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ACTIVITY MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING PLAN (AMELP)



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GUIDANCE OF THE AMELP

This document gives USAID/Colombia Implementing Partners (IPs) guidance on the content expected for each one of the sections of the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP) and indicates relevant references to be consulted during its construction.

Attached to this document, USAID will include the template of the AMELP to be filled according to the guidance. The reference sheets and illustrative tables included in this document will also be provided as attachments.

When using this document as template the final content of the AMELP should not include the guidance narratives provided.

While there is no contractually required format for partners to use in constructing the AMELP, this template can help USAID and its IPs ensure this plan meets the standards of USAID monitoring, evaluation and learning policies and directives.

[INSERT THE NAME OF
ACTIVITY]

ACTIVITY MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING PLAN (AMELP)

Draft or Final Version

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ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AMEP	Activity M&E Plan
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contract Officer Representative
DO	Development Objective
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOJ	Government of Vietnam
IM	Implementing Mechanism
IPs	Implementing Partners
IR	Intermediate Result
LF	Logical Framework
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RF	Results Framework
SOW	Statement of Work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

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I. OVERVIEW

Guidance: This section is composed of an introduction; the presentation of the theory of change; the results framework of the Activity; and the relationship to the USAID/Colombia Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS).

Note A: In USAID, the term “Activity” refers to the entire intervention of an awarded implementing mechanism. Hence along the AMELP, avoid using the terms “project” or “program” when referring to the whole implementing mechanism.

I.1. Introduction

Guidance: In maximum two pages, this section should provide clear and precise descriptions on the following topics:

- **Intended purposes and uses of this plan:** The foremost purpose of the AMELP is to serve as a tool for both USAID and the IP to know whether the Activity is making progress toward stated results. This topic embraces also how data and information proposed in the plan is intended to be managed, maintained and available for use.
- **Succinct description of the Activity:** This topic refers to the main objectives of the Activity; how it is relevant and contributes to the USAID Objectives¹; the starting and ending dates; the timeline and intended geographic scope (map suggested); a brief description of the intended relationship with the official entities of the Government of Colombia (national, regional and/or local), as well as civil society organizations, and the private sector.
- **Succinct description of the context in which the Activity starts operating:** This topic refers the context in which the Activity takes place, composed by factors and conditions out of the direct control of USAID or the IP but *directly* affecting the development of the implementation.

Note B: The AMELP should be revised as needed in response to changes in the Activity or context that occur during the life of the activity. Changes of the AMELP must be agreed with the AOR/COR of the Activity who will approve them.

I.2. Activity Theory of Change and Results Framework

Guidance: In maximum four pages, this Section should provide clear and precise descriptions of the following elements of the Activity:

- **The Theory of Change (TOC):** The TOC is a narrative description on how and why the purpose of the Activity will be achieved in its particular context. It is based in a development hypothesis grounded on a development theory, practice, literature, and experience. It explains why and how the proposed investments from USAID and others collectively contribute to or lead to the achievement of the Activity’s purpose.
- **The Results Framework (RF):** The RF is a predominant logic model that represents the TOC of the Activity. It shows the results the Activity expects to contribute to, or achieve, during its implementation. It diagrams the development hypotheses, outlining the logic for achieving the objectives over time. It shows the cause and effect relation between the different levels of objectives or intended results of the

¹ This may be a general reference to what will be exposed in sub-section 1.3

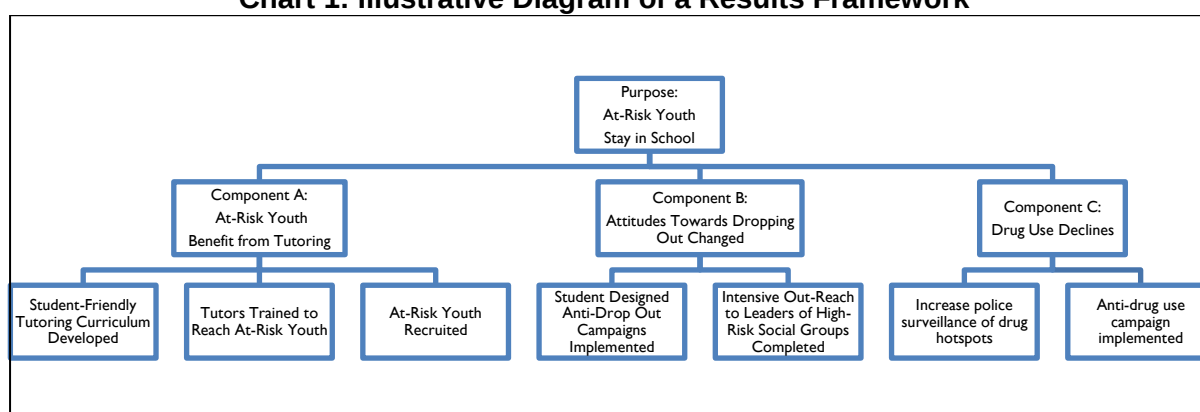
Activity (purpose, components o intermediate results, etc.). Chart 1 illustrates an example of a simple RF.

- **Landscape of key assumptions:** This landscape exposes, explains and qualifies relevant critical assumptions and risks linked to the achievement of the Activity's objectives in the frame of the RF. Assumptions and risks lye beyond the IP or USAID's control. Key assumptions must be linked in a logic manner to the different levels of expected objectives. Qualitative PESTLE Analysis² and "game changing" scenarios are recommended as starting point when constructing the landscape of key assumptions.

The process of developing the theory of change should be a participatory process involving broad engagement with local stakeholders and if possible with potential beneficiary communities. It also implies a series of dynamic critical-thinking exercises to examine the body of evidence, draw out different viewpoints, and reach consensus on the best possible approach given the available information.

Logic consistency going through each level of the RF should be checked from base to top. Each lower level result presented should have both the necessary results and meet the key assumptions to cause expected progress advancing to the next higher level. The results included at each level of the activity should be written in appropriate "results" language (simple assertive past tense). The results statement should express an outcome³ as opposed to describing actions or processes to achieve them. They should be clear, specific and precise, describing a single and measurable discrete result.

Chart 1: Illustrative Diagram of a Results Framework



The RF is not a complete representation of the full Activity. It is a snapshot to be used for purposes of planning, implementation, and communication that are supported by accompanying narratives of the TOC and development hypotheses on which the Activity is constructed. On the other hand, in agreement with the AOR/COR of the Activity (and in frame of the contract/ agreement/grant), the Results Framework may be updated during implementation to respond to new evidence or changes in context.

² PESTLE is an acronym standing for: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental variables likely affecting the execution of a strategy. The effect is scored based on the risk or likelihood as high, medium, or low.

³³ Outcomes refers to behaviors and conditions of people, systems and institutions or high-level achievements of performance such as efficiency

1.3. Relationship to mission CDCS

Guidance: In no more than two pages, this section should include:

- **Succinct narrative:** A brief description of how results of the RF contribute to the [USAID/Colombia/CDCS](#). The activity and its intended results should be easily understood within the strategy context and intended results. Thus the Activity should be analyzed in the context of the relevant Mission Development Objective (DO), Intermediate Results (IRs) and Sub-IRs (where applicable) of the USAID/Colombia CDCS. The emphasis should be done at the linkage of the Activity's objectives, with the relevant strategy Intermediate Result(s) the Activity is framed into.
- **Graphic representation** of the alignment or linkage between the Activity's Objectives at all levels and the relevant Intermediate Results(s).

Example of narratives to start off this section:

"The <Activity name> is expected to contribute to USAID's Development Objective #<X>: Inclusive Economic Development Accelerated." (Explain here which CDCS Intermediate Results (IRs) are equivalent to the activity/project of the Activity). "In particular, it will contribute to IR1.1 "Private sector competitiveness increased." In general, this Activity contributes to the overall USAID/Colombia Strategy (CDCS) by [...] helping to a more inclusive development for a sustainable peace".

2. MONITORING SECTION

Monitoring is the ongoing and systematic tracking of data or information relevant to the Activity. This section should describe and explain how the IP will monitor the performance and context of the Activity.

2.1. Monitoring Approach

Guidance: This introduction section should explain succinctly what type of data and information will be collected and used for monitoring the Activity and for what purpose. The following is an illustrative text for this introduction:

"Quantitative performance indicators and context indicators will be collected in a quarterly and annual basis. Performance economic and demographic indicators as well as context indicators will have a baseline collected during the first two quarters of implementation. Also a combination of qualitative and quantitative information will be collected and used regarding the perception of satisfaction from beneficiaries. This data will be collected through panel data in annual surveys. Results of surveys will be presented annually but outside of the Annual Report".

2.2. Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring is the ongoing and systematic collection of performance indicator data and other quantitative or qualitative information to reveal whether implementation is on track and whether expected results are being achieved.

Guidance: This section must include the indicators used for performance monitoring. The data offered by these **performance indicators** is the cornerstone of the plan because it supports adaptive management and decision-making and it is the backbone of the accountability structure of USAID. It provides the public and external stakeholders with information on the progress USAID is making and it delivers Washington the information needed to inform high-level decision-making.

Performance indicators are metrics that track progress toward the intended objectives of the Activity. The following are the definitions of the two types of performance indicators used by USAID:

- **Output indicators:** They measure changes of outputs that are produced as a direct result of inputs. Outputs are the tangible, immediate, and intended products or consequences of an Activity within USAID's control or influence. Examples are number of people trained, number of new hectares of crops supported and number of equipment installed as a result the assistance provided.
- **Outcome indicators:** They measure changes of behavior and conditions of people, systems and institutions or high-level achievements of performance such as efficiency. Outcomes are any result higher than an output to which a given output contributes but for which it is not solely responsible. Outcomes may be intermediate or end outcomes, short-term or long-term, positive or negative, direct or indirect. Outcome indicators indicate progress or lack of progress toward the achievement of high-level objectives. Examples are trust in institutions, the value of sales and travel reductions in time or costs.

Changes on output indicators included in the AMELP should be within the control of the IPs and changes in outcome indicators are expected to result from the combination of these outputs and other factors. IPs should be accountable for changes on both output and outcome performance indicators proposed.

The **performance indicators included in the AMELP should be linked to the RF** described in the overview chapter. The main objective (or goal) and the higher-level objectives/results (or components) of the RF should be aligned with at least one outcome performance indicator used to measure it. Usually, the objectives/results in the bottom of the RF have output indicators associated to them. However, all the objectives/results at the different levels of the RF can include output indicators to track its progress. Every result in the RF should have at least one performance indicator associated to it⁴.

Besides output and outcome performance indicators, impact indicators can also be included. These last indicators describe the ultimate attributable goal or benefit to which the Activity is contributing. Examples are income, wellness, awareness and economic growth. Changes on them are not directly attributable to the Activity. They can be affected by the interventions of the Activity in the frame of a much wider convergence of other agents' interventions, phenomenon and assumptions. USAID and its Implementing Partners should not be accountable for changes on those indicators.

Note C: Criteria of utility, validity, reliability, timeliness, precision, integrity, cost and disaggregation must be used for **selecting indicators**. Please refer to the [USAID Monitoring toolkit for selecting performance indicators](#) and the USAID Performance [Monitoring indicator criteria checklist](#).

The entire life of the activity should be considered when selecting indicators. Usually some outcome and impact-level indicators do not become relevant until near the end of implementation, such as those indicators monitoring higher-level results.

All the performance indicators selected must have **baselines**. The indicator baseline is the value of an indicator before major implementation actions of the Activity. Baselines must be collected before the implementation of an intervention⁵. For some indicators, the baseline value may be zero when the Activity by itself produces entirely the effects linked to the

⁴ Take into account that a single performance indicator may account for more than one result.

⁵ If baseline data cannot be collected until later in the course of a strategy, project, or activity, the indicator's PIRS should document when and how the baseline data will be collected.

indicator (trainings, meetings, leveraged funds, etc.). For more detail on this topic please refer to USAID guidance on [Performance Indicators Baselines](#).

All the performance indicators selected must have **targets**. The indicator target is the specific planned level of result to be achieved within a specific timeframe with a given level of resources. Targets should be ambitious but achievable given USAID IPs inputs. For more detail on this topic please refer to USAID guidance on [Performance Indicators Targets](#). It is expected each performance indicator will have defined yearly targets adding up to a Life-Of-Activity (LOA) target.

Disaggregates are useful sub-categories of performance indicators. Every indicator measuring person-level data must be disaggregated by sex⁶. At a minimum, all indicators that could have gender aspects should be sex-disaggregated in their data collection and reporting. This is, in the first instance, anything having to do with people involved in the activities as beneficiaries, farmers, owners, workers, students, trainees, heads of household, etc. When the indicator is linked to interventions affecting ethnic communities, disaggregation must be also done so results can be identified for these population groups. Each disaggregate of a performance indicator must have a calculated baseline. All the performance indicators included in the AMELP and reported to USAID/Colombia, should be disaggregated by geography (department and municipality). Other dis-aggregations are encouraged such as “vereda” and geographic coordinates when possible. For more detail on this topic please refer to USAID guidance [Additional Help Dis-aggregating Monitoring Data](#).

Foreign Assistance Performance Indicators (F indicators) are standardized performance indicators used by USAID and the Department of State to collect and analyze data coming from countries abroad where the U.S. Government provide development assistance. F indicators should be included in an AMELP and reported as long as the Activity does interventions that report on them. USAID/Colombia MEL Staff will provide the updated list of these indicators, so the IP can select those F indicators that are applicable. F indicators should be selected over other selected indicators if those are very similar in nature. If F Indicators are used, their ID codes assigned should also be displayed besides the ID code assigned by the Activity into this plan. Be aware that there are specific F indicators on topics such as Gender⁷.

The AMELP should also include existing **Mission wide USAID/Colombia indicators** linked to the current CDCS and other Missions’ basic crosscutting and strategic indicators, as long as the Activity does interventions that can report on them. USAID/Colombia MEL Staff will also provide the updated list of these indicators.

Note D: The following are examples of these types of indicators:

- Value of mobilized funds (Ym)
- Value of leveraged funds (Yl)
- Number of Public-Private Partnerships created
- Number of organizations (public, private, or CSO) supported or strengthened as a result of the USG assistance
- Number of individual direct beneficiaries (or direct households benefited) supported by the intervention as a result of the USG assistance

Note E: Codes should be used as part of the full name of the indicators in order to help proper identification in all documents, charts, tracking systems and databases. Sometimes the name of two or more indicators may look the same at glance. Therefore, including program’s and standardized codes as part of the full name is a useful practice to reduce mistaking. Besides the sole numerating

⁶ Sex is the biological condition: Male / Female. In contrast, gender is a personal option.

⁷ Additional to those gender specific F indicators, there are other covering this topic which apparently do not have to see with it but incorporate sex-disaggregates such as the indicators “EG.3.2-18 Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices with USG assistance” which ask for the amount of hectares managed by each respective category.

function of the code, it should also include a short acronym of the Activity as a prefix: for example **PMA** for the “Producers to Markets Activity”. Afterwards it should be added a shortened “nomen” corresponding to the main objective (component) under which the indicator makes part: for example **Ob1** for Objective 1 or **MI** for Market Integration; or **CC** for cross-cutting, etc. Finally, a numerating integer should be added: for example 001, 012, etc. The following is an illustrative example:
PMA-MI-004 Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with an international quality control institution meeting minimum product standards

The indicators selected should be presented in a table describing the relationship to each of the objectives and sub-objectives proposed in the RF. It should also present the main characteristics of the performance indicators selected (codes, types, source, frequency, etc.). An example is illustrated in Table 1. The dis-aggregates, baselines, and targets of the performance indicators should be also presented in a table. An example is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 1. Summary Descriptive Table of Performance Indicators

#	Code	Indicator name	Class	Type	Units of Measurement	Disaggregates	Source of Data	Reporting frequency
Main Goal: Improved competitiveness of rural agricultural producers								
1	ACT-P-01	Number of households benefiting directly from USG assistance (EG.3-1)	F Standard	Output	Households	<u>Duration:</u> New, Continuing <u>Location:</u> Rural, Urban/peri-urban	ACT Smallholder beneficiaries –	Quarterly
2	ACT-P-02	Value of incremental net income (Custom)	Custom	Outcome	US\$ Million	<u>Commodity</u>	ACT Smallholder beneficiaries –	Annually
3	ACT-P-03	Value of targeted agricultural commodities exported with USG assistance (EG.3.2-23)	F Standard	Outcome	US\$ Million	<u>Commodity</u>	ACT Supported exporters –	Annually
Component I: Increased Market Integration								
4	ACT-SPI-01	Value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance (EG.3.2-19; CDCS)	F Standard	Outcome	US\$ Million	<u>Commodity</u>	ACT beneficiaries	Annually
I.1: Increased Profile of Regional Products in Marketplaces								
5	ACT-SPI-02	Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance to export (EG.2.2-1)	F Standard	Output	Firms	<u>Duration:</u> New, Continuing	ACT Supported firms –	Annually
I.2: Increased Compliance with Market Standards and Regulations								
6	ACT-SPI-03	Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with (an) international quality control institution(s) in meeting minimum product standards (EG.2.2-2)	F Standard	Outcome	Firms	None	ACT Supported firms –	Quarterly
I.3: Expanded Market Integration								
7	ACT-SPI-04	Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance for improving business performance (EG.5.2-1)	F Standard	Output	Number of firms	<u>Type of Firm:</u> Formal, Informal <u>Duration:</u> New, Continuing	ACT Supported firms	Quarterly

Table 2: Baseline and Targets Table of Performance Indicators

#	Code	Indicator name		Units	Baseline date	Baseline value	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	LOA
Main Goal: Improved competitiveness of rural agricultural producers													
1	ACT-P-01	Number of households benefiting directly from USG assistance (EG.3-1)		Households	09/2016	321	7,500	18,750	26,250	11,250	11,250	0	75,000
2	ACT-P-02	Value of incremental net income (Custom)		US\$ Million	05/2016	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
3	ACT-P-03	Value of targeted agricultural commodities exported with USG assistance (EG.3.2-23)	Acai	US\$ Million	N/a	0	0.00	2.6	2.2	7.7	5.2	5.5	0.8
			Tea	US\$ Million	N/a	0	0.00	5.3	6.8	0.5	7.1	7.8	2.8
			Cocoa	US\$ Million	N/a	0	0.00	0.3	6.2	2.8	4.7	3.3	4.1
			Palm heart	US\$ Million	N/a	0	0.00	2.5	0.9	8.1	0.5	9.0	9.6
			Banana	US\$ Million	N/a	0	0.00	5.0	7.8	1.2	5.7	9.1	7.6
Component 1: Increased Market Integration													
4	ACT-SP1-01	Value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance (EG.3.2-19; CDCS)	Acai	US\$ Million	N/a	N/a	0.00	0.47	1.71	5.31	9.49	0.00	9.49
			Tea	US\$ Million	N/a	N/a	0.00	0.88	3.17	9.87	17.62	0.00	17.62
			Cocoa	US\$ Million	N/a	N/a	0.00	0.48	1.74	5.42	9.68	0.00	9.68
			Palm heart	US\$ Million	N/a	N/a	0.00	0.08	0.29	0.91	1.63	0.00	1.63
			Banana	US\$ Million	N/a	N/a	0.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
1.1: Increased Profile of Regional Products in Marketplaces													
5	ACT-SP1-02	Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance to export (EG.2.2-1) -Cumulative		Firms	08/2016	2	22	85	123	123	160	166	165

For each of the performance indicator selected in the AMELP, **Performance Indicator References Sheets (PIRS)** must be constructed. These are charts describing in detail the most relevant structural and methodological features to collect, validate and use data of performance indicators. Because charts altogether may occupy a considerable space in the plan, all PIRS should be placed in a separate section at the end of the AMELP (see last section PIRS and CIRS).

The template and guidance of the PIRS will be provided by USAID as an attachment to this document. Table 3 shows and illustrative example of the PIRS for a particular performance indicator.

Table 3: Example PIRS

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEET (PIRS)
Name of Indicator: CNG-003 Value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance (EG.3.2-19)
Name of Development Objective: DO3 – Improved conditions for Inclusive Rural Economic Growth
Name of Intermediate Result: IR3.2 Increased public and private investment in the rural sector
Name of Sub-Intermediate Result: Sub IR 3.2.2 Increased private sector investment in target rural; communities
Indicator Class/Type: Standard (SPSD) / Outcome
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): This indicator collects both volume (in metric tons) and value (in US dollars) of sales of targeted commodities from smallholder direct beneficiaries for its calculation. This includes all sales by the smallholder direct beneficiaries of the targeted commodities), not just farm-gate sales. Only count sales in the reporting year that are attributable to the Activity investment, i.e. where the program assisted the individual farmer directly. Examples of the assistance include facilitating access to improved seeds, other inputs, extension services, markets and other activities that benefited small holders. The value of incremental sales measures the value (in USD) of the total amount of targeted agricultural products sold by smallholder direct beneficiaries relative to a base year and is calculated as the total value of sales of a product (crop, animal, or fish) during the reporting year minus the total value of sales in the base year. The number of direct beneficiaries of the Activity often increases over time as the activity rolls-out. Unless an activity has identified all prospective direct beneficiaries at the time the baseline is established, the baseline sales value will only include sales made by beneficiaries identified when the baseline is established during the first year of implementation. The baseline sales value will not include the “baseline” sales made prior to their involvement in the Activity by beneficiaries added in subsequent years. Thus the baseline sales value will underestimate total baseline sales of all beneficiaries, and consequently overestimate incremental sales for reporting years when the beneficiary base has increased. To address this issue, the Activity requires reporting the number of direct beneficiaries for each value chain commodity along with baseline and reporting year sales. The Activity may use the baseline sales and baseline number of beneficiaries to establish average sales per beneficiary at baseline. The number of beneficiaries multiplies the average sales per beneficiary in each reporting year to create an adjusted baseline sales value. To accurately estimate out-year targets for incremental sales, targets for number of beneficiaries are also required. It is absolutely essential that a Baseline Year Sales data point be entered. The Value of Incremental Sales indicator value cannot be calculated without a value for Baseline Year Sales. If data on the total value of sales of the value chain commodity by direct beneficiaries prior to the Activity implementation started is not available, do not leave the baseline blank or enter ‘0’. Use the earliest Reporting Year Sales actual as the Baseline Year Sales. This will cause some underestimation of the total value of incremental sales achieved by the Feed the Future activity, but this is preferable to being unable to calculate incremental sales at all.
Unit of Measure: Dollars of the United States of America (USD)
Data Type: Currency (no decimal places)
Disaggregated by: Geography (custom): Department; municipality; hamlet –vereda. Market (custom): local sales; exports. Commodity (Standard): Animal products; other.
Justification/Utility for Indicator:
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION
Data Source: Implementing partners report this indicator with data collected via direct methods (for example employee records) or cartographic methods. Methodology for data collection must be explicit in the project objectives.
Method of Data Collection and Construction:
Reporting Frequency: Annually

Individual(s) Responsible at USAID: Activity's A/COR	
Individual(s) Responsible at the Activity:	
TARGETS AND BASELINE	
Baseline value:	Date of Baseline:
Life of Activity Target (LOA):	
Fiscal Year Targets:	FY2019:
	FY2020:
	FY2021:
	FY2022:
Notes on baseline and targets: (Example: LOA target will be determined based on the assessment of the baseline)	
DATA QUALITY	
Known Data Limitations: sales accounted at farmer's door and those at marketplace may be different; method of collection should be consistent as much as possible.	
Date of Previous Data Quality Assessment (DQA): N/A	
Date of Future Data Quality Assessment (DQA): TBD	
CHANGES TO INDICATOR	
Changes to Indicator:	
Other notes:	
This PIRS was last updated in October 01- 2017 by Jane Doe (KfV MEL Specialist)	

Note E: The name of F standard indicators as well as those used or created by USAID/Colombia must not be changed. The classification under which the F indicators are named is the Standardized Program Structure and Definitions (SPSD). Change and modifications to standard or official definitions stated in PIRS should be notified and agreed with USAID; such changes or modifications are possible as long as they do not avoid the quality standards, hence making unsuitable an official indicator to aggregate and report outside the boundaries of the Activity.

2.3. Context monitoring

Context monitoring is the systematic collection of information about conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation and performance of the Activity. This includes information about local conditions that may *directly* affect implementation and performance or external factors that may *indirectly* affect implementation and performance.

Guidance: This sub-section should describe the efforts that the Activity will undertake for context monitoring. Based on external factors affecting the Activity's Theory of Change and RF described in the Overview section, context indicators should be selected to track the most relevant assumptions and/or risks identified. The metrics selected may be analyzed in order to form judgments about how actors and conditions outside the control of USAID may affect the Activity. Some of them may also reveal the unintended consequences of the Activity. At least one of the indicators selected should be climate-related, in order to comply monitoring toward "Climate Risk Management" (see the [Mandatory reference 201mal](#)). The selection of context indicators may take into account that the collection effort not surpasses the utility of the information.

Context indicators do not have a baseline but a value of reference recorded in a specific date. Context indicators do not have either a target, but a (optional) threshold or level at which an alert for a managerial action is triggered.

The indicators selected should be presented in a table describing their main features (units of measure, sources, frequency, etc.). An example is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 4: Summary of Context Indicators

Code	Indicator name	Units of Measurement	Source of Data	Reporting Frequency	Reference Value	Reference Timeframe	Threshold Value
ACT-Cx-01	Average monthly potential evaporation	mm/month	IDEAM / Inirida	Quarterly	120	Feb/2019	244
ACT-Cx-02	Number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants	Number	CNP / DIJIN	Annually	11	Dec/2018	14
ACT-Cx-03	Value of public investment per capita in social infrastructure at rural municipalities	USD	HRT sub-contractor	Annually	8,000	Sept/2017	5,000

For each of the performance indicator selected in the AMELP, **Context Indicator References Sheets (CIRS)** must be constructed. Because charts altogether may occupy a considerable space in the plan, all CIRS should be placed in a separate section at the end of the AMELP (see last section PIRS and CIRS). The template and guidance of the CIRS will be provided by USAID as an attachment to this document.

2.4. Complementary Monitoring Approaches

If needed, this plan may look beyond indicators, incorporating other monitoring approaches, to complement the quantitative information provided by the metrics. This may entail especially the systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of complementary qualitative data.

On the other hand, if some of the interventions of the Activity develop in situations where results are difficult to predict due to dynamic contexts, unclear cause-and-effect relationships or a complex environment additional monitoring approaches can be used such complexity-aware approaches. This may also apply when there is substantial uncertainty on expected results or the causal model cannot be defined. For more reference of this method promoted by USAID please refer to [ADS 201sad, Complexity-Aware Monitoring Discussion Note](#).

3. EVALUATION PLAN

In general, while performance monitoring responses “what” results are achieved by an Activity, the evaluation methods look for providing information about “why or how” those results are achieved. According to USAID guidance and policies, evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics of activities conducted as a basis for judgments to improve effectiveness, and timed to inform decisions about current and future programming. The purpose of evaluations is twofold: to ensure accountability to stakeholders and to learn to improve development outcomes.

USAID categorizes evaluations as **impact or performance evaluations** depending on the purpose, evaluation questions, and the corresponding design. These two main classes of evaluation encompass most of the existing quantitative and semi-quantitative types of evaluations. Impact Evaluations measure the change in a development outcome that is attributable to a defined intervention. This type of evaluations are based on models of cause and effect and require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual to control for factors other than the intervention that might account for the observed change. Performance Evaluations encompass a broad range of evaluation methods. They often incorporate before–after comparisons but generally lack a rigorously defined counterfactual. Performance evaluations may address descriptive, normative, and/or cause-and-effect questions. For more information regarding evaluations at USAID please refer to [USAID Evaluation Policy](#).

Note F: The following are the two types of Evaluations that can be developed for USAID Activities:

USAID-led evaluations: These are external evaluation commissioned directly by USAID (funded with funds different from those of the Activity) at any time of the implementation either to comply with USAID evaluation requirements or when new information arises indicating that an evaluation is appropriate for accountability or learning purposes. USAID may select to conduct and/or commission a baseline, midterm, final and/or ex-post evaluation on an Activity, either as an Activity-specific or as part of a larger portfolio evaluation.

Internal evaluations: These are evaluations conducted or commissioned by an IP concerning their own activity. Funding may be dedicated within an Activity design for implementing partners to engage in an internal evaluation for institutional learning or accountability purposes.

Guidance: This section may include any plans for **internal evaluations**. It should include the type of evaluation (performance or impact) to be developed, possible evaluation questions, estimated budget, planned start date, and estimated completion date.

Although internal evaluations do not count toward USAID evaluation requirements, to the extent possible, internal evaluations should follow the same USAID processes and procedures as described in sections [ADS 201.3.5.15](#) through [ADS 201.3.5.18](#). Internal evaluations are subject to the same evaluation report requirements and quality criteria as external evaluations as described in [ADS 201.3.5.17](#). For internal performance evaluations USAID guidance on constructing evaluation questions will be helpful. Please refer to [TIPS for developing good evaluation questions \(for performance evaluations\)](#).

USAID may initiate an external performance evaluation at any time of the implementation. In this case, the Activity will collaborate with USAID and/or the external Evaluation Team as required. Hence, the Activity MEL Plan should also include descriptions for ensuring that any **planned external USAID-led evaluations** will have access to appropriate data collected by the implementer, such as performance monitoring data. It is envisioned that the major collaboration tasks would include but are not limited to providing valuable insights on the Activity concept and its achievements and lessons learned; providing inputs/comments to the evaluation scope of work and/or the draft report; providing support to validate the data/information collected by the Evaluation Team; and sharing ideas on recommendations for modifications of the Activity as appropriate. USAID through the AOR/COR will actively engage with implementing partners of activities being evaluated to ensure partners and external evaluators are collaborating productively. AORs/CORs should inform implementing partners as early as possible if their activity will be evaluated and must share the draft and final evaluation design completed by the evaluation team. AORs/CORs will also ensure implementing partners are facilitating access to data, documentation, personnel, and key stakeholders as appropriate for the completion of an external evaluation.

Note G: Do not include into this section any planned assessment, informal review or stocktaking either internal (conducted by the Implementing Partner) or external (conducted by a third-party contracted for the purpose). If these types of studies or plans are planned they may be included in the Learning Section.

4. LEARNING PLAN

Learning consists in augmenting the intention and consciousness about development interventions. Experience and lessons learned by the Activity should be constantly used to adjust and improve the USAID implementation cycle (adaptive management). Although this process might be incorporated already in the management of the Activity, the learning plan should document it and make it more systematic.

Sources for learning include data from monitoring, portfolio reviews, findings of research, evaluations, analyses conducted by USAID or third parties, knowledge gained from experience, and other sources. These sources should be used to develop plans, implement projects, manage adaptively, and contribute to USAID's knowledge base in order to improve development outcomes

Guidance: This section must include a learning plan based on the performance and context monitoring and evaluation data collected and analyzed, as well as ad libitum observations and experience on developing the intervention. It should include also any planned survey, study, assessment, informal review, workshop, or stocktaking done for learning purposes. The following are learning actions to consider when this section (as suggested per [ADS 201](#)):

- Meeting with partner(s), sector experts, donors, and the host government to share monitoring information as well as reviewing activity progress.
- Analyzing performance and context monitoring information to inform management and adapt interventions.
- Analyzing performance monitoring indicator data to identify any gender gaps.
- Identifying knowledge gaps in the theory of change and RF.
- Identifying gaps on technical knowledge and identifying and implementing ways to fill these gaps.
- Planning for and engaging in regular opportunities for partners to reflect on progress, such as partner meetings, portfolio reviews, and after-action reviews. These opportunities may focus on challenges and successes in implementation to date, changes in the operating environment or context that could affect programming, opportunities to better collaborate or influence other actors, and/or other relevant topics.
- Encouraging or requiring partners under a project to collaborate, where relevant. Collaboration activities may include joint work planning, regular partner meetings that facilitate knowledge sharing, and/or working groups organized along geographic or technical lines. These activities require time and resources, and implementing partners should have the appropriate resources separated for these initiatives.
- Involving sub-implementing partners in the learning activities, such as portfolio reviews or stocktaking efforts, as appropriate.
- Using the knowledge and learning gained from implementation, opportunities to reflect on performance, monitoring data, evaluations, knowledge about the context, and other sources to adjust interventions and approaches as needed.

For more USAID guidance on learning, collaboration and adapting please review the USAID guidance [Incorporating CLA in Activity Management](#).

Note H: This section should take into account the “Communications Strategy” of the Activity. It may take into consideration how the qualitative information and success stories not covered by the indicators reported contribute to building experiences and lessons learned throughout the implementation. Such information complements data from Performance and Context Monitoring. The learning plan may identify mechanisms so such body of knowledge might be systematically documented and shared to reflect about it.
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5. MANAGING DATA SECTION

Guidance: This section should explain how it intends to manage data at all stages, from collection to reporting. It will do a full description of how the data and information will be collected, analyzed, and used, based on data quality standards. This section should include:

- 1) Data collection methods
- 2) Data quality procedures
- 3) Data storage procedures
- 4) The formats in which data will be held and shared
- 5) Data security protocols
- 6) Data protocols for analysis and use

If several organizations are jointly managing the Activity, this section of the AMELP should touch on how data will be consistently handled across the partners to ensure the quality of the aggregated data.

USAID/Colombia utilizes MONITOR, an on-line management information system, to track mission-funded Activities. USAID IPs should provide, report and update performance information into MONITOR (including, but not limited to, indicator data and performance results). Among the descriptions to include in this section, are all the previous procedures the IP will use for preparing the data to report in MONITOR.

The AMELP is not intended for issuing reporting. However the plan may establish some tools and methods to report data under the Quarterly Performance Reports and Annual Performance Reports of the Activity. The Performance Tracking Table (PTT) below (Table 6) may be included in those periodical reports to present updated performance data.

Note I: The data contained in the PPT at quarterly reports should be the same displayed in the USAID/Colombia web-based tracking platform “MONITOR.”

This section must also include a preliminary identification of the Open Datasets to be collected and submitted in USAID’s open data portal (www.usaid.gov/data) according to the ADS-579⁸. If all the datasets cannot be identified to the moment of the AMELP approval, it must include provisions on future collection and submission in compliance with references of the ADS-579, such as incorporation of metadata and standards for geographic (consult mandatory references [579mab](#) and [579saa](#) to ADS 579 regarding geo-location and how to report it). Datasets submitted to the DDL⁹ must also be accompanied by supporting documentation, defining the fields within the Dataset and any categories or labels within the Dataset that may require explanation to an individual not familiar with the data. This may be accomplished through the submission of a codebook or data dictionary. When available, scopes and methodologies, such as survey protocols and instruments used to collect and analyze the data must also be submitted to the DDL, along with annotations to inform the general public of any known data quality issues. Datasets must be accompanied by metadata as required by [Project Open Data](#) and other metadata assigned by USAID. This may be accomplished by following the instructions at www.usaid.gov/data.

This section should also mention that training-related information should be reported in TraiNet.

⁸ USAID will provide a suggested template to document the metadata (data dictionary) to be attached to each respective dataset.

⁹ DDL: USAID Development Data Library. It is a repository of open data sets from development interventions.

Table 5: Tracking Table for Reporting Performance Indicators

Code- Indicator Name Abbr.	Previous FY		Current Year (FY 19)							Activity Total Progress			Observations
	FY 18 Actual	FY18 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY Actual	FY Target	FY Prog. %	Total Prog	LOA Target	Total Prog %	
Act-003 # people benefitted social programs (EG.3.5-11)	7,350	7,000	405	68	682		1,115	1,000	111.5%	120,966	45,000	268.80%	Spectacular achievements to 3 rd quarter were due to unexpected willingness of communities.
Act-009 # CSO members supported (Custom)	1,464	900	280		193		473	800	59.10%	9,198	3,000	306.60%	A boom of CSO has erupted out the renewed Bajo Cauca region

Note J: Do not report anything to this table in the AMELP. This table should be used at performance reports. It is included in the AMELP for reference. Any change in the PPT template here in the plan should be reflected at performance reports

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES SECTION

Guidance: This section should provide clear and precise descriptions on the Activity's MEL structures, functions, and capabilities. It should mention which staff/position(s) will have responsibilities for MEL at the different implementation levels and their competencies. It should incorporate a plan for staff MEL capacity strengthening and collaboration/partnership with MEL organization(s) to strengthen the MEL system or fill gaps, etc.

Example of the Activity's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) structures, functions, and capabilities narratives:

Implementing the AMELP

At the start of the project, the MEL Specialist will be the person responsible for implementing the AMELP. He/she will also be responsible for building the capacity of all program staff, reporting and supervising general monitoring and evaluation approaches, practices, and tools. The MEL Specialist also cooperates with the project on the technical level, ensuring that indicators and information are reported as needed by USAID and the COR/AOR.

Information Management

With reference to ADS 203.3.3.1 g), the XX Activity supports the Mission's efforts to maintain a performance monitoring information system that holds performance indicator including data collected by this AMELP.

Strong suggestion: Add here a diagram showing the flow of the information/data since the collection in the field or in third-party sources to the performance reports, including other management task such as internal data quality routines, storage, etc.

Reporting

The MEL Specialist is in charge of producing the MEL reports on time, and in a technically valid, high quality, and policy-relevant manner, with the purpose of providing firm grounds for management decisions. He/she is responsible for developing the protocols and standard procedures to ensure that data is gathered in a technically sound manner, is consistent and can be compared throughout the years. He/she must make judgments with respect to whether or not data meets quality standards.

MEL Oversight

The Chief of Party (COP) will have responsibility for overseeing MEL, assuring that the work of the MEL Specialist(s) meets overall project needs and responds to Mission requests for information. Missions in high-visibility locations such as Colombia have frequent "data calls" and information requests, so assuring that the Activity's responses are policy and decision relevant is an important role.

Home Office Support

The XX Activity receives technical support from the home office (HO) MEL staff. [Name of IM awardee] has assigned a long-term M&E expert to the project. His/her most essential services or responsibilities will be to ensure that high standards are maintained and activities are consistent with best practices in the field. From project start-up, the HO provides specialized assistance in finalizing the AMELP and offer specialized training to the MEL team, when needed.

This section should also provide a *Performance Reporting Schedule* (a Gantt-chart is recommended) indicating the planned tasks, frequency, timeline, responsible persons, etc., for performance monitoring. Discuss relevant database systems for MEL, including databases, USAID's TraiNet, etc. The section may also mention that the Activity will cooperate with non-scheduled requests for specific MEL data updates.

Sample Performance Reporting Schedule narrative:

Activity will produce monthly and annual reports. Every third month – or quarterly – Activity will collate and update the performance data and review this with the COR/AOR. This will provide significant input to the quarterly update of the work plan schedule as activities planned for the following quarter.

Activity will provide quarterly Performance Summaries for the Mission. At the end of the fiscal year, the activity will submit an annual performance report including a compilation of the year's actual indicators results versus its corresponding targets as well as explanatory narratives. All reports are presented in draft to the COR/AOR before final submission.

Note K: IPS should allocate enough financial and human resources for implementing all of what is proposed in the AMELP.

7. ACTIVITY PIRS AND CIRS

Guidance: This section should include the PIRS and CIRS of all the indicators selected for this plan.

8. ANNEXES

Guidance: Annex may include all detailed descriptions of topics and elements of the AMELP such as data collection instruments for surveys, key informant interviews or focus groups used along the implementation of the AMELP. It may include methodological approaches and descriptions of data sources.