by the MTE team. An observer who only participates in part of the field work and only a few of the analysis meetings is at risk of forming a partial, incomplete understanding of why a recommendation has emerged with the evidence to support it.
- Observers are under the guidance of the MTE team leader during data collection. If there are any questions about proper protocol, the observer is asked to consult with the team leader beforehand.