BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS PLATFORM
Better · Together

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Guidance Note for Partners

BPP's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) for the Climate Adaptation Partnerships in the Mekong Delta

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to communicate the Business Partnerships Platform (BPP) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approach and reporting requirements to partners for the successful implementation of the Climate Adaptation Partnerships in the Mekong Delta.

The BPP MEL approach has three core objectives:

- Monitoring Progress and Opportunities for Continuous Improvement: To track progress of Partnerships in working towards project milestones and targets and identify where a change in approach may be needed due to emerging needs.
- Evaluation for Accountability and Story-Telling: To measure, verify and communicate the contributions of Partnerships towards the climate objectives of the round and the social co-benefits.
- Sharing learnings: To promote successful approaches and document how Partnerships adapt to challenges and generate evidence to help address climate adaption in the Mekong Delta including future Australian government supported initiatives.

An effective MEL plan helps partners to achieve their goals by monitoring planned activities and results and adapting activities due to implementation challenges or changed operating contexts. MEL will ensure effective impact measurement focusing on generating and analysing evidence that instills confidence and trust from communities, prospective investors and potential donors about the results achieved by Partnerships. Project data collected through different methods also enable more creative story-telling and communication of the positive changes and key lessons learned from interventions that Partnerships are pioneering among wider audience.

The BPP MEL approach includes:

1. Project Kick-off/Inception – finalise the annual workplan and update the business plan if needed, develop Impact Model and Measurement Plan, including indicators, baselines and targets, data collection methods ensuring sex-disaggregated data collection and reporting.
2. Progress Reporting - Six-monthly Reports and Final/End of Project Report
3. Monitoring – regular monitoring
4. Learning – capture and disseminate good practices and lessons learned among target stakeholders in line with BPP's communication and visibility guidelines.

BPP can support Partners in meeting the abovementioned requirements. An orientation on MEL for the Partners will be held before the launch of the program. The BPP Relationship Manager for the grant in collaboration with MEL Manager will oversee Partners' delivery on these requirements with the help of local MEL consultants.

An Impact Model and Measurement Plan template will be made available to partners on the BPP portal. (Link and access password to be provided).

When is each requirement completed and who is responsible?

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Milestones	When	Who
1. Project Kick-off/Inception Revised Annual workplan Develop (1.A) Impact Model (1.B) Impact Measurement Plan - Indicators - Baselines - Targets - Data collection methods	Timing as agreed in the Collaborative Financing Agreement (CFA), usually within the first two-three months of a project.	Partners, with support from BPP on request
2. Report Progress and Results - Updated business plan if required. - Six-monthly Progress Report (including Results Worksheet) - Completion report	After 3 months of project start Every 6 months from CFA signing End of the project (within one month of contract completion, or as otherwise agreed in the CFA)	Partners
3. Monitoring Baseline survey Field monitoring Monitoring and Support Missions	The methodology and timing will be tailored to each partnership but coordinated/commissioned by the BPP Ideally quarterly field monitoring to be documented in Impact Measurement Plan (a template will be co-developed). Ideally around the project mid-term/end of year 1.	BPP and partners Partners Local MEL consultant to support as needed MEL Manager, local MEL consultant and Relationship Manager
4. Endline Assessment	Ideally 2-3 months before the project ends	BPP and partners
5. Learning Events Organise local/country level learning events. Participate in BPP learning events.	As per Partner's workplan and strategic timing All BPP partners to be invited to these events	Partners Coordinated by MEL Manager, Relationship Manager & Communications Advisor

Step-by-Step Guidance to completing MEL requirements:

The following section provides guidance on how to complete the requirements.

1.A Impact Model

The Impact Model is a representation of the relationships between key activities, people, environment and outcomes of the project. The overall Climate Adaptation Partnerships in the Mekong Delta round program logic is at Annex A. It is set out as a logic diagram. The arrows between each tier of the diagram describe the flow of activities and causal relationships that take place due to the project activities that ultimately lead to the climate, social and market strengthening benefits of the Program.

Each partner should develop a **project-specific impact model**. As a guide, a worked example of an impact model is provided to partners in the Impact Model tab of the Impact Reporting Template (Excel spreadsheet). This should be replaced with partner's project-specific impact model information.

Here are suggested steps to complete.

1.Write down the main **Activities** you plan to undertake, with one box for each activity and label each box A1, A2, A3 etc.

2. Write down the effect of these key activities. This will generally show the immediate **Outputs** of these activities, including how you expect to reach project participants and what additional conditions need to be in place to achieve your end of project goals. Label each box as O1, O2 etc.

3. Describe the changes in behaviour or usage of a new product or service that is now available to and being used by project participants because of these outputs. These are referred to as **Intermediate Outcomes** and each box should be labelled IO1, IO2 etc.

4. Describe the **End of Project Outcomes** you expect to see as a result of the changes in the agricultural value chain that has been brought about from the Intermediate Outcomes. This tier describes the additional benefits (including projected extent of benefits) received by project participants (e.g., increased income), the environment (e.g., more resilient farming practices andCO_2 emission reduction) and partners (e.g., commercial viability, profits) due to the project interventions. Each box representing an End of Project (EOP) outcome should be labelled EOP1, EOP2 etc.

5. The projected extent of change you expect should also be reflected in your narrative description of the Outputs (e.g., 100 farmers with new skills by June 2023), Intermediate Outcomes (e.g., 70 farmers applying new farming practices by December 2023) and End of Project Outcomes (e.g. 50 farmers with increased income from climate adaptive crops).

6. BPP is also interested in capturing any systemic changes that may be brought about by your project during the approximately 2-year contract period. This is not necessarily expected to be achieved during the funding period, however, should you become aware of any evidence such as (a) additional farmers or stakeholders adopting the model (b) additional private capital sources showing interest in your model; (c) institutionalising industry good practices, please include this evidence in your progress reporting and/or final completion report.

A Sample Impact Model and how it relates to a Business Model is attached in Annex B.

1.B Impact Measurement Plan

Along with each impact model an Impact Measurement Plan (IMP) needs to be developed for each project. The IMP is a planning tool for data collection and a common reference point to ensure partners, BPP relationship managers and the MEL manager have a shared understanding of progress.

To fulfil IMP requirements, partners are asked to complete the Impact Measurement Plan tab in the Impact

Reporting Template (Excel Spreadsheet) that contains details on key indicators, how they will be measured, who will do it and when it will be done. The IMP also contains information about baselines and targets (mid-term and end of project) supported by narrative evidence on assumptions and methodologies. See the Impact Measurement spreadsheet for details.

Indicators

After documenting the impact model, the next step is to identify indicators to measure the changes in each box of the impact model that represents an activity, output or outcome. For each box in the impact model, there should be a minimum of one indicator to specify the expected changes that need to be measured.

All indicators identified should be documented in the Impact Measurement Plan table, including calculation methods and data sources.

Generally, good indicators should be SMART:

- **S**pecific: Indicators must be clearly defined and specific to the changes described.
- **M**easurable: Indicators must be measurable either quantitatively or qualitatively.
- **A**ttainable: Indicators must be realistic and attainable at a realistic cost.
- **R**elevant: Indicators must be relevant to the changes in the result chain box.
- **T**ime-bound: Indicators must be identified with a specific timeframe.

Where relevant, both quantitative and qualitative indicators should be specified. Quantitative indicators are often useful to measure to what extent changes are happening. Qualitative indicators are useful to explore the nature of changes: how and why or why not changes taking place as well as sustainability of changes.

If the changes in the impact model boxes are clearly defined, it will be easier to identify the indicators. Hence, during the development of the impact model, it is important to make certain that descriptions of changes at activity, output and outcome levels are clearly defined.

Disaggregated Indicators

Key indicators involving people must be disaggregated by sex at a minimum.

For example, if the indicator is ‘number of participants’ in a program, the data will need to show x male and y female participants not just the total number of participants.

Where relevant and possible, the BPP is also interested in data disaggregated by income group (as per partner definition of ‘low income’), disability (as per globally agreed definition of ‘people living with a disability’), ethnic minority and any other category of disadvantage that is deemed important by partners to achieve their project objectives. Partners should clearly describe their definitions for 'low income' and ‘people with a disability’ and calculation methodologies for collecting this data. When collecting personal data, partners should be conscious and sensitive to any risks that sharing such information may create for women or vulnerable groups, such as stigmatisation and discrimination, or loss of privacy if personal questions are asked in non-confidential settings. This can be addressed by training data collectors in ethical data collection practices, ensuring confidentiality when asking sensitive questions. As discussed above, the baseline and endline survey will be commissioned by BPP.

Portfolio level Indicators

The BPP has a set of overall program level indicators to report on. To do this the BPP asks partners to select which indicators are relevant to their individual partnership projects from the list in Table A. Not all portfolio indicators will be applicable to each partnership.

Partners may also include project-specific indicators that are unique to their project and essential for assessing the results of their project.

While the portfolio indicators are generally quantitative in nature, qualitative data is also important to illustrate the result or show/verify how the Partnership project has contributed to the results.

Table A – Portfolio Indicators

EOPO1 – climate impact	# HH adopting sustainable business practices to achieve climate abatement, adaptation or environmental co-benefits (e.g. water savings)
	Area (hectares) of land where sustainable business practices changed
	Volume (tCO2eq) of GHG emissions projected to be abated, mitigated or avoided by change in business practices
EOPO2 – socio-economic impact	# workers accessing jobs as a result of BPP
	# new suppliers benefiting from income generating opportunities
	# existing suppliers benefiting from improved income generating opportunities
	# underserved consumers benefiting from access to products and services
	# people accessing new products, services and/or business opportunities (total participant reach)
	# HH with increased income
	Value (AUD) of increased earnings (of partner's impact group)
	Value (AUD) of increased savings (of partner's impact group)
	Value (AUD) of Net Attributable Income Change (NAIC) (of partner's impact group)
EOPO3 – gender impact	# business partnerships that adopt inclusive business practices as a result of IPSP support
	# women accessing new products, services, jobs and/or business opportunities (% of total impact group)
	# people with disabilities accessing new products, services and/or business opportunities (% of total impact group)
EOPO4 – catalytic impact	# business models securing new investment to scale after completion of BPP
IO5 – commerciality	Value (AUD) of additional business revenue generated by partner (in relation to BPP supported business activities)
	Value (AUD) of profit achieved by BPP partnership
	# new customer relationships
IO2 – Inclusive business model implementation	# BPP partnership participants (impact groups) with new skills and awareness

Baselines

Any indicator that aims to demonstrate a change needs to have a baseline. The core purpose of a baseline is to provide the initial 'snapshot' of the situation at the beginning of the project and allows comparisons to be made to the situation at the end against set targets.

Some partners will have some preliminary baseline data available prior to commencement of the project. BPP will engage a local consultancy firm/service provider to conduct the baseline survey for all partnerships within 2-3 months of the project start date (cost to be covered from the partnership's MEL budget). Methodologies and timeframes for baseline data collection and results of these baselines are to be recorded in the Impact Measurement Plan.

Quantitative Baseline Data

Partners should clearly indicate the timeframe for collecting baseline data for each relevant indicator in the IMP.

When measuring social co-benefits, such as farmer income, this needs to be recorded and the baseline survey may need to assess the farmer's existing income prior to commencement of the project. In this case, BPP expects baseline income data to separate project related and broader farm or off farm income. Ideally their net income will be measured to ensure an understanding of their expenses on farming inputs compared to the expenses they incur related to adopting a new practice. (This will entail skilled M&E resources from Partners' side to delineate input cost from total gross on-farm/off-farm income. Smallholder farmers usually do not maintain such records on inputs. Farmers need to be trained to keep relevant data for reporting purpose)

Qualitative Baseline Data

For project-specific indicators that are **qualitative** in nature (e.g., improved knowledge), partners should provide a narrative-based description of the current situation before the project has commenced.

Where changes in capabilities are being measured, a scale may be provided to project participants to survey knowledge and skills before and after relevant project activities.

Data collection approach

Once the indicators have been made, the next step in developing the IMP is to explain the data collection approach. This includes:

- What type of information will be collected (e.g., quantitative and/or qualitative data).
- Sources of information (e.g., training records, sales records, income surveys).
- When the information will be collected.
- How the information will be collected (e.g., field visits, compliance audits, focus groups, interviews, observation).
- What methods will be applied in measuring attributable change.
- Who is responsible for collecting and analysing the information.
- Possible weaknesses and/or limitations in measurement.

Targets

Partners set targets and regularly update results against targets. Some partners may need to revise targets in consultation with the BPP.

Targets for key indicators are provided in the IMP with references to each outcome area in the impact model. More details and supporting documentation will also be needed, e.g., all targets are supported by clear calculations showing how the projections were derived, assumptions that were made in the process.

Projected benefits should be distinguished according to what will be achieved by mid-term and the end of the 2-year funding period.

All sources supporting the data should also be mentioned. For example, interviews, field studies (with dates), assessment reports, attendance sheets, training participation lists, registration sheets, meeting minutes etc.

Targets for outcome level indicators are included in the Proposal submitted by the partner. However, methodologies will need to be submitted to support these targets when submitting the IMP. In consultation with Relationship Managers, targets with appropriate justification may be revised during the project kick-off/inception at individual partnership level as partners finalise their impact model.

2. Progress and Results Reporting

Progress Reports are submitted at 6, 12 and 18 months after contract commencement. A Progress Report template is available in the SmartyGrants system for upload and allows partners to demonstrate progress towards key indicators, highlight achievements, challenges and how they have adapted to address them. New risks and handling of these risks should also be reported.

Quantitative Data

Partners are asked to complete the Results Worksheet tab in the Impact Reporting Template (Excel Spreadsheet) and submit this with the Progress Report in SmartyGrants. The Results Worksheet includes each key indicator set in the IMP and enables partners and the BPP to track progress against the IMP.

Significant variance between targets and actual progress/achievements could signal the need to revisit the nature or scope of activities, impact model, indicators, targets or data collection approach. If this is the case, identify implementation challenges and discuss with the BPP.

Qualitative Data

Quantitative results in the above table should be supported by qualitative insights, where relevant and where this can help illustrate the depth of the change or how that change was achieved. Qualitative data is also important to assess the extent the project has contributed to the result or whether it would have happened anyway without the project.

In particular, qualitative data is useful to understand behaviour change or social co-benefits of the project. For example, how increases in income or improvements in land use practices have improved the health, education or other outcomes of low-income households. Additionally, it is useful to help identify which aspects of the project were key drivers of changes in behaviour or to what extent project participants believe the project was the primary contributor to their change in wellbeing or whether other factors also contributed to this.

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

The BPP recognises that whilst measuring sex-disaggregated data is a compulsory requirement of the program, it is also interested in understanding the broader impact that a business can have on improving outcomes for women, people living with disabilities, ethnic minority, low-income households and other vulnerable groups. By supporting and promoting social co-benefits, the program aims to contribute to the economic and social empowerment of these groups and help to break down barriers to their full participation in socio-economic activities along with strengthening their resilience to climte change . These impacts may include changes in the social and economic status of women in the community, increased opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in productive employment, and changes to the way women and other socially excluded groups are perceived and treated by wider communities.

Examples of results a business may choose to track and report on include:

- implementing policies and programs that support the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in the workforce
- recruitment and retention rates of employees, disaggregated by sex and disability
- percentage of women in decision-making roles (such as management, senior management and board positions) and/or the promotion of female leadership within the business
- training and mentorship opportunities for female employees
- increasing the percentage of women as suppliers to the business
- the implementation of accommodations and support systems that enable people with disabilities to participate in the workforce (such as inclusive recruitment processes, accessible facilities and equipment, flexible work arrangements, etc)
- implementing fair wages and benefits for employees in order to improve the economic well-being of low-income households and also promote greater social inclusion
- changes in attitudes towards the role of women and people with disability in business

Partnership Approach

Achieving shared goals through partnerships is a core engagement approach adopted by the BPP. The BPP is investing resources into supporting the health and functioning of partnerships and monitoring the benefits of this approach. In line with this BPP approach, we may ask partners to participate in an annual survey to assess the value partners are getting from the partnership and to what extent it is contributing to the objectives of the partnership and project results. Wherever possible this will coincide with annual health check meetings, as discussed in the Ways of Working workshops, and not be an additional process.

3. Monitoring and Support Visits

Relationship Managers in coordination with DFAT and the MEL team will organise and undertake an in-person monitoring and support visit at least once during the project implementation. This will generally take place around the mid-term/end of year 1. A monitoring visit plan and scope will be shared with the partner for inputs and agreement. The purpose of the monitoring visit is to:

- Assess to what extent impact model is being followed.
- Identify any major changes that have occurred as a result of the initiative which are not included in IMP and identify a way to measure it.
- Identify any measurement challenges (if any) and suggest mitigation measures.
- Review/update disaggregated results reported by partners .
- Seek insights from partners on what is going well and related success factors.
- Seek insights from partners on what is not doing so well and why; and what corrective measures they are taking to adapt/respond to these challenges.
- Discuss with partners any areas of variance between targets and results and the reasons; confirm if targetsare realistic.
- Discuss with partners any early signs of impact and/or sustainability.
- Document anecdotal evidence of the changes among the impact groups (i.e., project participants).
- Discuss with partners what further support may be needed.

4. Completion Report

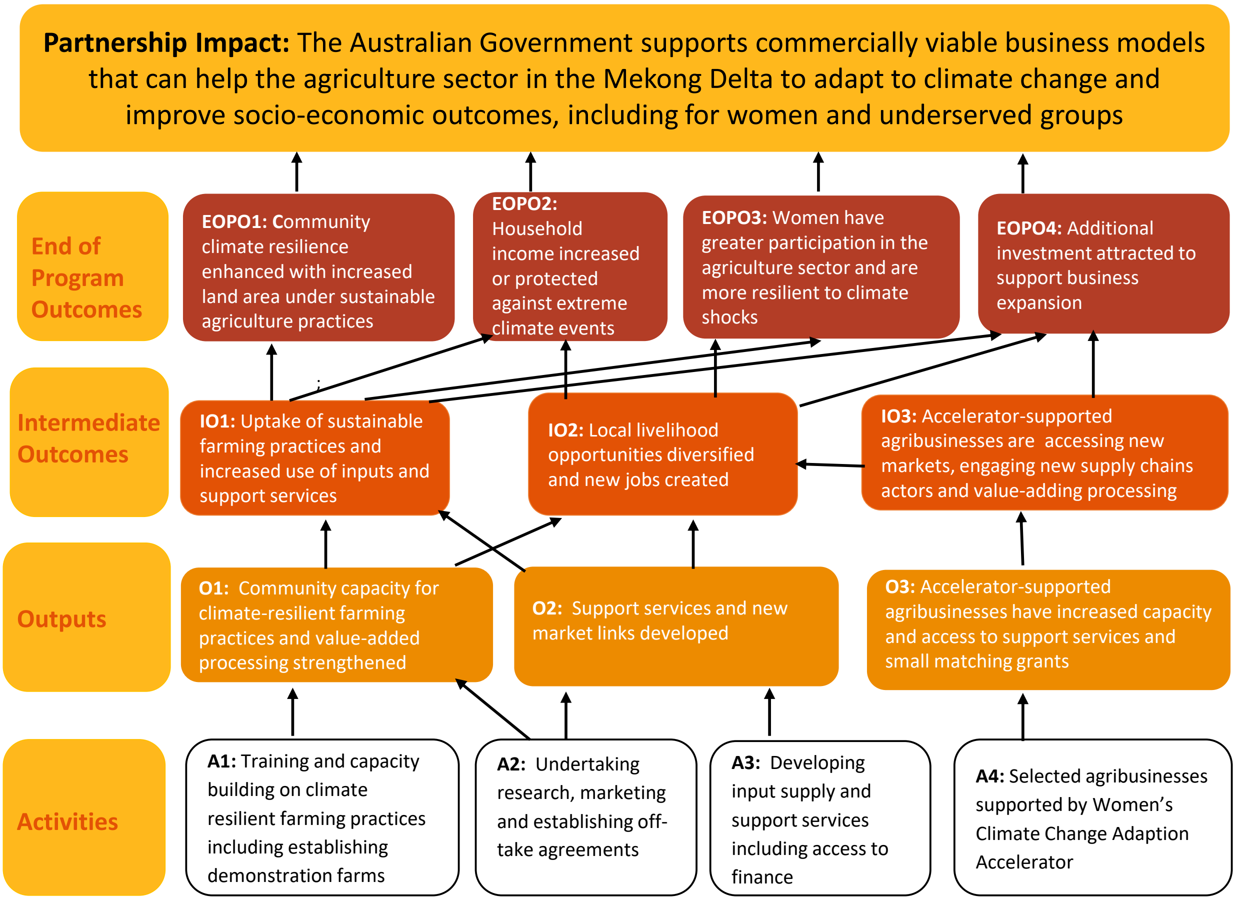
Partners are responsible for submitting a completion report. A completion report template can be downloaded from SmartyGrants, accompanied by a final Results Worksheet (as per Impact Reporting Template).

5. Learning Events

The BPP will co-develop with partners a Learning Plan to support the round as well as partnerlearning objectives. The aim is to generate, document and share evidence and methodologies to address climate adaptation in the Mekong Delta.

Partners are encouraged to host/participate and share learnings throughout the implementation of their BPP projects. The six-monthly progress report will ask partners to reflect on their learnings. BPP will also offer optional learning events to inform partners of current best practices, as well as provide forums for peer learning.

ANNEX A Climate Adaptation Partnerships in the Mekong Delta Round Program Logic



ANNEX B: Sample Impact Model and Business Model