**How-To Note: Prepare & Maintain a Performance Management Plan**

This resource describes how to prepare and maintain a Performance Management Plan.

**Introduction**

This How-To Note supplements ADS 201.3.2.16. It provides an overview of the Performance Management Plan (PMP) and outlines practical steps for developing and maintaining a PMP. The primary audience includes Program Officers, M&E Specialists, learning advisors, technical officers, and Project Managers.

**Background**

A PMP is a Mission-wide tool for planning and managing the process of (1) monitoring strategic progress, project performance, programmatic assumptions, and operational context; (2) evaluating performance and impact; and (3) learning and adapting from evidence. Missions use the PMP to inform the allocation of resources to support Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) efforts, portfolio review processes, and Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) mid-course stocktaking.

Each Mission must prepare a Mission-wide PMP within six months of CDCS approval. The Mission Director must approve the initial PMP and then it must be uploaded to the CDCS and PMP Directory on ProgramNet. Missions that do not have a CDCS are required to have a PMP covering all projects they fund.

*It is not expected that the initial PMP will be comprehensive upon approval. The PMP is continually updated over the life of a CDCS because projects and activities are typically designed after the PMP is approved.*

A Mission may update the PMP at any time, but must review and update the PMP following the annual strategic portfolio review and following each new Project Appraisal Document (PAD) approval. Updates to the PMP should include any new indicators or monitoring approaches, planned evaluations, and learning efforts.
Format and Content of the PMP

There is no standard format for a PMP. Missions should use a format that best fits their management and communication needs. There are, however, minimum content requirements for a PMP as described in ADS 201.3.2.16, though Missions may include additional content in the PMP to suit their performance management needs. Templates for required elements are available in the Monitoring Toolkit. PMPs should provide clear and concise information that can easily be reviewed and updated to reflect actual mission priorities and plans. The rest of this section discusses both the minimum required content, including what is required at PMP approval, and the recommended content for a PMP.

INTRODUCTION OR OVERVIEW (Recommended)

This recommended section introduces the PMP and describes its structure. It may reiterate or elaborate on the Mission’s overall priorities and approach to monitoring, evaluation, and learning as described in the CDCS. It may also include a summary of how the Mission organizes its performance management process and any overarching Mission-specific principles of performance management. It may reference but need not duplicate the Mission’s Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Mission Orders.

THE CDCS RESULTS FRAMEWORK (Recommended)

Although not required, it is good practice to include the CDCS Results Framework graphic(s). Indicators in the PMP may then be included alongside the Results Framework graphic to illustrate the relationship between expected results and indicators to provide an overall picture of the strategy and how it will be monitored.

The PMP should not include any unapproved modifications of the CDCS development hypotheses or the Results Framework. If the consideration of performance indicators, evaluations, or other learning activities during PMP development prompts the need to modify the CDCS development hypotheses or Results Framework, these modifications should be captured in an update or amendment to the CDCS document (see ADS 201.3.2.19). Upon approval of the CDCS modification, the PMP would then be updated to reflect any implications for monitoring, evaluation, or learning.

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DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE MONITORING PLANS (Required)

Development Objective Monitoring Plans describe how performance and context will be monitored. For each Development Objective, the Monitoring Plan should include: performance indicators; supplemental information about each performance indicator; a description of additional efforts for monitoring Development Objective programmatic progress and performance; and a description of efforts for monitoring contextual conditions relevant to a Development Objective.

Performance Indicators
PMPs must include a list or table of the performance indicators that will be used to monitor progress toward a Development Objective. However, performances indicators of Development Objectives themselves are not required. In lieu of performance indicators at the Development Objective level, a combination of performance indicators at the Intermediate Result (IR) and sub-Intermediate Result (sub-IR) levels of the CDCS Results Framework is considered sufficient for monitoring progress toward a Development Objective.

At minimum, performance indicators in the PMP must include:

- At least one performance indicator for each IR identified in the Results Framework;
- At least one performance indicator for each sub-IR identified in the Results Framework; and
- At least one performance indicator for any Project Purpose that is not aligned to a single IR or sub-IR, following PAD approval. This includes Project Purpose indicators for projects aligned to a Development Objective or not aligned to a single IR or sub-IR in the Results Framework. (Project Purpose indicators typically are aligned to a single IR or sub-IR in the Results Framework, in which case the project indicators developed during project design are expected to replace any illustrative IR and sub-IR indicators upon approval of a PAD.)

These required performance indicators for measuring IRs, sub-IRs, and Project Purposes should be measures of expected outcomes of USAID assistance rather than measures of USAID activity outputs.

All other performance indicators collected by a Mission, such as those included in Project and Activity MEL Plans, are not required to be included in the PMP.

At initial approval of the PMP, performance indicators for measuring the Results Framework IRs and sub-IRs are required to be included in the PMP, but may still be preliminary if the projects that are expected to achieve these results have not yet been approved. The selection of project indicators and any necessary revisions to preliminary IR and sub-IR indicators should be completed during the project design process and included in an update to the PMP following PAD approval.

Beyond these minimum requirements, Missions have the discretion to decide whether or not to include additional performance indicators in a PMP. For instance, Missions may choose to include in their PMP:

- Performance indicator(s) for monitoring a Development Objective;
- Additional performance indicators for monitoring each IR or sub-IR;
- Some or all performance indicators for monitoring expected results in a project logic model;
- Performance indicators reported to the Performance Plan and Report (PPR), or other performance indicators the Mission frequently reports on; or
• Gender-sensitive indicators that monitor specific gender-related goals for the Development Objective or projects (see ADS 205).

While Missions may choose to include an extensive list of performance indicators in their PMP, the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) recommends that Missions limit the total number of performance indicators in their PMP to a number that is both useful and manageable. To this end, PPL recommends that Missions:

1. Limit the number of performance indicators monitoring a single IR or sub-IR to no more than three.

2. Limit performance indicators selected for inclusion in the PMP to those most relevant for making management decisions at the strategy level. This would include, for instance, performance indicators that monitor significant outcomes that help to determine if a development hypothesis remains relevant and whether expected progress toward a Development Objective is on track. Indicators likely to be reviewed during a portfolio review or used for making decisions about adaptations or amendments to the strategy are good candidates for including in the PMP.

3. Limit the inclusion of other performance indicators to those that are otherwise important to Mission management (e.g., indicators frequently used to respond to Washington requests).

For many Missions, the minimum set of performance indicators required for inclusion in a PMP may be sufficient.

When including performance indicators in a Development Objective Monitoring Plan, PPL recommends including them in a Performance Indicator Summary Table along with some of the key supplemental information described below. A template for a Performance Indicator Summary Table is available in the Monitoring Toolkit.

**Supplemental Information about Each Performance Indicator**

For every performance indicator included in the PMP, baseline data and end-of-CDCS or end-of-project targets must be included in the PMP. If baselines have not yet been collected or targets not yet set, the PMP should include plans to collect baseline data and set targets. Per ADS 201.3.5.7, actual performance monitoring indicator data must be stored in an indicator tracking table or monitoring information system, but these regularly updated tracking tables are not a required part of the PMP.

In addition, indicator reference information for each performance indicator must be included in a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) as part of the Development Objective Monitoring Plan. However, if a performance indicator is included in the PMP as preliminary or tentative (for instance because a PAD associated with an IR is still under development) and data collection has not started, the PIRS need not be included in the PMP. Following finalization of the performance indicator, a PIRS must be completed within three months of the start of data collection. A Recommended PIRS Template and Guidance is available in the Monitoring Toolkit.

**Description of Additional Efforts for Monitoring Development Objective Programmatic Progress and Performance**

Performance indicators are neither the only – nor always the best – means of monitoring expected results within a Development Objective. For instance, performance indicators may not adequately capture progress toward the achievement of particularly broad, complex, or qualitative results to which
USAID contributes. In such cases, a Development Objective Monitoring Plan may include descriptions of other efforts that will be useful for monitoring expected results, such as periodic narrative reports, qualitative assessments, partner meetings, and expert panel reports. For example, a Development Objective focusing on improving civil society may use infrequent but repeated household surveys to measure public support for democracy, supplemented by the more frequent convening of an expert panel to review changes in government laws and regulations, as evidence of changes in the enabling environment for civil society.

Description of Efforts for Monitoring Contextual Conditions Relevant to a Development Objective

Context monitoring is the systematic collection of information about conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation and performance of a Mission or Washington OU’s strategy, projects, and activities. Each Development Objective Monitoring Plan should describe what the Mission will do to monitor context for each Development Objective. Missions should include a list or table of any context indicators for monitoring assumptions or risks that may affect Development Objective progress or the operational context in which strategies and projects are being implemented. If the PMP does not include performance indicators of a Development Objective in the CDCS Results Framework, a mission may choose to monitor a Development Objective with a context indicator. While context indicators are not required to have indicator reference information, Context Indicator Reference Sheets (CIRs) are recommended and may be included in an annex with the PIRSs. More information for developing a CIRS is available in the Monitoring Toolkit.

As with performance monitoring, indicators alone may not be sufficient for monitoring context. Any planned context monitoring efforts should also be included and addressed in this section, as needed.

EVALUATION PLAN (Required)

The PMP Evaluation Plan identifies, summarizes, and tracks all evaluations as they are planned across the Mission and over the entire CDCS timeframe. The Evaluation Plan must include the following information for each planned evaluation, as it becomes available:

- The strategy, project, or activity to be evaluated;
- Evaluation purpose and expected use;
- Evaluation type (performance or impact);
- Possible evaluation questions;
- Whether it is external or internal;
- Whether it fulfills an evaluation requirement or is a non-required evaluation;
- Estimated budget;
- Planned start date; and
- Estimated completion date.

The Evaluation Plan may include additional information about each evaluation at the Mission’s discretion. Missions should consider including the information that is required to be provided on an annual basis in the Evaluation Registry, since this will facilitate the process of inputting data into the Evaluation Registry. A sample Evaluation Plan and Schedule Template is available in the Evaluation Toolkit.
Missions may also choose to include an overarching narrative in this section on the Mission’s approach to the planning and implementation of evaluations over the life of the CDCS. This may include information on Mission-wide evaluation priorities, efforts to improve gender-sensitive evaluation practices, expectations when commissioning evaluations of strategic importance, etc.

At initial approval of the PMP, the Evaluation Plan is only required to include summary information on evaluations currently planned for ongoing projects and activities. As new projects and activities are designed, additional evaluations should be added.

**COLLABORATING, LEARNING, AND ADAPTING PLAN (Required)**

The Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Plan of the PMP defines how the Mission will strategically collaborate, continuously learn, and adaptively manage its programs for maximum effectiveness. CLA approaches include: collaborating intentionally with stakeholders to share knowledge and reduce duplication of effort, learning systematically by drawing on evidence from a variety of sources and taking time to reflect on implementation, and applying learning by adapting intentionally. The [CLA Framework](#) illustrates the components of CLA.

Developing a CLA Plan helps ensure that learning is planned, resourced, integrated into ongoing tasks, and acted on in ways that can maximize results.

**Contents of a CLA Plan**

The CLA Plan must include information on how CLA efforts will support the Mission’s CDCS and describe Mission-level actions and processes to address:

- Strategic collaboration;
- Learning at the strategy level;
- Opportunities for reflecting on progress to inform adaptation; and
- Resourcing these activities.

It may also address other parts of the CLA Framework, including enabling conditions – organizational culture and processes – that support learning.

The types of activities and processes outlined in CLA Plans may include: facilitating partners’ efforts to collaborate through joint work planning or other means; developing a learning agenda to address critical gaps in knowledge; contributing to or organizing knowledge sharing forums; and planning for reflection sessions to consider learning from implementation, shifting priorities, and necessary adaptations.

For each CLA action or process listed, PPL recommends that the plan address:

- **Roles and Responsibilities**: Which office or staff member will be responsible for leading the action or process?
- **Expected Outcomes**: What is the intended outcome for each action item? What will change as a result of implementing the identified process or action?
- **Timeline**: What are the key milestones and/or deadlines for the action items?
- **Resources**: What resources (including staff time, mechanisms, implementing partners, funding, etc.) will be used to implement the action item?
- **Next Steps**: What are the steps to be taken to implement this action?
For more information, see Drafting a Collaborating, Learning and Adapting Plan.

**SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Required)**

The Schedule of Performance Management Tasks and Responsibilities lists the performance management tasks the Mission anticipates conducting over the life of the CDCS and identifies the timeframe and office or individual responsible for the listed task. The schedule may be a simple matrix or calendar outlining the responsible office or officer and timing of each task, or it may go into more detail about the tasks and roles of staff involved. Typical performance management tasks in the schedule include:

- Updating and revising the PMP (particularly when new PADs are approved);
- Collecting and analyzing data;
- Conducting Data Quality Assessments (DQAs);
- Designing and conducting evaluations as planned, needed, and/or required; and
- Periodic and intentional opportunities for reflection to inform adaptation, including portfolio reviews and mid-course stocktaking of the CDCS.

The schedule of tasks and responsibilities should be consistent with ADS 201 and the Mission’s approved Mission Orders on monitoring and evaluation. Recommended Staff Roles and Responsibilities for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning are described in the Monitoring Toolkit.

**RESOURCES FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TASKS (Required)**

This section provides a description of human and financial resources needed for planned monitoring, evaluation, and CLA efforts described in the PMP. Performance management is often under-resourced, so this section provides an opportunity to identify necessary resources; make a realistic commitment of resources to monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and plan for procurement and other actions to mobilize these resources.

There are no specific requirements for the content of this section. Much of the information is likely to follow from information included in the other sections of the PMP, particularly the Schedule of Performance Management Tasks and Responsibilities. Questions to consider addressing in this section include:

- How much will it cost to procure planned external evaluations, studies, and assessments and what human resources will be needed to manage them?
- Will the Mission procure a Mission-wide or technical office MEL support contract?
- What resources will be used to ensure collaboration among partners and other stakeholders?
- Will new staff need to be hired (such as M&E Specialists or Learning Advisors) to support tasks identified in the PMP?
- What resources are needed to collect and manage the context and performance indicators at the highest levels of the CDCS Results Framework?
- Will the Mission procure services for DQAs or will DQAs be conducted by Mission staff?
- What staff resources should be dedicated to preparing, conducting, and documenting the annual strategic portfolio review?
• Will the Mission expend resources or staff time to build staff skills and experience in monitoring, evaluation, and learning?

There are also no requirements on how to organize the content in this section. For instance, the information may be organized by Development Objective or by category of performance management tasks (i.e., monitoring, evaluation, and learning), but it should allow for easy updating as plans change.

OTHER OPTIONAL PMP SECTIONS

Missions may choose to include other sections in the PMP, as needed, such as plans for developing the monitoring and evaluation capacity of local organizations or individuals. If a Mission has or intends to contract a monitoring, evaluation, and learning support platform, they may wish to include a section describing how the support contract will work with Mission staff to implement the PMP.

Developing the PMP

This section describes recommended steps to develop an initial PMP following CDCS approval.

1. ASSEMBLE A PMP TEAM, DEVELOP A WORKPLAN, AND LAUNCH THE PROCESS

Following CDCS approval, the Program Office, led by the M&E Point of Contact (POC), typically shepherds the PMP development process with significant contributions from Development Objective Teams, Project Managers, and/or technical offices. (For simplicity, this document will henceforth use “Development Objective Teams” to refer to Development Objective Team, technical offices, or other structures for managing activities under a Development Objective.)

PPL recommends that each Development Objective Team designate a POC to be part of a PMP core team that develops a PMP outline and workplan and supports the PMP development process. The workplan may include: major tasks to be completed, a tentative list of responsible individuals (e.g., drafters, reviewers, etc.), and timelines for completing key tasks. A kick-off session, led by the Mission Director or core team helps introduce the vision for the PMP to Mission staff; sets a shared goal of completing the PMP; and clarifies tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines.

2. HOLD DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE WORKING SESSIONS

Most of the PMP can be completed by Development Objective Teams working in parallel with each other. Led by the Program Office or the PMP core team, they should:

2a. Revisit the Results Framework and CDCS MEL Section

Make sure the development hypothesis and key results from the CDCS are clearly understood across the Development Objective Team as these will affect approaches to the Monitoring, Evaluation, and CLA Plans. Review the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Section in the CDCS to understand priorities, approaches, and the knowledge gaps identified during CDCS development.

2b. Review and Select Performance Indicators

Review all preliminary performance indicators developed for the CDCS Results Framework Indicator Annex, along with current performance indicators from existing projects that are aligned to the new CDCS. Preliminary Results Framework performance indicators from the CDCS may need to be revised for inclusion in the PMP, as needed. PPL does not recommend spending time on revising preliminary Results Framework performance indicators that are likely to be modified during
upcoming project design processes. Development Objective Teams may also wish to review performance indicators included in the Mission’s PPR and consult with implementing partners and other stakeholders regarding possible performance indicators to include in the PMP for learning and managing at the Development Objective level. For each performance indicator selected for inclusion in the PMP, Development Objective Teams must determine the baseline or develop plans to collect baseline data. Similarly, for each performance indicator, Development Objective Teams must set end-of-CDCS or end-of-project targets, or develop plans to set such targets within a reasonable timeframe. If data collection has already started for a performance indicator included in the PMP, then the Development Objective Team should ensure that the PIRS for that indicator is complete and sufficient.

2c. Consider Other Performance Monitoring and Context Monitoring Efforts
Following the selection of performance indicators, discuss, decide upon, and describe any additional needs for monitoring performance within the Development Objective, or for monitoring the context relevant to the achievement of the Development Objective. PPL recommends the selection of context indicators for monitoring progress toward Development Objectives.

2d. Identify Proposed Evaluations
Identify the evaluations already planned for ongoing projects and activities for inclusion in the Evaluation Plan. Information about evaluations of new projects and activities may be added to the Evaluation Plan following the completion of project and activity design processes. However, PMP development is an appropriate time to consider which current or future project(s) within a Development Objective may undergo a whole-of-project evaluation (see ADS 201.3.5.13). Development Objective Teams may also determine at this stage if they plan to conduct evaluations of the entire Development Objective, evaluations that cut across projects within the Development Objective, or evaluations that cut across Development Objectives.

2e. Discuss CLA Opportunities at the Strategy Level
The PMP core team or a Learning Advisor, if one exists at the Mission, should facilitate a discussion per the Drafting a CLA Plan Guidance and CLA Plan Template with each Development Objective Team on strategic collaboration, learning at the strategy level, and opportunities for reflecting on progress to inform adaptation.

3. INCORPORATE WORKING SESSION DECISIONS INTO MISSION PLANS
Using the information gleaned in working sessions with each Development Objective Team, the PMP core team should incorporate each session’s findings into the Development Objective Monitoring Plans, Evaluation Plan, and CLA Plan. The core team should look for opportunities where cross-Development Objective efforts can be established to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and opportunities for learning.

4. COMPLETE THE REMAINING SECTIONS
Following the completion of the Development Objective Monitoring Plans, Evaluation Plan, and CLA Plan, the PMP core team should work with the Development Objective Teams to fill in the Schedule of Tasks and Responsibilities and determine the level of resources needed for performance management tasks specified in the PMP. Additional elective PMP sections should be completed at this time.

5. MISSION DIRECTOR APPROVAL
The Mission Director reviews, comments on, and ultimately approves the initial Mission-wide PMP.
within six months of CDCS approval.

**Updating, Sharing, and Using the PMP**

Initial approval of the PMP is just the beginning. A PMP is only valuable for informing Mission decision making if it is updated, shared, and actively used.

**UPDATE**

Although the PMP is approved six months after the CDCS, it is not expected that the PMP will be comprehensive upon approval. The PMP is updated and changed over the life of a CDCS as new projects and activities are designed; strategies, projects, and activities are modified during implementation; or performance management efforts require adaptation to better serve Mission needs. Missions must keep the PMP up-to-date to reflect:

- Changes in the CDCS;
- Updates following each annual strategic portfolio review;
- Approval of new projects or modifications to existing projects;
- Addition of new monitoring indicators or revision of existing indicators;
- Identification of new evaluations to be conducted; or
- Identification of new learning needs and efforts to address those needs.

At minimum, the Mission should review and update the PMP at least once per year as part of the Mission’s portfolio review process as described in the PMP Schedule of Tasks and Responsibilities.

Mission Director approval is not required on the iterative updates made to the PMP following initial approval, although Missions may set their own procedures for Mission Director involvement in reviewing updates and revisions to the PMP.

**SHARE**

It is critical for Missions to share relevant parts of the PMP with external entities contributing to USAID’s performance management processes. For instance, PIRSs should be shared with implementing partners reporting on indicators in the PMP. Other stakeholders, such as joint funders or country partners, may also value understanding USAID performance management efforts as described in the PMP. Prior to sharing the PMP, procurement sensitive information should be removed, such as plans for evaluations that will be contracted. All initially approved PMPs must be uploaded to the CDCS and PMP Directory on ProgramNet. Updated PMPs are not required to be uploaded to ProgramNet.

**USE**

As a plan, the PMP should document a Mission’s expected efforts to monitor, evaluate, and learn from the implementation of the CDCS. In particular, the PMP should be used to:

- Set expectations about monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts over the life of the CDCS;
- Ensure that monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts are adequate to facilitate strategic learning and adaptively manage implementation of the strategy;
• Highlight monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts that require coordination across teams so that these efforts are efficient and mutually reinforcing.

Ultimately, Missions should use the monitoring data, evaluation reports, and learning that result from the planned efforts described in the PMP. See the Monitoring Toolkit, Evaluation Toolkit and CLA Toolkit for further information on using monitoring data, evaluations, and learning activities.