Define Measurements and Costs

Module 2
Grant Application and
Project Implementation Guidance

Internet Society
Foundation

What to expect

To provide real-life examples to the sometimes-abstract-sounding concepts in this training, there are two personas that will serve as guides. Adam is a Grant Applicant from Sri Lanka who is interested in applying for Foundation funding for a specific project. Mariam is a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Expert that represents the Foundation.

Mariam: After you have set up the design of your project, the next step is to figure out how you will measure the progress of your activities and how they are contributing to the project objective/s and goal. Through following each of these steps, by the end of this section you will have key performance indicators and corresponding targets as well as a draft budget that is clearly and accurately linked to your activities.

Adam: Ah, so after we have done all the designing, we are now operationalizing what we planned? That is really important, I keep having great meetings with my team and we have so many brilliant ideas about what we could do, but then we realize we don't have money for it or nobody steps up to see it through and track what comes out of it.

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Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

As you begin to finalize the activities, this is the time to start selecting and/or designing the key performance indicators (KPIs). If possible, you should work to select at least two of the example KPIs that the Foundation recommends. You can find example KPIs listed below as well as **here**. You should report the results of these KPIs to the Foundation as part of your narrative reporting.

You may also find that the example KPIs don't capture all the progress that you would like to track. If that is the case, you can also consider developing your own 'custom' indicators in addition to the KPIs that you find within this guidance. You may choose to report your 'custom' KPIs to the ISOC Foundation, or use them to track progress for internal purposes only.

Indicators collect either quantitative or qualitative information and within those two distinctions, there are three main types of indicators. The types of indicators – input/component, output, and outcome –all contribute to measuring the impact. You will find examples of indicators below and you can find more examples and details on the indicator types **here**.

If you establish more than one KPI, it may be a good idea to utilize **this table** (called a Key Performance Indicator Tracking Table – or KPITT). You can find more details about how to fill it out in the **optional KPITT module**.

Top tips

- Focus first on what is important to you and the Foundation, to achieve progress as a result of the project, and only as a second step ask yourself how or whether you would be able to measure it.

- Some of your higher-level objectives will be very difficult to measure with the resources you have, for example if you are working to change policy and some of the important information on progress may not be public. In that case, focus on the closest proxy that you can measure.

Adam: This all sounds very technical!

Mariam: That's true, but you'll see it is actually not that complicated. Just think of the activities and objectives you have already defined and think about how you would know whether the project was on the right track. Do any of the example indicators sound like they might give you that information?

Adam: I think we can use some of those indicators about participants and increasing skills. But how do we measure success about this multi-stakeholder platform?

Mariam: Good question. What is important about this platform? As I understand it, they need to have strong relationships and work together. Maybe you could just track how often they meet, as a proxy?

Adam: Yes, that would be a good indicator, we can get that information easily and it would tell us whether the platform is active or just a promise. I put "number of stakeholder platform meetings" into the "indicator field", and then I put "5" as the target for the end of the project?

Mariam: If you think that is achievable, that sounds great. Then you can track the meetings that actually happen on your tracking table and submit it with your narrative report. You can find the KPITT template **here**.

Example

- Indicator (Input): Number of stakeholder platform meetings.

- Indicator (Output): Percentage of participants that increase skills following trainings.

- Indicator (Outcome): Number of girls that decide to pursue a scientific path following the trainings.

Examples of KPIs

Quantitative Indicators

(= numbers that show how something changes over time)

- Number of trainings carried out through the project (Input).

- Number of participants in your project activities (Output) – this measures your reach. It is helpful to disaggregate this number depending on the group of people you are targeting – for example, you can count the share of women or people under 18.

- Number (or percentage) of participants who demonstrate increased levels of skill or knowledge (Output).

- Number (or percentage) of participants who indicate an interest in further training/next steps (Outcome).

- Number (or percentage) of participants who self-report a change in how they use the internet/who independently look for more information on the training topic/who apply to internships in emerging internet technologies (Outcome).

Quantitative Indicators

(= statements and milestones of how something changes over time)

- The extent to which participants have increased confidence (Outcome)- in this case, you would provide statements describing the participants' attitudes as expressed through discussion or behavior, for example "girls overwhelmingly agree that careers in tech are for men only", vs "girls express a motivation to enroll in formal training or apply to related internships".

- The extent to which the local community is aware of the opportunities and threats of emerging internet technologies (Outcome)- for example, "most community members have not heard of IoT or the blockchain" vs "community members discuss and research IoT or the blockchain").

Set targets

Take time to consider - what is your expectation for each initiative?

Start with the baseline numbers for each indicator. For the majority of indicators, the baseline is likely zero because it is a new project. If you know that some activities have been ongoing, there may be an opportunity to reflect a different number as the baseline The baselines that you created in the **look back** are a good place to start when setting your targets.

Once you establish the baseline, you decide on the target that you want to aim for during implementation of your project. Write down targets for each of your KPIs based on the details of the activities.

Finally, you can also set a disaggregation if it is applicable. A disaggregation for indicators means breaking down a larger number of elements into smaller parts. It is often helpful, for example, if you want to track the gender of participants or the location of trainings in different areas. For an indicator that tracks the number of participants, you could disaggregate by gender and location. You would track the total number, as well as the numbers for male-identifying and female-identifying participants, and the numbers for training participants in different locations.

Examples

Indicator (Output)
Number of stakeholder platform meetings

Baseline: 0   Target: 6   Disaggregation: Region

Percentage of participants that increase skills following trainings

Baseline: 0   Target: 90%   Disaggregation: School level (primary/secondary school or University)

Percentage of participants that decide to pursue a scientific path following the trainings

Baseline: 0   Target: 50%   Disaggregation: School level (primary/secondary school or University)

Top tips

- Keep in mind that the majority of your activities should be measured by at least one indicator and typically the more powerful data collected is often at the outcome-level because it tells the story about the lasting benefits of the training, past the direct results.

- Keep it realistic, you can always work with your point of contact at the Foundation if things change during implementation.

- Stick to indicators that are cumulative, I.e. if you will run one training before the first milestone and a second training after that, milestone 2 should have a number that adds up the trainings participants of the whole project so far.

Budgeting best practices

The budget is a fundamental element of your project proposal. The first step you should take is to read through the project design as you have drafted it up to this point (problem statement, project goal, theory of change, objectives, activities, indicators, and targets. Make sure your budget costs are aligned with the project objectives and detail the costs for each planned activity, equipment, travel, personnel etc. Be realistic and do not overstate or understate your budget or make up figures. If you are having trouble, look back to the costs of previous activities and base your projection on those 'real' costs. Ensure you are providing realistic estimates about staff time to carry out activities, conduct data collection, take the time for reflection sessions, and for report writing.

Additionally, make sure to account for any funding provided by other project partners and what activities or aspect of the project they will be covering as cost-share.

You can find more detailed instructions on budgeting using this **link**.

Adam: I have a budget here from an old project and tried to adapt it for this new one. However, there are two different partners involved that provide different cost shares. It looks quite messy if I try to put that all in, I doubt anyone can understand where the numbers came from.
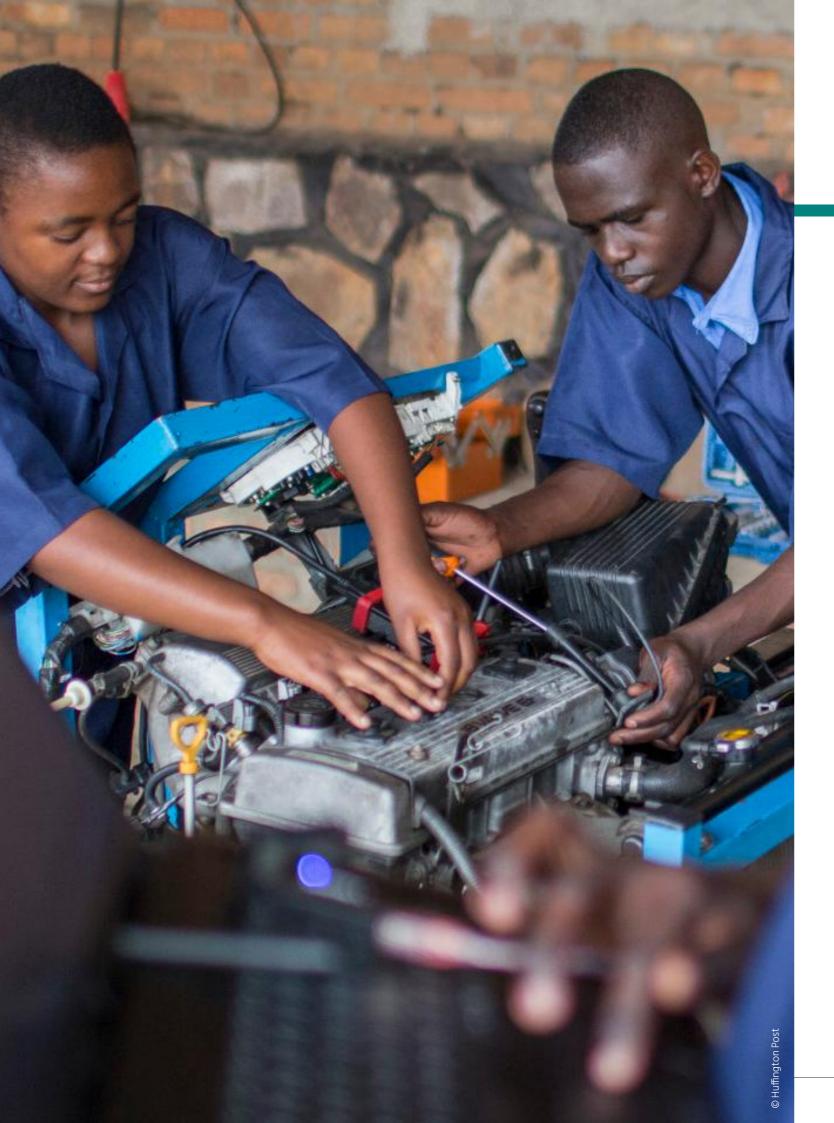
Mariam: You should use the templates provided by the Foundation programme area you're applying for and follow the guidelines in the application form. In the narrative section, explain how you've calculated or determined the costs specified in your budget.

Adam: This is quite a detailed template. Can't I just estimate some of these things at this point, given that the project may not even get implemented?

Mariam: The Foundation needs accurate numbers. If your application is approved, a precise estimate of your budget will not only guarantee an optimal use of the funds, but it will also facilitate the practical implementation of the project.

Top tips

- Wherever possible, base the budget projections on 'real' costs from previously implemented, similar activities. You should use these figures as a basis – and then adapt it per the specificity of the activity.

- Make sure that each activity within the project is accounted for with a budget line item. If the cost is being funded through other funds – just note that as cost-share.

- Ensure that all activities listed in the proposal are represented in the budget and clearly link budget totals to activity descriptions.

- Provide as much detail and cost breakdowns as possible.

- Check your formulas and be accurate.

Optional:
Encouraged action

Develop a Key Performance Indicator Tracking Table (KPITT)

The KPITT is a document to organize and track the measurement indicators over the life of the project. It is a simple table that allows you to track indicator progress over time. You should fill it out after each activity that you implement and/or when you have data to analyze as a result of the **data collection techniques** you've employed. The ISOC Foundation provides the following template (**KPITT**).

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