AgriFoSe2030 Phase 2: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

MEL guidelines and templates for project teams, June 2021

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Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) guidelines

Who: For project team leaders and teams

What: Guidelines and templates on how to implement monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) in AgriFoSe2030 projects

How: Project ToC and a set of light-touch processes and templates for documenting and reporting changes

1. Overview

This document provides guidance for AgriFoSe2030 project teams in how to implement monitoring, evaluation and learning in their project.

The AgriFoSe2030 programme works with a Theory of Change (ToC) approach, that guides projects towards a series of desired changes and goals. The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) strategy provides projects with an approach to follow-up on the ToC process in a structured way, to:

- Track progress along their ToC of the project
- Demonstrate how their project contributes to bridging science, policy, and practice.
- Document and showcase change stories from their project, in terms of both successes and learning.

What projects will use for their MEL:

- ✓ Project ToCs. These provide the backbone for the MEL approach
- ✓ A set of MEL tools and processes. These will help projects systematically document and track how project activities, outputs, and outcomes are progressing along the ToC, and to reflect on assumptions.

2. Project planning, MEL and reporting cycle

MEL at the project level is designed to work on an annual cycle, illustrated in Figure 1 and constitutes of three points: i) the project plan, ii) the mid-point review and iii) the annual review. These are further outlined below.

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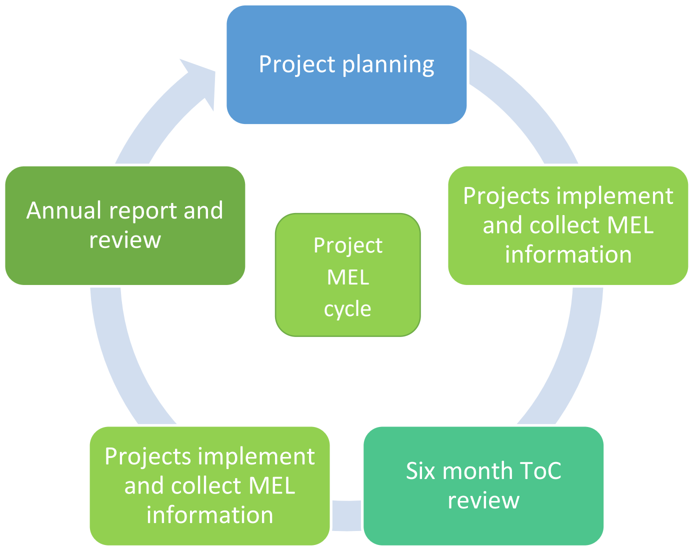

Figure 1: AgriFoSe2030 Project MEL cycle

The specific activities at each point are as follows, with templates and guidelines provided in Annex 1:

- ✓ **Project workplans:** Workplans are developed annually.
- ✓ **Throughout the project term,** projects are expected to conduct MEL activities. Project teams are required to provide reporting from a minimum of **four MEL activities during a project MEL cycle of 12 months.** However, more uses of the MEL tools can be undertaken if desired and useful to the project. Out of the four required MEL activities, each project is required to do at least one **Change Story, using Tool 3.**

    Tool 1: Key Stakeholder Meetings Tracker – Guidance and template

    Tool 2: After Action Review- Guidance and template

    Tool 3: AgriFoSe2030 Change Stories – Guidance and template
- ✓ **Six months:** A **mid-point review** is held six months after project start **–** this review focuses on the ToC and a review of progress and challenges. It consists of a discussion session between project teams, Challenge Leaders and the C&E team. The mid-point review does not require any written input from project teams. Decisions and actions will be agreed and documented by the Challenge Leaders. The meetings will depart in a checklist outlined as a tool:

    Tool 4: AgriFoSe2030 ToC 6 monthly review checklist – for the mid-year review meeting
- ✓ **12 months:** An **annual review** is held after a project has run for 12 months**.** This is a more in-depth review, and project teams are required to produce an annual report ahead of the annual review meeting, including a summary of the four MEL activities carried out during the year and attaching the original MEL documentations to the annual report. The annual review meeting consists of a discussion between project teams, Challenge Leaders and the C&E team.

    Tool 5: Template for projects' annual report
- ✓ **The project MEL cycle** continues at the same time intervals until the end of the project term.

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3. AgriFoSe2030 Project MEL tools

To support projects in their MEL activities, AgriFoSe2030 has designed a set of tools and templates to be used during the project implementation to capture rapid 'real-time' insights and reflections. The tools have been designed first and foremost to be useful to project teams as they implement their project:

- Each tool is actually a **group process of critical reflection**, captured in a simple template. The tools are based on a rapid reflection process - 'so what?' and 'now what?' - encouraging teams to **discuss, reflect on** and **document changes** as they emerge, with reference to their ToC.
- Over time, if these tools are used by project teams regularly and systematically, they will build up a 'real time' evidence base that helps to make visible the projects' progress and change process along their ToC.

Project teams are expected to use the tools to systematically document progress along their ToC and reflect on their own work. These tools can be complemented or combined with any project specific data gathering method, such as surveys and baseline studies.

The AgriFoSe2030 MEL tools are briefly described in Table 1 and detailed guidelines plus the templates are provided in Annex 1.

Support will be provided for the first round of documentation and reporting when using these tools.

Table 1. AgriFoSe2030 MEL tools

MEL process and tool	Description
Key Stakeholder Meetings Tracker	This is a very light-touch tool, that aims to help you to gather systematic information about Key Meetings with significant stakeholders, and record the intentions going into the meeting, and what was gained as a result of it. **Use:** Rapid, use before and after every major or 'high stakes' meeting with a key stakeholder, e.g. ministry officials, smallholder farmer groups.
After Action Review (AAR)	An After Action Review (AAR) is a more structured group review of a major activity or event, e.g. stakeholder workshop: 1. It enables the individuals involved to analyse what they did, what happened as a result, examine why it happened, what went well, what needs improvement and what lessons can be learned from the experience, to further improve future practice. 2. Such reviews also support institutional memory and MEL by capturing and documenting what happened at a particular moment in time and the projects' analysis of it.

	3. A series of After Action Review reports can also be used as a data source for future evaluations and related activities, for example, to populate a timeline of critical events during an intense project period or to inform Change Stories. **Use:** Requires 20 mins-1 hour, use before and after major events, such as stakeholder engagement events. AAR is a useful reflective practice for project teams to adopt as a routine, as it supports an adaptive management approach in an evolving change process.
Change Stories	The Change Story process is a more analytical tool, designed to help teams steps back, capture and reflect on significant changes, that they are seeing emerge in real time. A significant change is a change in what a stakeholder, actor (or change agent) did or is doing, that reflects a significant change in their behaviour, relationships, activities, actions, policies or practice which in turn may have implications for the project's goals and ToC. These changes are often called 'small but mighty'- intermediate outcomes in their ToC that are significant early signs of change, even if the big headline outcome of a policy change, or a commitment has not been achieved yet**.** So, the Change Story captures important signs of progress that have come about through stakeholder engagement towards policy influencing goals in a systematic, analytical way. Change Stories can be developed by drawing together various sources of information, as appropriate, e.g., individual observation; After Action Reviews; face-to-face interviews or workshops; findings from surveys; and Key Meetings Trackers. The template encourages transparency about the underlying information and data sources and the extent to which change stories could be verified by internal or external MEL. **Use:** Requires 0.5-1 day to compile information, discuss and document the story. A Change Story is a more in-depth reflection, requires more structured input from the team, and from stakeholders. Suggested frequency, every 6 months or annually. At least 1 per year provided as supporting evidence for project reports.

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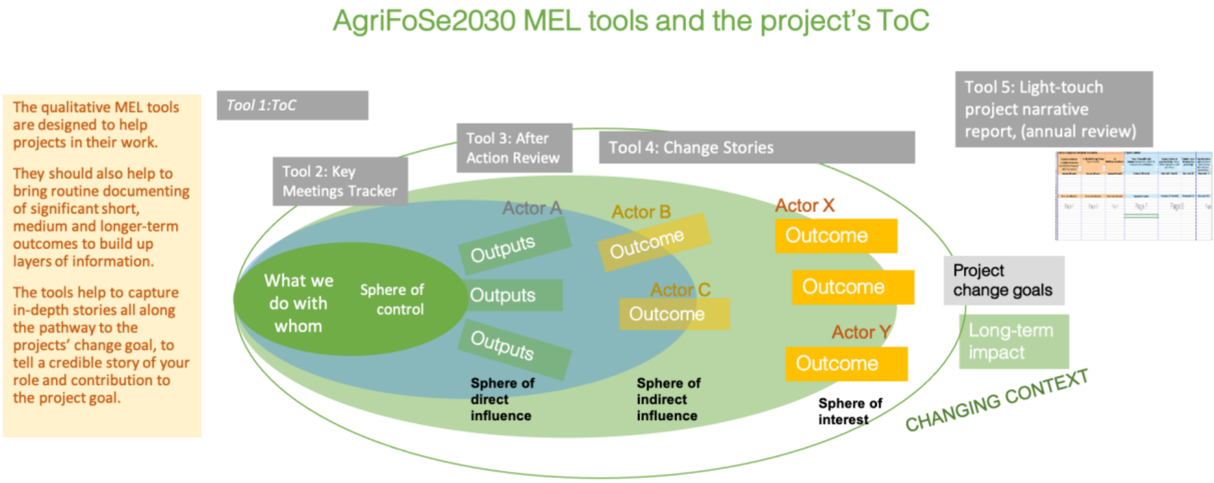
Figure 2 illustrates how the MEL tools are aligned to capture different types of change along the ToC.

Figure 2. MEL tools and the ToC



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Annex 1. AgriFoSe2030 MEL Tools

Tool 1: Key Stakeholder Meetings Tracker – Guidance and template

Introduction

Research influence and advocacy consists of many meetings with key stakeholders ranging from ministers, policy makers, senior policy advisers, parliamentarians, and many other actors who we seek to persuade to take action in support of our overall goal.

Sometimes, this means working very directly with high level political stakeholders, or through personal connections with key stakeholders. Therefore, much of the influencing activity remains 'invisible'. Although project teams may frequently take action and adjust tactics in response to meetings, this is rarely documented, so what happens in significant meetings remains tacit.

A further complication is that the significance of decision or outcomes from a meeting may not become evident until later, so the implications for next steps and strategies, as well as for how these interactions contributed to or hindered our outcomes is not documented.

This tool is designed to be a simple template for recording the results of significant meetings with key stakeholders or actors, to encourage a 'so what?' and 'now what?' rapid reflection.

2. How does it work?

This tool aims to help you to gather systematic information about Key Meetings with significant stakeholders, and record the intentions going into the meeting, and what was gained as a result of it.

This tool is a building block towards more in-depth MEL. This is the first 'layer' of information, as it can be used in a number of ways, for example to build up an evidenced timeline of events, to support more in-depth periodic reviews, or to inform de-briefing and adjustment of tactics after an intense period or an unexpected event. This information can also be used as inputs to an AgriFoSe2030 Change Story or an After Action Review, and as a reference for the annual reports.

2. How to use

Use immediately after a significant meeting to document what happened. This template could be used for a write-up of meetings for sharing with colleagues, and as an input into tactics.

Over time, these documents can be analysed to inform Change Stories.

As with other MEL tools, the level of confidentiality and how to record details needs to be agreed internally to ensure data handling complies with AgriFoSe2030 partners' existing data protocols.

- ✓ Individual or team-based
- ✓ Use when de-briefing – 5-20 mins
- ✓ Document key points and save the document – either Excel or Word
- ✓ Review regularly with reference to project strategy, ToC and outcomes

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- ✓ Periodically collate and review the set of trackers and decide what it means for future action and reporting.

3. When and how often should you use it?

- ✓ After any significant, high stakes meetings, e.g. meetings when you ask for action
- ✓ Relationship building meetings – e.g. cultivating new political or bureaucratic supporters

4. Level of effort

- ✓ 5-20 mins at each use of the Tracker.

5. Note on data storage and analysis

The use of this tool has implications for data management and analysis, which requires some thinking through in the context of AgriFoSe2030 and partners' existing systems. An advocacy team may have dozens of meetings during the course of a year and individual Word documents could quickly get out of hand.

There are a number of options, for example:

- ✓ the content of the form could possibly be transferred to another format for easier storage and analysis e.g. Excel workbook, with a tab for each meetings tracker;
- ✓ many templates could be copied several times into a single Word document, and collated to create a single document with records of all the meetings;
- ✓ or, similarly, you could create a single document for a particular category of stakeholder, with many versions of the template to use for all meetings with that category of stakeholder e.g. political stakeholders, depending on what is a priority for the organization.
- ✓ Excel could be a good format for helping to store and analyse several Key Meetings Trackers.

6. Key Meetings Tracker Template

Create a new copy for each meeting record and save with an appropriate filename.

This could also be set up in an Excel format for easier storage and analysis.

Documentation Date/s:	
Meeting date **Type of stakeholder e.g., elected official; ministry official; coalition ally** **Meeting objective**	*Record the meeting date.* *Record the type of stakeholder* *Briefly list the main objective (s) of the meeting, and your expectations.*
Short description	*Provide a brief description of the meeting including who (agency or individual) how and if expected objectives were met.*

Key commitments, decisions and actions; next steps and follow-up	*List the key commitments, decisions or actions taken in the meeting, and any next steps or follow-up required.*
Observed immediate responses, behaviour or attitude change	*Describe the responses, attitudes or behaviours observed in this meeting, plus any reflections of how this may support or constrain other objectives and activities.*
Contribution of observed responses to the development of the relationship with the stakeholder	*Note how observed changes contribute to the development of the relationship with the stakeholder, e.g., moving from new/untested ally -> potential for supportive actions -> trusted ally.*
Challenges and/or enablers, and significance	*Describe any blocks or challenges around the meeting objectives that came up in the meeting, and/or any enabling factors which could help make progress towards AgriFoSe2030 partners' outcomes, and the significance of these for next steps, e.g., Blocker: the stakeholder did not understand the key messages without additional explanation, and so we should review messages for other stakeholders.*
Any documentation that is relevant to this meeting.	*Describe any reports or documents that were shared, or any supporting document e.g., minutes, actions.*

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Tool 2: After Action Review- Guidance and template

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1. Introduction

Learning requires continuous reflection on progress, looking at successes and failures, ensuring that learning takes place to support continuous improvement. The **After Action Review** (AAR) is a simple option for facilitating this assessment. It works by bringing together a team to discuss a task, event, activity or project, in an open and honest fashion.

An After Action Review (AAR) is a team-based discussion of an activity or event:

- ✓ It enables the individuals involved to analyze what they did, what happened as a result, examine why it happened, what went well, what needs improvement and what lessons can be learned from the experience, to further improve future practice.
- ✓ Such reviews also support institutional memory by capturing and documenting what happened at a particular moment in time and the organizations' analysis of it.
- ✓ A series of After Action Review reports can also be used as a data source for future evaluations and related activities, for example, to populate a timeline of critical events during a major project activity or to inform Change Stories.

2. How does it work?

An AAR gives a structured approach to de-briefing and information sharing that allows project teams to answer the questions 'so what?' and 'now what?' after a significant event or engagement. It provides a systematic way to do this, so that reflection and lesson-learning can happen quickly, but is captured in a consistent way.

As well as turning tacit learning into a more structured reflection, it helps to build trust among team members and to overcome fear of mistakes or setbacks, and turn these into learning and improvement.

The essence of the AAR is to bring together the relevant group to think about a significant event or task, and work through the questions below in order.

But there are many different ways to conduct AARs. A dialogue between two people is usually helpful, although individual reflection can also be useful. Given the importance of stimulating collective learning, the usual approach is to bring together a small group, either in person or online. An AAR discussion can also be conducted over the phone, using Skype, or even instant messaging if the situation requires it. AARs can be incorporated into team meetings or be conducted immediately after a high stakes event, for example.

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The simplicity at the heart of the tool means there is much potential to experiment with the process and find the ways that will work best with the group and the work issue under review. The whole process should be kept as simple and as easy to remember as possible.

The questions do sometimes overlap, but try to be systematic and address each one in turn – the overlapping means that you have to look at things from a different perspective and this helps to build up in-depth analysis.

3. How often should you do an AAR?

- ✓ After any 'big moments', significant or major activity, e.g., events, mobilizations.
- ✓ After high-risk activities or tactics
- ✓ Use as de-brief – digs into the critical questions and gives you new insights
- ✓ At end of campaign or project

4. How should you do it?

- ✓ Involve the whole team
- ✓ Choose a facilitator
- ✓ Open, honest, learning attitude, no blame
- ✓ Document key points and save
- ✓ Periodically collate and review AARs and decide implications for future action and reporting

5. Level of effort?

- ✓ 15-20 mins for rapid review;
- ✓ 60 mins for more in-depth review;
- ✓ 4 hours for annual review.

6. After Action Review template

Create a new copy of the template for each record and save with an appropriate filename

Optional Pre-Action Check-in What is our reason for doing this action / event? What are we planning to do? What do we hope will happen? What specific responses are we hoping to get and from whom? What do we hope to be able to next and/or differently if we are successful?	Optional pre-action questions: In the event that no formal planning, strategy, or process document has been developed prior to the event or activity taking place, the following questions can be explored before an action takes place to help support a more in-depth process of critical reflection.

AgriFoSe2030
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1. What were the most significant outcomes of the event/process in relation to projects' priorities or goals?

1.

2. What was supposed to happen?

- What was the plan?
- What changes or responses did we aim to influence?

These questions establish a common understanding of the work item under review. The facilitator should encourage and promote discussion around these questions. Bring in a focus on the changes / responses that we wanted to stimulate or influence with the activity.

3. What actually happened?

- What was the reality?
- What changes or responses did we actually observe?
- Why was it different to the plan?

These questions prompt a reflection on the reality, with a focus on what changes / responses were actually observed. Why there were differences stimulates reflection on factors that enabled or inhibited the plan.

3. What went well and less well?

- What worked, what didn't work and why?

These questions help us dive deeper into critical and honest thinking about specific differences to the plan and reasons for this. Important to avoid blame, we are wanting to learn, and that requires honest appraisal.

4. What next?

- What would we do differently next time?
- What do the observed changes and responses mean for our strategy?
- What does it mean for our ToC and assumptions, do they need updating?

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These questions help us to make specific tangible recommendations to improve our approach. Focus on what the observed responses mean for our strategy helps us to make crucial decisions about where to go next.

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Tool 3: AgriFoSe2030 Change Stories – Guidance and template

1. Introduction

The template in this document provides a systematic and analytical structure for recording changes (outcomes) of significance, encouraging a critical reflection on what change has happened, how it has come about, and the contribution of the organisation to the change, alongside other actors and factors.

The Change Story is a more in-depth MEL tool, it encourages the telling of a story behind a significant change in a more analytical and systematic way.[1]

A significant change is a change in what a stakeholder, actor (or change agent) did or is doing, that reflects a significant change in their behaviour, relationships, activities, actions, policies or practice which in turn may have implications for the project's goal.

The process and template encourage us to critically reflect on the role we played, alongside other actors and factors, and what contribution we made to a particular outcome. It encourages us to provide details of the context, other actors and factors, and a reflection on the significance of the change for our project and strategy.

The Change Story process is designed to capture incremental change, in real time – 'small but mighty' intermediate outcomes that are significant, even if the big headline outcome of a policy change, or a commitment has not been achieved yet**.** So, it captures important signs of progress that have come about through stakeholder engagement towards policy influencing goals in a systematic, analytical way.

This qualitative MEL process provides a useful complement to numerical indicator reporting because it helps to capture, in real time, the dynamics of the policy engagement process that numerical indicators are less suited to capture.

A collection of Change Stories can be used to support or challenge the project's Theory of Change.

The Change Story template is given below, with tips after it, as this is a more complicated approach.

2. How it works

A Change Story helps research teams to take a step back and think in-depth about 'real-time' major steps that are emerging on the way to their policy or practice influencing goals.

If outcomes are documented systematically and analytically, with details of the context and contributions, this builds up over time to a credible and substantial internal evidence base that can be used for monitoring, evaluation and learning and learning to improve strategies.

[1] This template for documenting outcome stories is based on an adapted 'Outcome Harvesting' approach developed by AVAC – Global Advocacy for HIV prevention (https://www.avac.org/).

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Change Stories can be developed by drawing together various sources of information, as appropriate, e.g. individual observation; After Action Reviews; face-to-face interviews or workshops; findings from surveys; and Key Meetings Trackers. The template encourages transparency about the underlying information and data sources and the extent to which Change Stories could be verified by internal or external MEL.

3. When to do it and how often

- ✓ When you have observed significant signs of progress – change in awareness, behavior, commitment, collective action, or policy change.
- ✓ Can be early-stage or late-stage – capture the real-time story
- ✓ You should carry out at least 1 Change Story every year.

4. How to do it[2] and level of effort

- ✓ Consultation with teams and partners to identify examples e.g. quarterly review meetings.
- ✓ Open and honest reflection.
- ✓ Collate and review KMTs and AARs for input
- ✓ Draft Change Story
- ✓ Share draft with team and partners for corroboration and supporting evidence

Level of effort: 4-8 hours per Change Story;

5. The Change Story template

Create a new copy of the template for each record and save with an appropriate filename

Documentation Date/s:
What happened or what has changed?

[2] Text adapted from Simple, Participatory Assessment of Real Change (SPARC), AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention, NEW YORK, NY, REVISED DECEMBER 2017

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Basic description of the outcome, including what changed, who was involved, and where and when it happened. Aim to give a rich description, with context, dates and places if confidentiality allows. *Include a description of the context, especially if that has changed.*
What is the significance of this change?
Why the change is relevant to your policy, practice and/or institutional change goal and outcomes, and the particular behaviour change, issue, challenge or barrier it helps address. Why is it significant given the context? *Note whether the outcome was planned or unplanned, positive or negative.*
What was our role and contribution to the change?
What role did we play, e.g. convening, coordination, information provider. What other actors, factors and influences may have played a role? ***What was our project's unique contribution?***

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Related evidence and information sources?
Any documentation, data or other evidence that support this outcome or analysis. Please provide a hyperlink to the evidence. *Please be transparent about the extent or robustness of the evidence base.*
Potential for corroboration or verification
This is worth noting for any future evaluation activities you may wish to conduct, such as an impact evaluation.

6. Tips and advice

- ✓ **Starting to think about significant changes (outcomes) can be challenging at first - think about what has changed in terms of behaviours, actions and the context.**

An outcome-oriented approach starts with "what has changed" – changed in relation to the issue, the context or the actor in order for the project's goals to be reached, **NOT** with what you did or your activities.

The focus is on actors, change agents and changes in their behaviour, rather than project activities; the project's potential role in influencing that change is the last question.

Box 1 defines what we mean by 'outcomes' in this way of thinking:

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Box 1: What do we mean by "significant changes" (outcomes)?

An outcome is a change in what a social actor (or change agent) did or is doing, that reflects a significant change in their behaviour, relationships, activities, actions, policies or practices which in turn may have implications for partners' goals.

An outcome might describe an action that reflects a demonstrated change in awareness, commitment, engagement, collaborative action. An outcome might also be changes in policy, funding or implementation of programs.

Thinking about outcomes can be challenging for some people and organisations, particularly in terms of not placing their own efforts front and centre in the analysis. However, an outcome orientation promotes good evaluative thinking and helps to strengthen internal MEL practice.

- ✓ **Finding the right level of detail for a Change Story can be difficult at first – think 'small but mighty', and imagine the 'chapters' in your change story, especially as contexts are so dynamic.**

It is worth remembering that policy and institutional capacity outcomes are typically incremental and that changes that may appear small today may have a big effect later in time. A major outcome may be made up of several 'chapters' of incremental change that preceded it.

The key message is that you should try to document outcomes regularly, not just those which are impressive or directly linked to your activities. We recommend reviewing "what has changed" often, even monthly, to help you review what is changing, the significance for your strategy and the role you play, and to document this using the Change Story template. However, we require only one story per 12 months.

- ✓ **Participation and discussion is key for identifying outcomes, challenging our assumptions and enriching Change Stories with a wider range of perspectives and evidence.**

Engaging in a dialogue or wider discussion is essential to help us challenge our own assumptions about our role and contribution, as well as helping to strengthen the evidence base if outcomes can be triangulated and validated by a wider group. As a guide, the process of identifying and developing Change Stories can take up to an hour per outcome, depending on how many people are involved and how clear the outcomes are.

- ✓ **Aim to capture both positive and negative outcomes, planned or unplanned, to help develop a richer explanatory picture of how change happened, and your organisation's contribution to it, alongside other actors and factors.**

The template does not presuppose positive or negative change. It is open for you to record whatever outcomes are of significance to your goals, and that may be linked to your activities. Focusing on unplanned outcomes is appropriate to an unpredictable policy influencing process and could help to stimulate deeper critical reflection and learning and create a more robust explanation of what was achieved and how.

- ✓ **Set clear guidelines on the confidentiality of Change Stories, how sensitive information is to be recorded and how stories will be analysed as a collection as part of MEL.**

Some partners have emphasized that some of their work is confidential e.g. work with senior government stakeholders in priority countries. Confidentiality should not be a barrier to documenting Change Stories, but the organization should agree internally on its protocols for anonymizing data while retaining sufficient detail to support a meaningful analysis. These protocols should align with the organisation's existing data handling protocols.

- ✓ **Be transparent about how robust (or not) the evidence is for the Change Story, but be open to opportunities to corroborate and validate Change Stories with evidence from partners and stakeholders.**

Change Stories can be made more robust by validating them with stakeholders, coalition partners and other informed individuals or organisations. However, given available resources, this may not always be possible to do. A transparent reflection on the evidence base, and noting if there is potential for corroboration or validation is a good starting point.

Further reading:

Outcome Harvesting overview, on Better Evaluation:
https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting

'Outcome Harvesting', May 2012, Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt

https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/wilson-grau%2C-britt-%282012%29-outcome-harvesting.pdf

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Tool 4: AgriFoSe2030 ToC 6 monthly review checklist – for the mid-year review meeting

This check list is provided as a guide for Challenge Leaders and Project Leads when they conduct the half-year review meeting with project teams.

The checklist can be shared in advance with project teams, so that they can review their ToC, project progress and consider these questions in preparation for the call. In the call, CLs will go through these questions in order. This checklist complements the report format above.

Part 1: Review changes in relation to the ToC

1. **What has actually changed since the project start-point?**

- Ask for a description of changes in the context
- Description what has changed for different target groups (especially different types of organisations and men/women)?
- Ask the project lead to provide stories, examples and/or evidence to illustrate these points – we could develop these into change stories.
- Include negative changes or setbacks that have affected the project, e.g. climate or policy changes.

Examples of highlights and outcomes:

Examples of set-backs and challenges.

2. **If you have noted changes for different groups, what have these been, and what are the implications of these for the project?**

- This could be either to the target groups or in terms of project plans - note: "expect the unexpected": we are looking for positive, negative and unintended consequences here.

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3. **What do you consider to be the most significant changes and/or outcomes for the project's goals?**

- E.g., the engagement of a specific stakeholder that has been difficult to engage so far, but they open doors for the project. Or it can be a negative change.

Part 2: Thinking about the contributions made by the programme

1. How did the project contribute to these changes?

- This could include some or all of the following and others: money, capacity development, technical expertise, coordination etc. Try to reflect and see everything that the project may have contributed.

2. Who else or what else may have helped or hindered progress in relation to these noted changes?

3. In your opinion, what have been the project's most useful and effective ways of working in relation to making these changes happen? Why?

4. What are the main lessons you feel the team has learned about implementation in this period?

Part 3: Review of assumptions

1. Consider the main assumptions in your ToC for this period and these outcomes, to what extent did thy hold true?

- Were there any that were proved wrong?
- What do you know now that you didn't then? Are there important insights that you now have from this implementation period?

2. Can these assumptions be updated in the light of experience?

- How would you update them?

- What about assumptions for the next phase of the project – do they need updating?

3. Overall, were there better/other ways in which the programme could have supported planned changes and/or responded to unplanned ones?

- Please explain what they might have been and why they might have worked better?

4. What would you do differently next time?

5. **What does this critical reflection mean for adjusting the project strategy and plans?**

- Do any changes need to be made to the plans or implementation approach? E.g. need to work with different groups; plan for different communications etc.

Summarise how your plans and/ or your ToC need to change based on this review.

Record actions and next steps:

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Tool 5: Template for projects' annual report

The annual report should include the four MEL activities that have been undertaken during the last 12 months.

Project Details

Countries / project	
Start Date	
Completion Date	
Type of Reporting Submitting Here	Annual report
Submitted By	
Email	

Summary of project objectives for the period

Project objectives	
Objectives for the period	
ToC areas this relates to	

A. Project progress and challenges - annual report

Please provide a summary for the period under the following headings **(150-500 words per section):**

1. What have been the principal progress and gains that support the projects objectives and ToC outcomes for the 6 months/year? (summarising information from MEL activities) Please note if these were planned or unexpected.

2. What have been the main **setbacks** that have held back gains?

3. What have been the **enabling factors, and/or constraining factors** that have supported or hindered gains? E.g. parallel work by allies; coordinated efforts; a high-level policy decision that created a window of opportunity.

4. What is the **significance** of both gains and challenges, given the context? E.g. very difficult political context, so even small gains have been significant.

5. What **challenges and priorities remain** to be tackled to make progress towards the next project milestones?

1. Based on this reflection, how should the project ToC and project plans be **adapted**? • ToC and assumptions changes? • What should be the **objectives and workplan** for the coming year?

B. Overall role and contributions towards the project objectives and ToC changes and outcomes - annual

Please describe your projects' overall contribution to progress this year, referring to your ToC.

Please provide a short narrative of significant changes and significant events, activities, you feel were most impactful, the gains and achievements in your project you are most proud of.

7. What major ToC changes (and other changes) has your project **contributed to,** given the context?

Lessons Learned

8. What have been the main lessons learned that you will take forward into next year's work programme?

Evidence sources

Please note and attach any documentation, data or other evidence that supports this report, After Action reviews Change stories

Additional Information (optional)

If you have any additional information you would like to share, you may provide it here.

e.g. pictures, products and tools