

WEB-BASED MONITORING

A Training Workshop Report and Guidance Document for MEAL Section



26-28 DECEMBER 2024
COAST FOUNDATION



Abbreviations

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
RBM	Result-Based Monitoring/ Management
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
RF	Result Framework
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
CBCPC	Community-Based Child Protection Committee
PD	Project Document

Contents

1. Introduction	04
a. Objectives of the Training Workshop	04
2. Training Workshop Methodology	04
3. Discussion and Outcome	04
a. Monitoring	04
b. Level of Monitoring	04
c. Result Based Monitoring	05
d. Result Based Management	05
e. Gaps and Improvement area in RBM implementation	05
f. Logical Framework Approach (LFA)	06
i. Component of logical framework	06
g. Indicator	07
i. Purpose of Indicator	07
ii. Classification of Indicator	07
iii. Developing indicator	08
h. Hands on Practice on Kobo Toolbox	08
i. MEAL Standard	09
j. Difference Between Normal and System Systematic MEAL	09
k. Data Collection	10
l. Hands-on Practice on Beneficiary Card Preparation	10
m. Data Quality	11
n. MEAL Plan and Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)	11
4. Resource Mapping for MEAL section	11
5. Recommendation for MEAL Section	12
6. Action Plan	12
7. Conclusion	12
 Content Box	
i. COAST Stepped Towards Web-based Monitoring	8
ii. Community Reporting	11

1. Introduction

COAST Foundation organized a training workshop on Result-Based Monitoring at COAST Charfassion Center, Bhola, on 9-11 January 2025. The 25 participants in the training session comprised Assistant Directors, Project Managers, M&E Officers, Field Monitoring Officers, Head-MEAL, Project Officers and Information Management Officers.

This MEAL report and guidance document presents the key learnings of MEAL and RBM and will be used as a guidance document for MEAL practices within the organization. This guidance document presents tools, templates and training resources to COAST's donor-funded projects to meet each of the MEAL standards. This document supports:

- An understanding on RBM & MEAL standards and practice of COAST's donor-funded humanitarian and development projects.
- A guidance documents for systematic MEAL adaption and practice.
- Professional development for MEAL/M&E staff through self-learning.

a. Objectives of the Training Workshop

1. To enhance understanding of MEAL and RBM.
2. To enhance the conceptual knowledge on Logical Framework/Log Frame.
3. To be familiar with different MEAL tools.
4. To identify gaps in practicing systematic MEAL and offer recommendations to overcome them.
5. To develop a guidance document for organizational MEAL system.

2. Training Workshop Methodology

- Discussion and presentation on training contents.
- Hands-on practice on MEAL tools design, Kobo questionnaire develop, beneficiary card design, data cleaning and analysis.
- Group work to identify gaps in MEAL practice and recommendation.
- Project-wise group work to develop action plan for MEAL system.

3. Discussions and Outcome

Currently, COAST practices traditional, non-digital MEAL in its programs and projects. This training workshop is designed to adopt a systematic web-based MEAL practice for humanitarian and development projects. Training sessions were designed around these topics.

a. Monitoring

Monitoring is an ongoing/continuous and systematic process of gathering data/information about:

- use of resources in a program/project;
- progress of activities;
- progress of outputs;
- the way different activities are carried out; and
- external factors.

b. Level of Monitoring

Two levels of monitoring are usually discussed in systematic MEAL practice.

1. Activity or Process Monitoring is the process of monitoring interventions by program personnel. Essentially, all program personnel are involved in activity monitoring.
2. Result Monitoring is measured in two results forms, such as output and outcome monitoring.

What is Result?

- A result is a describable or measurable change in a state or condition arising from a cause-and-effect relationship.
- The changes can be intended or unintended, positive and/or negative.

Key Takeaways

1. Monitoring is not just foreseeing or looking after who is doing what. It's all about collecting data or information in a systematic way, which requires project- and activity-specific monitoring tools.
2. Activity or Process Monitoring does not necessarily require MEAL or M&E Officer; it can be done by the PIU.
3. For result monitoring (e.g. Output and Outcome monitoring) MEAL or M&E staff is required because it requires systematic process of data collection and then processing that data into information.
4. Monitoring can include Activity Monitoring, Process Monitoring, Output Monitoring, and Outcome Monitoring. The purpose of monitoring is to track progress against indicators and objectives of the project.
5. Every project must develop project-specific monitoring tools.



Md Shahinur Islam, AD-Humanitarian Response, facilitating RBM session.

c. Result-based Monitoring

Result-based Monitoring is a continuous process of collecting and analyzing information to compare how well a project, program, or policy is being implemented against targets.

d. Result-based Management

Result-based management is a management strategy by

which all actors contribute directly or achieve a set of results, ensuring that their processes, products, and services contribute to the desired results (output, outcome, higher-level goal or impact), and use information and evidence on actual results to inform decision-making on the design and delivery of programs and activities as well for accountability and reporting.

e. Gaps and Improvement Area in RBM Implementation

Participants found out several gaps and improvement areas in RBM implementation in group works at the training sessions.

Gaps in RBM Implementation

Project Level	Organizational Level
Absence of M&E officers in every project	Lack of dedicated human resource for MEAL
Absence of data management process	Lack of systematic MEAL practice, web-based MEAL
Absence of MEAL framework	Lack of data management process
Absence of capacity building training	Lack of MEAL framework
Absence of advance-level data management	Lack of advance-level data management

Area of Improvement in RBM Implementation

Project Level	Organizational Level
Set up fully independent MEAL section	Set up web-based MEAL system
Gather technical expertise	Align project LF with organizational thematic area
Arrange training and follow-up	Conduct centrally-monitored regular RBM
Put in place centrally supported monitoring/ data analysis tools	Ensure data protection policy
Promote data visualization	Organize project-based workshop to share learning

Purpose: the purposes of using log frame are-

- **Planning:** It helps organize and structure the key elements of a project.
- **Tracking:** It enables us to monitor the progress of a project.
- **Monitoring:** It allows us to keep an eye on the project's advancement.
- **Evaluation:** This helps assess the progress of the project.
- **Identifying Risks:** This helps recognize potential risks and issues that need attention.



Participants present group work slides.

f. Logical Framework Approach (LFA)

The Logical Framework Approach (Log frame) is a structured planning, monitoring, and evaluation tool widely used to connect inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts to achieve project goals effectively.

i. Components of Logical Framework Approach

Component	Definition	Examples
Input	The resources required to implement project activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human resources: Project staff, trainers, facilitators. Financial resources: Donations, funding from stakeholders.
Activity	Interventions conducted to achieve specific outputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material resources: Equipment, tools, and supplies needed. Conduct training on income-generating activities (IGA) such as tailoring or gardening/distribution of cash grants.
Output	Immediate, tangible results achieved upon completion of activities. In other words, outputs are results of inputs and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of women trained in homestead gardening. Quantity of tools or cash distributed among beneficiaries.
Outcome	Short-to-medium-term changes or benefits resulting from the outputs, intermediate effects of an intervention's outputs. Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of women who started practicing in homestead gardening. Percentage of program participants with knowledge of basic health rules and practices.
Impact	Long-term, overarching changes or improvements resulting from the outcomes, often aligned with the project's ultimate goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved financial stability. Reduction in poverty levels and improved quality of life.

Key Takeaways

1. LFA is often called Result Framework. Different funding partners use either term.
2. LFA is a tool used to analyze how the inputs and activities bring output and outcome and how they are going to help achieve the project/program goal.
3. For an understanding of an entire project, it is necessary to understand its LFA/RF.
4. LFA/RF is mandatory for designing Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP), MEAL Plan, and Risk Mitigation Plan.
5. In a nutshell, before taking up a project/program, the development partner and the implementing partner are required to agree on the project proposal and then sign an MoU. These documents contain the project's LFA/RF. This document details how exactly the inputs and activities will bring results and will ultimately achieve the goal.
6. Understanding the components of LFA is crucial. Input is the required resource by which designed activities will be implemented. Efficient implementation of activities will bring timely and effective results. And the result will ensure the intended impact, leading to the achievement of the project goal as targeted before undertaking the project. It is important to remember that impact is the long-term change that benefits the targeted population.

g. Indicator

An indicator is a measurable variable or factor that helps monitor and evaluate the progress, performance, or success of a project, program, or policy. Indicators are crucial for assessing whether objectives are being achieved and for identifying areas needing improvement.

i. Purpose of Indicators:

- To track progress at different stages (output, outcome, impact).
- To provide evidence for decision-making.
- To measure effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of activities.

ii. Classification of Indicators

Primarily there are two types of indicators.

1) Quantitative indicator: is a numerical or statistical measure that provides objective data to assess progress or outcomes. These indicators are often expressed in terms of numbers, percentages, ratios, or frequencies.

2) Qualitative indicator: is a descriptive or subjective measure that captures perceptions, attitudes, experiences, or the quality of a process or outcome. These indicators often complement quantitative data by providing deeper insights. To monitor, evaluate and assess the level of impact, we must track the following indicators.

Indicator	Definition	Example
Input Indicators	Measure resources provided for the project.	No. of training materials distributed.
Activity Indicators	Measure actions taken to achieve outputs.	No. of training sessions held.
Output Indicators	Measure the immediate results of activities.	No. of participants trained in vocational skills.
Outcome Indicators	Measure medium-term changes in behavior, knowledge, or skills.	Percent of trainees who secured employment after the program.
Impact Indicators	Measure long-term, broader effects of the project.	Women of fisher folk in Teknaf Upazila contributing an average of 30% of their income to their family.

i. COAST Steps Toward Web-based Monitoring

COAST is set to launch a web-based monitoring system soon, which is currently under development. As part of a systematic, real-time MEAL approach, all projects will be integrated into this platform, enabling the central MEAL team to access real-time data.

A key feature of this system is the interactive dashboard, which will track targets, plans, and achievements in real time, ensuring efficient monitoring and reporting. Additionally, a cloud storage system will be established for all project and program documents, providing secure, centralized data management and easy access. This will streamline data sharing and enhance informed decision-making across projects.

iii. Developing Indicators:

Developing indicators is a critical component of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. Effective indicators help measure progress, outcomes, and impact of a project.

While designing indicators, we will apply the SMART framework. We can use this framework to create strong, practical, and meaningful indicators in humanitarian and development programs.

SMART Indicator	Definition and Example
S-Specific	What we intend to measure should be specific. Example: instead of “Grade 3 students who received education materials,” let’s use “Number of students who received education materials.”
M-Measurable	Data should be quantifiable or qualitatively assessable. Example: “Percentage of households using safe drinking water.”
A-Achievable	Make sure that indicators are realistic in line with resources, time, and capacity. Example: For Child Protection Project in Rohingya Camps, we may choose to set an indicator like “Child marriage stopped in Rohingya Camps.” This is an extremely ambitious indicator and is often unrealistic. Instead, we can rather say: “Percentage of child marriage reduced in camp 14”.
R-Relevant	Indicators should directly relate to the project objectives. Example: “Number of CBCPC members received training on positive parenting.”
T-Time-bound	Indicators should specify a timeframe for achieving results. Example: “Increase literacy rates among girls aged 10–15 in rural areas by 20% within three years.”

h. Hands-on Practice on Kobo Toolbox

A hands-on session was conducted to train participants in data collection using Kobo Toolbox, covering design, data entry, and real-time visualization. They practiced creation of digital surveys, addition of validation criteria, and use of forms for offline data collection. Participants also learned to upload, analyze, and export data while following best practices for reporting and data preservation. The session emphasized on data integrity, secure storage, and dashboard creation for decision-making. By the end of the training, participants gained practical skills to develop questionnaire in Kobo Toolbox for use in preparation of survey questionnaire and data processing as well as output and outcome monitoring, alongside project evaluation.

Key Takeaways

1. All indicators should be monitored and evaluated throughout the project duration.
2. To track indicators, it is preferable for a systematic MEAL to prepare IPTT at the very beginning of the project.
3. IPTT is a tracking table or format where every indicator is tracked on a regular basis. It shows the real-time progress against each indicator.
4. All indicators should fulfil the SMART criteria.



Hands on practice session on Kobo Questionnaire design.

i. MEAL Standards

There are some set standards for MEAL. Based on some of these core standards, different organizations set up MEAL standards to build their own MEAL system. Some of these standards widely used by international organizations are listed below. During the sessions, training participants and facilitators built on those standards, incorporating some additional features to formulate COAST MEAL standards.

1. A theory of change, LFA or RF are developed or put in place with guidance from the PD.
 - 1.1 Projects and programs have a ToC, clearly defining how the goal will be achieved.
 - 1.2 Develop LFA or RF.
2. MEAL Planning and Budgets
 - 2.1 Defining the project or the program's MEAL approach, processes and structure. For this, we need to develop a project-based MEAL frame work.
 - 2.2 Allocate or define required human resources for MEAL activities.
 - 2.3 Allocate required budget for MEAL activities.
 - 2.4 Develop MEAL plan and required tools for MEAL activities.
3. Baseline
 - 3.1 Determine baseline and disaggregation, and set a target for each indicator.
 - 3.2 For baseline, conduct baseline survey.
4. Evaluation
 - 4.1 Develop Evaluation Plan for the project/program.
 - 4.2 Complete evaluation plans.
5. Data Collection, Analysis and Use of Data
 - 5.1 Develop data collection tools based on requirements.
 - 5.2 Conduct monitoring and data collection activities.
 - 5.3 Ensure all the data are systematically collected, recorded, and updated on the dashboard.
 - 5.4 Conduct Data Quality Assessment.
 - 5.5 Analyze and interpret disaggregated data and generate reports and information.
6. Accountability
 - 6.1 Ensure CFRM channels.
 - 6.2 Document all the complaints, feedback and suggestions.
 - 6.3 Share learnings.

j. Difference Between M&E System and Systematic MEAL

Based on the discussion and knowledge sharing, facilitators and participants differentiated between traditional, off-line M&E/MEAL system and web-based MEAL.

Components	Traditional, off-line M&E/MEAL System	Web-based MEAL
MONITORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly, it conducts process monitoring and periodic monitoring which is less adaptive. • Tracks activities and outputs mostly on funding partners' requirements. • Collects data periodically, but has inconsistency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures constant monitoring, enabling quick response and adaptive management. • Tracks process, activities, output, outcome, and impact to ensure constant learning and adaptation. • Data are collected systematically and in a structured manner. These data are collected on a real-time basis, ensuring data quality and consistency.

EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations are carried out. These are mostly centered around funding partners' requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, impact, and sustainability throughout the project lifecycle. Frequent, ongoing operations research. Focused on improvements. Emphasizes program needs.
ACCOUNTABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability is mainly focused on donor reporting. Feedback mechanisms are often missing or less prioritized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures two-way accountability to organization, donor, beneficiaries and stakeholders. CFRM functions strongly within the organization.
LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learnings mentioned in the report are based only on implemented activities. Mostly, output and outcome level data are collected, which rarely or slightly influence the decision-making process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always focuses on adaptive learning and influences future projects. Data are used to improve program design. Systematically documents learnings and applies them.

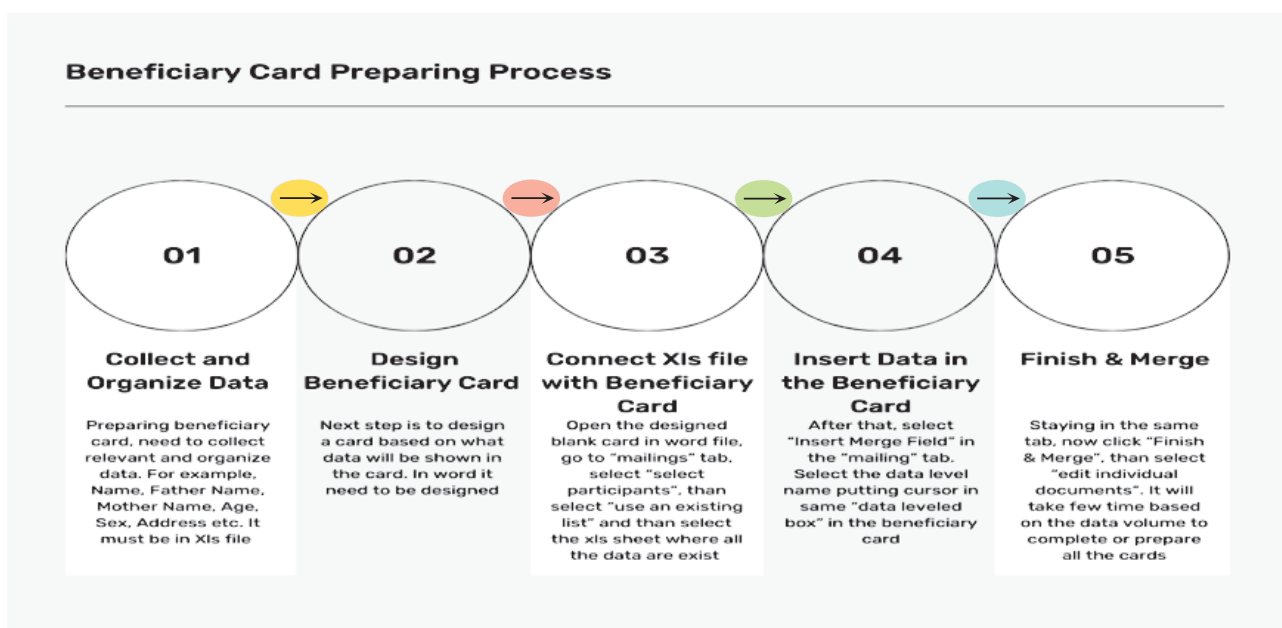
k. Data Collection

The session focused on data collection methods, the types of data required for project monitoring as well as evaluation and hands-on practice using Kobo toolbox. For decision-making, mainly two types of data are collected, processed, stored, cleaned and used.

Qualitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deals with descriptions. Data can be observed but not measured. Colors, textures, smells, tastes, appearance, beauty, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public hearing, testimonials. Observation of Focus Group Discussion participants. Document analysis, KII.
Quantitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deals with numbers. Data that can be measured. Length, height, area, volume, weight, speed, time, temperature, humidity, sound levels, cost, members, ages, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey Census Questionnaire

l. Hands-on Practice on Beneficiary Card Preparation

A hands-on session was conducted during the training to equip participants with practical skills for preparing beneficiary cards using MS Word and MS Excel. The process to prepare Beneficiary Cards for large number of populations in a short time using MS word and Excel is listed below.



m. Data Quality

Accurate and authentic data help the management team to make the right decision. This is why ensuring data quality is crucial. Five key features of quality data are presented below.

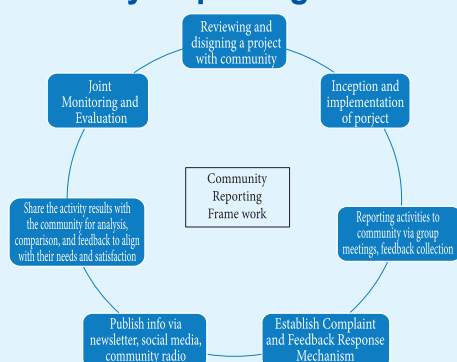
Validity	Integrity	Precision	Reliability	Timeliness
Data should represent the intended results clearly and adequately.	Data should have safeguards to minimize risk of bias, transcription error, or manipulation.	Data should have a sufficient level of details to facilitate informed decision-making.	They should reflect consistent data collection process and analysis methods over time.	Data should be available at a useful frequency, should be current, and should be timely enough to influence management decision-making.

ii. Community Reporting

(A good practice for ensuring accountability toward community)

COAST's community reporting is a structured approach to ensure accountability, transparency, and active community participation throughout the project cycle. It aims to keep communities informed, engaged, and empowered to provide feedback, ensuring they are not just recipients of aid but active decision-makers. By practicing community reporting, COAST strengthens community ownership and responsibility, creating a two-way communication channel that allows beneficiaries to voice concerns and influence project activities. This approach enhances accountability by ensuring transparency, strengthening participation, improving responsiveness, and fostering trust. COAST implements community reporting through regular community meetings, publishing newsletters, introducing feedback mechanisms and structured monitoring tools such as the Plan of Operation, quarterly and monthly target-achievement plan of projects. Additionally, monthly Project Performance Monitoring Meetings (PPMM) with the Senior Management Team also ensures community participation, while feedback is reviewed and addressed. By integrating community reporting mechanism into its operations, COAST ensures that projects remain participatory, transparent and adaptable to the evolving needs of the community.

Community Reporting Framework



n. MEAL Plan and Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)

Presentation and discussion in the session highlighted the importance of MEAL plan and IPTT for Result-Based Monitoring. MEAL plan systematically outlines all the doable to see how the project tracks progress, assesses impact, ensures accountability and how learnings will be applied for improvement. IPTT is a progress-tracking tool against each indicator of a project or program.

(Sample formats link is attached with this documents).

4. Resource Mapping for MEAL Section

Subject/Issues	Key Resource Person	Alternative Resource Person
Power Bi	Dileep Bhowmik	
SPSS	Ajmol Siddique	
Kobo Q Develop	Tanjir Uddin Roni	
Advance Excel	Abdullah Maksud	Mizanur Rahman
Access	Abdullah Maksud	
Data Visualization	Tanjir Uddin Roni	Dileep Bhowmik
Google Sheet/ form	Dileep Bhowmik	
Reporting	Zahidul Islam	Tanjir Uddin Roni
Qualitative Data Analysis	Tanjir Uddin Roni	
MEAL Tools Development	Tanjir Uddin Roni	



5. Recommendation for MEAL Team

- 5.1 Adopt systematic MEAL, where M&E officers will work under MEAL section.
- 5.2 Adopt web-based monitoring.
- 5.3 Revise COAST's MEAL policy.
- 5.4 Develop a MEAL guideline for donor funded project.
- 5.5 Develop project-based MEAL frame work once the project agreement is signed.
- 5.6 Develop MEAL plan, project-specific MEAL tools, PTT and ensure that all projects are practicing it.
- 5.7 Adopt Result-Based Management where management will make decisions on real-time data.
- 5.8 Create a pool of data enumerators and train them as COAST can utilize them for various research and survey purpose.

6. Action Plan

The session focused on strengthening COAST's staff capacity in data management and MEAL practices. An Action Plan was developed for each project, aligning the MEAL activities with the result framework. Key areas included preparing MEAL plan, accountability plan, developing required tools for outcome monitoring, developing IPTT, project-based MEAL framework and Evaluation Plan. A resource persons' list was created to facilitate training and ongoing support. The plan prioritizes continuous professional development to enhance MEAL capacity. This initiative aims to improve project outcomes, accountability, and knowledge integration, reinforcing COAST's commitment to impact and efficiency.

7. Conclusion

The training workshop brought all the relevant staff together for better understanding, and then analyze the gaps and find out the improvement area where COAST can adopt Result Based-Management. This training workshop provided participants with a comprehensive set of tools and strategies to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning within the organizations.