



# Guide to Developing a Scope of Work for Mid-Term Evaluation of Title II Development Food Assistance Programs

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The FSN Network is an open community of practice of food security and nutrition implementers seeking to share information, shape agendas, understand and influence donor priorities, build consensus on promising practices, and widely diffuse technical knowledge.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANRM	agriculture and natural resource management
ARR	Annual Results Report
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DH	development hypothesis
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DRR	disaster risk reduction
FFP	USAID Office of Food for Peace
IGAs	income-generating activities
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
IR	Intermediate Result
KM	knowledge management
LQAS	Lot Quality Assurance Sampling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCHN	maternal and child health and nutrition
MSI	Management Systems International
MTE	midterm evaluation
PD	Positive Deviance
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PVO	private voluntary organization
RF	Results Framework
SAPQ	Standardized Annual Performance Questionnaire
SBC	social and behavior change
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	scope of work
TL	team leader
TOC	theory of change

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USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VSL	village savings and loan
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene

This guide is designed to help Title II development food assistance program Awardees develop a standard scope of work (SOW) for their midterm evaluations (MTEs).

A MTE must be carried out by the Awardees approximately halfway through the life of a Title II development food assistance program award. The MTE of a Title II program should be a process evaluation rather than a summative evaluation. As a process evaluation, the MTE represents an opportunity to make midcourse corrections in program strategy and to address implementation issues that are constraining effective implementation. The MTE concentrates on reviewing implementation processes for producing planned outputs and the program logic reflected in the results framework (RF) to determine whether the program is likely to achieve the intended results, objectives and impact. The MTE identifies successful strategies, challenges, ways for improvements and lessons learned.<sup>1</sup>

The following set of objectives may be used in designing a MTE for a Title II development food assistance program.

- Identify, explain and learn from successful strategies.
- Identify and learn from challenges and unsuccessful strategies.
- Assess implementation progress and constraints, and determine the likelihood of achieving target results.
- Review service and input delivery mechanisms and the quality of services (e.g., training, sensitization sessions, care group or Positive Deviance [PD]/Hearth sessions, farmer field school or other learning approaches used) and inputs (e.g., food and non-food items distributed).
- Understand stakeholders' views on or perceptions of program interventions, i.e., what is working and what adjustments need to be made.

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<sup>1</sup> Information in the paragraph was taken from: USAID Office of Food for Peace. 2009. *Food for Peace Information Bulletin 09-06*.

## Scope of Work Outline

1. Introduction
  - 1.1 Description of the program
  - 1.2 Evaluation purpose and objectives
2. Key evaluation questions
  - 2.1 Technical components
  - 2.2 Program quality and cross-cutting areas
  - 2.3 Implementation processes
3. Evaluation methodology
4. Composition of MTE team
  - 4.1 SOW for the team leader
  - 4.2 SOW for team members
  - 4.3 Desired qualifications of the team members
5. Program responsibilities
6. Deliverables
7. Methodological strengths and limitations
8. Presentations
9. Timeframe

## 1. Introduction

The introduction section should provide a brief description of the program, including its goal, objectives, theory of change (TOC), key project activities, operating environment, program partners and contextual information. It should also include a brief overview of the purpose of the MTE and its relationship to program monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities.

### 1.1 Description of the program

The introduction should include the following information:

- Description of the wider context, specifically the issues and vulnerabilities the program is seeking to address
- Goal of the project, including strategic objectives (SOs) and intermediate results (IRs)
- A brief description of key interventions and implementation activities
- Targeted beneficiary groups and geographic coverage of the program, including a map showing the location of the program area
- Brief description of key partners and coordination of activities among partners
- Implementation history and issues to date, which may include but are not limited to:
  - Operating environment (e.g., political, institutional, climatic, economic), especially factors affecting implementation and changes in the targeted populations
  - Changes in the design of key interventions

## I.2 Evaluation purpose and objectives

The purpose statement in an evaluation SOW explains why an evaluation is being conducted. The purpose of a MTE is to improve program/project effectiveness and efficiency and/or to inform specific future decisions. The MTE is a process evaluation that suggests mid-course corrections in program strategy and recommendations for improving effectiveness efficiency. The introduction should clearly state the overall objectives of the MTE, as well as any unique topics that need to be investigated for a particular program, such as a major issue affecting implementation, a major constraint that the program is facing or an important cross-cutting issue.

## 2. Key evaluation questions

Key questions for a MTE should focus on processes and inquire about a program's approach, implementation management and/or relationships among program partners. Although it is not a prime focus of the MTE, the team should also review the program's early results relative to performance targets.

Evaluation questions should be outlined by topic in the SOW. This will clearly communicate to Awardees what to expect from the MTE and will guide the MTE team in developing topical outlines for qualitative study and survey instruments for quantitative surveys. The MTE team should focus on the evaluation questions outlined in the SOW. The following guiding principles may be used to develop a list of evaluation questions.

- Consider implementation processes, especially the time, budget and resources available for the MTE. While a participatory process ensures wide-ranging input into the initial list of questions, it is equally important to reduce this list to a manageable number of key questions. When identifying key questions, each should be carefully considered with respect to the available budget for the MTE, the time and effort needed to adequately answer the question, and the technical expertise needed.<sup>2</sup>
- Review the TOC or development hypothesis (DH) of the program and the RF to identify key evaluation questions. The TOC/DH and RF should be the basis of most of the key evaluation questions.
- Identify questions for which an examination of gender-specific or gender-differential effects are expected.<sup>3</sup> In addition, identify evaluation questions for which sex-disaggregated data are available from the performance monitoring system.
- Each evaluation question should be answerable with the highest-quality and most credible evidence possible, given time and budget constraints. To ensure that a team will be able to gather adequate evidence to sufficiently address each of the evaluation

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<sup>2</sup> USAID, 2010

<sup>3</sup> USAID, 2012

questions, a maximum of five evaluation questions per technical area and a maximum of two to three evaluation questions per cross-cutting areas should be included in a SOW.

- The questions should be clearly defined, precise and “researchable”. It is important to ask how important and essential the question is to the purpose and the users of the evaluation.

The MTE team should review the quality and effectiveness of the methodologies, approaches and techniques used to achieve program outcomes. The MTE team should also review program processes and management as they are equally important to achieving results. One way to organize the key evaluation questions is by technical components (sectors), program quality and crosscutting areas, and implementation processes, as outlined in **Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3**.

This guide includes sample questions by topical area in the Appendices. The long list of questions provided only should be used to help Awardees develop specific questions for the MTE, not used in totality for the MTE. The actual list of questions for the evaluation will be much shorter: there should be no more than five questions per technical area and not more than three questions per cross-cutting and implementation process areas. The final questions used will depend on the program components, purpose and scope of the evaluation, and resources availability.

## 2.1 Technical components

The MTE should include questions on the following technical components. You should also include questions on technical areas specific to your program that are not listed below. Remember that only five questions per component are necessary.

- Maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN)
- Agriculture and natural resource management (ANRM) and income-generating activities (IGAs)
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
- Infrastructure

## 2.2 Program quality and cross-cutting areas

The MTE should include questions on the following program quality and cross-cutting areas. Remember that only three questions per area are needed.

- Linkages with complementary programs/projects and government departments
- Partnership and consortium management
- Targeting
  - Geographical targeting
  - Targeted beneficiaries

- Integration and synergy of program activities
- Beneficiary phase-in/phase-out strategies
- Sustainability/exit strategies
- Gender
- Social and behavior change (SBC)

### 2.3 Implementation processes

The MTE should include questions on the following implementation processes:

- M&E
- Knowledge management (KM)
- Commodity management
- General management
  - Financial management<sup>4</sup>
  - Human resources management

## 3. Evaluation methodology

This section should describe the general methodology of the evaluation. The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP) does not require a MTE to be quantitative or population-based. FFP encourages participatory qualitative methods for the MTE. However, evaluators should certainly review quantitative information being generated by the M&E systems and consider how the final evaluation will measure program performance.

The MTE should use a qualitative and participatory approach that includes all key stakeholders, such as government representatives, field staff and managerial staff of implementing partners (sub-Awardees), consortium members, community volunteers and beneficiaries. Program staff, including partner and consortium member staff, and the private voluntary organizations (PVO) country office should be involved in all aspects of evaluation, including developing lists of program sites, sharing program documents, answering questions, sharing successes and challenges, recommending changes to research methodologies and/or instruments, making logistical arrangements for research activities, validating data collected by the MTE team, helping interpret results and reviewing draft reports. The qualitative methods tend to use purposive sampling; therefore, if the MTE team's observations do not represent the overall program, program staff must point this out to the MTE team.

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<sup>4</sup> The MTE team will not conduct a financial audit or determine how good the accounting system is. Rather, the evaluators should determine whether the financial management system is facilitating or inhibiting program implementation. See the example questions in **Appendix 2**.

With the guidance of MTE team members, program or consortium staff may also participate in collecting certain kinds of information or data during field visits. Ideally, program staff, in small numbers, will accompany the team on field visits, participating in observations and introducing evaluators to program participants.

The MTE team should review the program proposal, program reports<sup>5</sup> and other relevant qualitative and quantitative information provided to the MTE team as much as one month before the field work starts, and available in hard copy in-country to the MTE team. The MTE should evaluate these materials to determine the quality of program management, cross-cutting issues and likelihood of the program achieving established targets.

In addition, the MTE team will use qualitative methods and techniques for primary data collection to complement available data. These could include:

- Key informant interviews with program personnel and stakeholders, including USAID, local government organizations, relevant government ministries, institutional partners, local community committees and selected community participants
- Review of program records to establish outputs and financial accountability
- Direct observations of service delivery sessions through site visits to assess technical practices and the quality of activities, confirm recorded outputs, and assess the likelihood of achieving outcomes
- Focus group interviews with program participants (household and institutional) to determine program benefits and beneficiaries, service delivery quality, perception of the communities, unanticipated consequences and possible areas of modification and design
- Assessments of the Awardee's institutional capacity (in terms of human resource capacity, technical capacity, logistical capacity, etc.) to implement the program
- Review of program and organizational documents from primary and secondary sources to assess institutional strengthening activities of various partners and organizations
- Interview staff and partners' staff to determine if program management and administration, including logistics and financial management are constraining program implementation

The MTE team should also assess the effectiveness of the monitoring system, including the appropriateness of performance indicators, M&E plan, data collection tools, roles and

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<sup>5</sup> Program reports should include, but are not limited to, the baseline report, annual reports, routine monitoring reports and outcome monitoring reports.

responsibilities in collecting and aggregating data, data flow and data quality management mechanisms.

### 3.1 Quantitative survey

Should the program decide to conduct a quantitative survey as part of the MTE, the survey needs to be carefully designed to achieve the objective of the evaluation, which typically is to measure progress on key outcome indicators and to evaluate the program's TOC/DH. Although a MTE often uses a sample survey of beneficiaries to collect quantitative data (if a quantitative survey is planned) to measure adoption coverage, alternative sampling techniques, such as Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS), can also be used.

The MTE quantitative survey should be designed to collect information from program beneficiaries. It should not be a population-based survey. There is no need to use a stratified sampling design for a MTE. Collecting and analyzing quantitative survey data should occur before the qualitative review takes place. This will allow the MTE team to investigate the reasons for poor or inadequate performance and potential opportunities for improvement. The quantitative data also will provide insight into identifying bottlenecks and recommending changes.

### 3.2 Validation of the initial observations

The validation of findings is an important step in getting the staffs' buy-in of the results; therefore, it is critical to ask for a data validation strategy in the SOW. The MTE team should follow an interactive and participatory process so that program staff are aware of the information gathered by the MTE team. The MTE team should present its initial observations to program staff (including partners) to validate its findings and interpretations. In the event of major disagreements, the MTE team may need to revisit the data or communities to make sure that their findings are based on valid and reliable information.

The validation exercise may also be combined with action planning, in which program staff formulate plans to follow up on recommendations. This is advantageous, as it gives staff access to the MTE team's technical expertise and presents both sides with the opportunity to ensure mutual understanding of the recommendations.

## 4. Composition of MTE team

The composition of the MTE team depends on the technical components of the program, general program quality issues and implementation processes to be evaluated. The number of team members will depend on the scope of the program, the need for specific technical expertise and resource availability.

Assign one person of the MTE team as the team leader (TL) to coordinate between program management and MTE team members and to ensure the overall quality of the MTE. This person can also cover one technical area and several cross-cutting and implementation process areas. The TL should work with program management on MTE

planning and logistics, allocate responsibilities by topic areas, provide support to MTE team members, and organize and facilitate team interaction. The TL is responsible for compiling the final report and coordinating MTE team responses to the feedback on the draft report. The TL also will spearhead the process to validate the initial observations and interpretations and to plan in-country presentations to program stakeholders and donor(s). The individual in this position should possess strong evaluation management skills and prior experience in successfully leading evaluation teams. The TL needs to be given sufficient time to carry out these responsibilities.

The roles, responsibilities and desired qualifications of the TL and MTE team members need to be defined and included in this section. The roles and responsibilities of each team member will depend on the evaluation questions and the program strategies.

## 5. Program responsibilities

Program management will be responsible for the following:

- Share the draft SOW with the donor and incorporate donor comments, arrange an initial orientation meeting between the donor and the MTE team, and arrange briefing meetings
- Provide administrative and logistics support to the MTE team, such as scheduling appointments with stakeholders and coordinating with consortium members or partners on travel, lodging and per diem matters for the consultants
- Provide consultants with background documents, reports, data and other materials
- Develop a list of all beneficiary communities and classify them based on progress (e.g., high performing, moderate or poor performing), and make this list available to the MTE team or collaborate with the team to select a mix of communities for the site visits
- Provide available data on all components required by the MTE team, such as human resources, commodities, M&E systems and financial management structures
- Share the draft evaluation report with all key stakeholders, including key program staff, partners, donor representative(s) and government officials; give these stakeholders a due date for providing feedback to a program point person; and review comments, compile them, and forward the consolidated comments to the MTE team
- Translate the final report into the local language for distribution to staff and stakeholders

## 6. Deliverables

The MTE team will be responsible for producing a report that combines qualitative and quantitative data using the following suggested outline.

- I. Executive summary

- II. Background
  - A. Overview of program strategies
  - B. Program history and operating context
- III. Evaluation purpose and objectives
  - A. Evaluation methodology
- IV. IR 1.1 under SO 1
  - A. Brief description of interventions
  - B. Service delivery strategies and approaches: quality, successes and challenges
  - C. Implementation progress and achievement of results
  - D. Meeting targets
  - E. Other achievements
  - F. Lessons learned and promising practices
- V. IR 1.2 under SO 1
  - A. Brief description of interventions
  - B. Service delivery strategies and approaches: quality, successes and challenges
  - C. Implementation progress and achievement of results
  - D. Meeting targets
  - E. Other achievements
  - F. Lessons learned and promising practices
- VI. IR 2.1 under SO 2
  - A. ....

[Similar sections for all IRs]
- VII. Program quality and cross-cutting areas
  - A. Partnership/consortium quality
  - B. Targeting
  - C. Integration
  - D. Sustainability/exit strategies
  - E. Gender
  - F. SBC
- VIII. Implementation processes
  - A. M&E
  - B. KM
  - C. Commodity management
  - D. General management
    - Financial management
    - Human resource management
- IX. Recommendations (If technical recommendations for each IR are incorporated in the IR section, only general recommendations need to be presented here.)

- a. Critical priority recommendations
  - b. Other recommendations
  - c. Recommended updates to future M&E activities
- X. Appendices
- A. List of abbreviations and acronyms
  - B. Evaluation SOW
  - C. Evaluation plan and schedule<sup>6</sup>
  - D. Evaluation methods and tools (topical outlines and quantitative survey questionnaire)
  - E. A brief report on quantitative results (if a quantitative survey is carried out as part of MTE)
  - F. List of sites visited
  - G. List of key informants and communities visited
  - H. Summary tables on finance, commodities and human resources

## 7. Methodological strengths and limitations

USAID's evaluation policy<sup>7</sup> states that any methodological strengths and limitations must be communicated explicitly in evaluation SOWs. When likely study limitations are described in an evaluation SOW, USAID and other decision-makers are placed in a better position to decide whether to go ahead with the evaluation in spite of these or to adjust the evaluation questions, timeline or budget to eliminate or minimize their impact on the quality of the evidence an evaluation yields.

## 8. Presentations

The SOW should outline the presentation requirements and the potential audiences. Plan for two presentations: one for the internal audience (e.g., program managers, technicians, implementing partner organizations) that details the findings, including preliminary recommendations, and a formal presentation of key findings for USAID/FFP representatives, government counterparts and other stakeholders.

## 9. Timeframe

The SOW should offer a realistic timeframe for the key evaluation activities. The following table provides an example<sup>8</sup> of key activities that can serve as a basis for estimating the time needed. The specific activities and their timeframe will depend on context.

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<sup>6</sup> The evaluation plan should be developed by the program with input from the MTE team and should not be redundant with the SOW. It does not have to be an elaborate document.

<sup>7</sup> USAID, 2011

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from ACIDI/VOCA PROSHAR 2012.

<b>Key activities for program staff</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<p><b>Pre-planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with partners to plan for the MTE. Determine the core competencies of the team members, their level of experience and the number of evaluators needed.</li> <li>• Contact possible TLs, MTE team member candidates and consulting firms.</li> <li>• Finalize selection of the MTE team (TL and members).</li> <li>• Organize all documents and make them available to the MTE team.</li> <li>• Develop a list of all implementation villages/communities (by partner) and classify them by level of program performance (e.g., excellent, moderate, needs extensive support).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing reports, documents and data (quantitative survey, program records).</li> <li>• Develop qualitative survey tools.</li> <li>• Develop an evaluation plan.</li> <li>• Develop and share final implementation and logistical plan with stakeholders</li> <li>• Identify program staff that will participate in the review process.</li> <li>• Arrange all logistics.</li> </ul>	

Key activities for the MTE team	Timeframe
<b>Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select sample communities/villages.</li> <li>• Discuss with partners and staff to ensure that appropriate steps are being taken before implementation.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implementation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold an introductory meeting between the MTE team and stakeholders (i.e., partners, key program staff, donor).</li> <li>• Brief the MTE team (objectives, organizations, methods, approaches, tools) and finalize the qualitative study tools.</li> <li>• Train enumerators and/or the qualitative interviewers.</li> <li>• Conduct the field work (i.e., interviews, focus group discussions, observations, analyses, triangulations).</li> <li>• Present the preliminary observations to validate findings and interpretations.</li> <li>• Revisit sites if there are major disagreements on the findings.</li> <li>• Present detailed results, including preliminary recommendations, to the consortium members.</li> <li>• Make a summary presentation of the key findings and implications to USAID/FFP and government counterparts.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reporting</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a draft report following the guidelines in <b>Section 6</b> and share it with the prime Awardee. (The Awardee then shares the draft report with key stakeholders, collects and compiles comments, and forwards comments to the MTE team.)</li> <li>• The MTE TL addresses the comments and incorporates inputs from the stakeholders.</li> <li>• Finalize the MTE report.</li> </ul>	

While MTEs are encouraged to be participatory and detailed, the MTE team should still focus on providing succinct analysis without too much repetition and only include the most relevant information. Qualitative research can be challenging when sorting through long interviews and focus group reports to find trends. However, these trends are important and should be conveyed clearly to build the foundation on which recommendations will be made.

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## APPENDIX I: Examples of key evaluation questions for technical components<sup>9</sup>

### MCHN

- Is the level of effort among different interventions and activities relevant to the MCHN problems facing the community?
- Did the program adjust the plans and MCHN messages in the proposal after reviewing the results of the baseline survey?
- Are the approaches the program is using to promote behavior change or to prevent malnutrition appropriate to the context and the local health and nutrition issues?
- How are the MCHN activities linked to the other program interventions (e.g., agriculture, water and sanitation)? Are there clear linkages and coordination with community public and private health, nutrition and social services?
- Does the community have a clear understanding of the MCHN-related services offered by the program and who is eligible to receive them?
- What is the project doing to increase access to and availability of food in order to achieve improved dietary diversity? Is this strategy likely to lead to sustainable improvements?
- Do beneficiaries receiving food rations understand why they are receiving them and for how long they will receive them?
- How successful has the program been in increasing use of government preventative and curative health and related social services, including those that address gender-based violence? Are there barriers to usage that the program is not addressing? Why isn't the program addressing those barriers?
- How successful has the program been in getting the community linked with potential government financial resources (e.g., construction of water and sanitation related infrastructures)?
- Are staff knowledgeable of the purpose of the MCHN component and qualified in applicable methods? Are staff knowledgeable about the relative nutrient content of locally available foods? Do staff understand the barriers to access and availability of even the most basic foods for some beneficiaries?

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<sup>9</sup> The sample questions presented in the Appendices were developed by the technical task force members or borrowed in part from Bonnard, 2009.

- Are messages and services being delivered in a gender-appropriate manner in order to maximize effectiveness?
- Are the MCHN-related messages and technologies promoted by the program technically sound and appropriate to the operational context of the program?
- What is being done to improve the capabilities of staff and local partners to respond to community needs and meet the program's objectives?
- Are structured supervision plans and tools in place to monitor those responsible for providing health and nutrition education or assessment/care/treatment?
- Is there a problem with the attrition of community health or nutrition volunteers? If so, why do they drop out and what can be done to reduce the rate of attrition? What is the program doing to sustain motivation?
- What is the quality of growth promotion sessions? Are there follow-up discussions with the mothers, and what is the quality of these follow-up discussions? Are staff aware of common micronutrient deficiencies? Do they know how to link people to available services?
- If the program has a micronutrient activity, do staff and community volunteers fully understand recommended behaviors and the rationale for these? Which MCHN strategies have been more effective so far, and why?
- What specific behaviors is the program trying to change? Is the program using SBC methods appropriate to achieving desired changes in behavior? How does the program measure the effectiveness of its SBC methods?
- Are there other factors unrelated to program activities that contribute to or hinder progress toward behavior change(s)? If not, does the program understand any real or potential obstacles to optimal behavior and have plans to address them?
- Do those responsible for promoting health and nutrition behavior change have SBC materials or methods that are appropriate, tailored to the user, actionable, accurate and linked to growth promotion messages? Which materials need strengthening, if any, and how should they be strengthened? Are users of these materials and methods able to select the appropriate messages and provide effective counseling? If not, what skills need strengthening? Do the materials focus on a limited number of messages related to infant and young child feeding?
- Through what processes were the health and nutrition behavior change and communication materials developed, tested and applied? Were the materials made available to staff and volunteers in a timely manner?

## **ANRM and IGAs**

### General

- What are the main opportunities addressed by the program (for example, increasing production and/or sales volume, improving produce quality, or building business expertise)? Does the program take adequate advantage of these opportunities? What has worked really well and what needs to be addressed and adapted going forward?
- Are there ways to enhance the effectiveness of IGAs on household food security beyond what has already been done or planned?
- Have changes in income impacted the household dynamics in a positive or negative way, particularly with regard to gender? If so, how?
- Have any new potential practices or tools been used during the program that could be replicable elsewhere?
- What are the main ANRM elements hindering the program's progress? What new opportunities have been identified that could be addressed in the remaining part of the program?
- What is the likelihood of sustaining the increased agricultural production (e.g., vegetable, fish) and/or value addition methods introduced during the program?
- Are microenterprises targeted by the program likely to sustain their operations without program support? If not, why, and what can be done to enhance their sustainability?
- How has increased agricultural production impacted children's education or workload?
- What systems or activities have been put in place to ensure sustainability beyond the life of the program?

### Technologies and practices

- To what extent have program-promoted ANRM technologies and practices been adopted by program participants? What gaps still need to be addressed? How have such practices and tools impacted women's workload?
- Are the technologies and practices being promoted established and suitable to the local agro-ecological environments?
- If demonstration plots have been used during the program, do they accurately reflect the real conditions farmers face? What challenges have been identified in using these plots, and what needs to be changed to improve them?

- Are the program-promoted activities linked to governmental agriculture, fisheries or livestock departments or the national or international agricultural research centers? Has a communication protocol been established? Are the linkages sustainable? If not, why not? Suggest solutions.
- What are farmers' perceptions about the program-promoted technologies and practices? (Be sure to take into account perceptions of men, women and youth.)
- Will farmers be able to continue program-promoted technologies and practices beyond the life of the program?
- Are farmers and other stakeholders able to access technical support related to ANRM practices without program assistance (free or subsidized)? If not, what would be required so they could?
- Do women face additional limitations in accessing funds (such as credit) in order to continue the promoted practices and technologies? If the program has introduced productive infrastructure, such as small irrigation systems, are farmers and other stakeholders able to maintain those new infrastructures on their own? If not, why not, and what could be done? Are there additional limitations specifically pertaining to women?

#### Market access

- Has the program conducted a comprehensive value chain analysis, taking into account the separate and shared roles of men and women? What activities were initiated in response to the value chain analysis, and how successful have they been? What were the main challenges related to this?
- Is there an accessible market for the products or services produced by the microenterprises promoted by the program?
- Did the program introduce market linkages? If so, how successful have they been, and how likely are they to remain after the program ends?
- If farmer groups have been established, what capacity do they have to sustain the established relationships with the private sector (e.g., producer, buyers, suppliers, retailers)?
- If women's groups have been targeted, what are the key factors to success, limitations and negative impacts?
- In mixed groups, do women play an active role (e.g., leadership positions, participation in meetings/events)? What are the limitations?
- If collection points have been established during the program, are they functioning regularly and are they likely to be sustained? If so how?

- Did the program conduct an assessment of gender roles in production, resource management, control over resources and workload in developing program strategies for this sector? How were the results used in developing or revising the strategies to improve an equitable participation and benefits?
- Does the program have systems in place to address gender equity in promoting the techniques related to ANRM? What could be done to improve equitable participation, workload distribution and the benefits from interventions?
- Are the IGAs promoted by the program appropriate for the most vulnerable and the geographical context? If not, what options could be better?

#### Access to finance

- Are microfinance projects (e.g., village savings and loans, microfinance institutions) designed and implemented according to standard promising practices? If not, why and how can credit practices be improved?
- Are there certain groups/individuals within the target population better able to access loans? If yes, why? If there are groups/individuals that are unable to access loans, should the program be broadened to include these groups, and how can the program be modified to incorporate them?
- Have microfinance activities contributed directly to household food security, and how?

#### **DRR**

- Which disaster preparedness activities have been most effective, as perceived by the community? Which activities were not successful, and why? How might these activities be improved?
- How well are the DRR activities integrated with interventions to promote food access, availability and utilization?
- How well are the activities integrated with government-promoted emergency preparedness or DRR activities?
- What roles did communities and individuals have in developing the DRR activities? How have the viewpoints of men, women, girls and boys been taken into consideration?
- Are government and community stakeholders aware of the disaster preparedness activities promoted by the program and outputs of these activities? How successful has the program been in assuring government buy-in/support?

- What evidence, if any, exists to indicate improved community preparedness for response to and recovery from disasters? What gender-specific issues have been addressed?
- Are there additional direct or indirect benefits derived from infrastructure construction or rehabilitation that are not currently being captured?
- Are there any unintended negative environmental impacts stemming from infrastructure activities? If so, are there sustainable mitigation measures being implemented? What additional measures can be implemented?

## **WASH**

- What strategies are employed to influence the WASH behaviors of men, women and children? What are these strategies' levels of successes in influencing the target population's WASH behaviors?
- What is the quality of behavior change sessions, for example, interactive sessions, session length, topic selection, quality and use of visual aids, quality and use of flipcharts, participation and facilitator's demonstrated knowledge of the topic? How can they be improved?
- Which WASH activities have been most effective in addressing assessed needs? Which activities were not successful and why? How might these activities be improved?
- Which communication methods are preferred by women and men to receive the information they need about WASH activities? Are these formal or informal?
- Did the program build, distribute or rehabilitate the community's potable water system(s) (borehole pump or tube-well)? Are all the pumps working? How they are maintained? Who is benefiting from the water systems? Who is excluded?
- How has the community been involved in deciding the type and location of water sources?
- What are men's and women's preferences for location of water points? What preferences are there for design and technology?
- How have water sources been maintained? Are there examples of community-maintained water sources? What are the key factors behind the success of this model? What are the challenges in community-led management of water points? How can those challenges be addressed?

- Are there households in the community that do not receive this water supply? If yes, how do these households get water? Why don't these household receive water?
- Is there a functioning water committee? Does the water committee have a savings account? Does the water committee collect monthly fees from households to maintain the water system? Are the monthly fees collected enough to pay for the operation and maintenance of the water system?
- Where do the necessary funds come from for the water system's maintenance or repair? Are there differences between women and men in willingness and capacity to pay for water services?
- What is the level of staff training to promote health and hygiene interventions? Do they have adequate knowledge about behavior change and its links to program hierarchy? What additional training, if any, would be recommended for program staff?

### **Infrastructure<sup>10,11</sup>**

- Do the design and implementation of infrastructure adhere to local technical codes and guidelines? If not, why not, and how can program activities be brought up to code? What is the quality of the infrastructure? What is the community's perception on the quality and effectiveness of the infrastructures?
- Did the program follow USAID environmental regulations in constructing these infrastructures? How are the activities labeled as 'negative determination with conditions' being monitored?
- Are there any unintended negative environmental impacts stemming from infrastructure activities? If so, are there sustainable mitigation measures being implemented? What additional measures can be implemented?
- Has the rehabilitation of rural roads had an effect on seasonal road use and transportation time and costs for the targeted beneficiaries? Has it had an effect on seasonal availability of food and other important commodities?
- What mechanisms have been developed to maintain the infrastructures created or rehabilitated by the program after the program ends? How has the system been working? What could be done to improve the system?
- Are there additional direct or indirect benefits derived from infrastructure construction or rehabilitation that are not currently being captured?

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<sup>10</sup> Bonnard, 2009

<sup>11</sup> Infrastructure is often not standalone in a program strategy, but supports other components, including the ANRM, DRR and WASH components.

- Do food- or cash-for-work activities compete with or complement the demands for household labor in other productive activities?
- Have women been targeted for food- or cash-for-work activities? How was this done? How did the program address issues related to childcare and the ability of women to perform in these activities?

## APPENDIX 2: Examples of key evaluation questions for general program quality and cross-cutting areas

### Partnership and consortium management

- Did partners/consortium members develop a set of common criteria for excellence in internal partnership/consortium management, such as compliance to donors and each other and programmatic, financial and managerial accountability for service delivery to communities and/or program participants<sup>12</sup>?
- Did partners/consortium members agree to a set of appropriate financial, administrative and managerial processes and procedures that are based on consortium needs and each agency's strengths? Did they develop an operations manual documenting these processes and procedures to remain in compliance with host nation law and donor requirements?
- Did the partners/consortium members define their roles based on each agency's capacities and the program's needs?
- Does the consortium or partnership have guidelines for conflict resolution, communication and decision-making that reinforce transparency and accountability at all levels? How have gender-equitable programming and integration been presented to consortium members, staff and partners?
- Do consortium members conduct business in a transparent, timely and respectful fashion and work to build a consortium based on trust and mutual respect, consistently supporting positive interpersonal behavior?
- Does the consortium have an open and transparent process for decision making and arbitration? Can it be improved?
- Do consortium members put the needs and identity of the consortium ahead of individual organizational needs when representing the consortium?
- Does the consortium or partnership allocate adequate resources<sup>13</sup> to monitoring, evaluation, learning and KM systems; support staff in learning, change and innovation; and create and sustain a culture that continually improves its management practice from lessons learned, both failures and successes?
- How effective<sup>14</sup> is the partnership in planning, developing implementation strategies, reviewing monitoring reports, documenting and sharing lessons learned, and making

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<sup>12</sup> CRS, 2008

<sup>13</sup> "Adequate resources" refers to the human and financial resources required to carry out the monitoring activities agreed on by the consortium and maintain the agreed upon standards.

<sup>14</sup> Attributes of effective partnership include:

programmatic policy decisions? Provide specific recommendations to improve the quality of partnership.

- Did the partners or consortium members periodically meet to review program progress and implementation challenges?
- Which strategies have worked in encouraging partner participation and involvement, and which did not?

### **Targeting**

- Who from among the program's intended beneficiaries is benefiting from these activities? How are they benefiting?
- How would these beneficiaries be described on the poverty/food insecurity/vulnerability continuum? For example, are they from the "poorest" end of the continuum, from somewhere in the middle, or from the "top" end of the continuum?
- How does the achieved numbers of people compare to proposed targets? Is the program on track to achieve its target beneficiary numbers?
- Who else, who may not have been an intended beneficiary, benefits from program activities? How are they benefiting?
- Who has been adversely affected by program activities? How have they been affected?

### **Integration**

#### Integration with the host country government Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

- How well does the program strategy align with the host country government strategies, as reflected in the PRSP?
- Which program activities are making the largest contributions to the PRSP?
- Which program activities may be creating or hardening obstacles to achieving progress described in the PRSP?

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- a) Open and transparent communication and decision-making processes among the partners
  - b) Common understanding of both individual and joint responsibilities of partners
  - c) Involvement of key stakeholders in all stages of partnership and program development
  - d) Strong leadership role taken by the prime or the Awardee
  - e) Flexibility in terms of scheduling meetings, adjusting roles and responsibilities, being willing to adapt to changes in planning and implementation, and accepting differences in philosophy, management style and ability to contribute to the program
  - f) Mutual respect in the areas of organizational expertise and accepting others' judgment

- How well do program activities interface with government systems? How could this be changed to make these links more effective?

#### Integration with USAID country strategy

- How well does the program strategy align with the United States Government (USG) development strategy?
- Which activities are making the largest contributions to USG strategy?
- Which program activities may be creating or hardening obstacles to achieving progress described in the USG strategy?
- What other USG-funded program activities are being implemented in the evaluated program areas? How does the evaluated program interface with these other activities? How should this be changed?

#### Integration within each partner/consortium member

- How does the program fit within the partner's overall development strategy?
- What are the biggest contributions made by the program to the partner's development strategy?
- What other program are being implemented by the partner in the same geographic areas as the evaluated program? How does the evaluated program interface with these?
- What other programs are being implemented by the partner in the same sectors as the evaluated program, but in different geographic areas? How does the project interface with these? How do experiences get exchanged across different projects in the same sector?

#### Integration within the program

- What proportion of the program's beneficiaries receives multiple services from multiple sectors? What complementary program activities could be extended to the same beneficiaries?

### **Sustainability**

- What program-induced behavior change needs to be sustained after the program ends? What threats exist that could cause the behavior change to revert to previous practice or instigate other negative practices? What external organizations, services, structures or relationships are needed to support the behavior change?
- Does this program have an exit/sustainability strategy? Does it clearly define the approaches, criteria for exiting, measurable benchmarks, timeline, actions steps,

responsibilities of different stakeholders and staff, indicators to measure progress, and a mechanism to assess progress?

- Which services being established or strengthened by the program are intended to be continued beyond the life of the program? What are the main threats to enabling these services to survive? What likely will happen to these services after the program ends? What strategies are in place to address these threats?
- What physical structures being constructed or rehabilitated by the program are intended to be continued beyond the life of the program? What are the main threats to maintaining these structures? What likely will happen to these structures after the program ends? What strategies are in place to address these threats?
- What relationships being established or strengthened by the program are intended to be continued beyond the life of the program? What are the main threats to enabling these relationships to survive? What likely will happen to these relationships after the program ends? What strategies are in place to address these threats?

## **Gender**

- Has the program developed or adapted a gender strategy? How well has the strategy been implemented?
- Did the program offer some type of gender training at program start-up? If so, have annual refresher courses and training for staff arriving after the initial training been offered?
- What is the mix of male and female staff within the hierarchy of the organization and the program? Is the proportion of female staff to male staff low, and if so, why? What has been done to improve the gender ratio of male and female staff? Please provide realistic suggestions for improving the situation.
- Is the work environment supportive of working professionals? Why are more female not coming to work for the program? What type of challenges do female professionals face in performing their work? What could be done to improve female participation? Are there similar staff/work issues related to men? If so, please explain.
- Are the intended target beneficiaries (men, women, boys and girls) being reached? What are some of the benefits of the interventions targeting specific gender groups?
- Have program interventions experienced observable negative impacts? If so, what are they and what is being done to mitigate these impacts?
- What benefits do female beneficiaries experience from project activities and do these outweigh any additional workload they may also experience?

- Is there any evidence of female empowerment<sup>15</sup> because of the program?
- Is the program demanding more time from women? Has women's work burden increased because of the program?
- How does the community see women's participation? What do the men and other household members (for example, mother-in-law) think about women's participation in the program? Are there examples of men facing similar challenges (e.g., negative impressions of men's participation in roles traditionally held by women)?
- How are men being engaged in MCHN learning opportunities, and are their roles strengthened to support the health and nutritional status of their families?
- Does the M&E system collect and process gender-sensitive-, sex- and age-disaggregated data to track outputs and outcome level changes?

## **SBC**

- What sort of formative research on determinants of key behaviors has been conducted as part of the program? Have the results of this formative research been used to guide program interventions, activities and messaging? How?
- How does the program measure coverage?
- What is currently being done in the program to reach a high proportion of beneficiaries with high-quality, effective SBC methods for behavior change? What appears to be working and what is not? Are there ways the approach could be modified to bring about improved behavior change?
- Who are the major "influencers" (in addition to mothers) targeted by program SBC activities? Which SBC methods is the program using to target them?
- What tools and methods are being used by program staff to measure and improve the quality of key SBC processes (e.g., group facilitation, individual counseling)? Which additional methods could be added to ensure high-quality SBC processes?

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<sup>15</sup> Female empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment. Dimensions of empowerment may include decision-making power over agricultural production activities, including crop, livestock, poultry and fisheries; decision-making power over microenterprises; ownership, access to and decision-making power over productive resources, such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables and credit; decision-making power over health, nutrition and family planning choices; control over income and expenditures; allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks; satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities; and increased participation in decisions around disaster preparedness.

## APPENDIX 3: Examples of key evaluation questions for implementation processes

### M&E

#### M&E design

- Does the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) have robust indicators to measure the results stated in the RF? Does the IPTT have all of the FFP-required standard indicators? Does the IPTT include gender-sensitive indicators appropriate to the RF? What is the balance of indicators? Does the program have too many indicators for each results stated in the RF? Are all indicators defined objectively, and are they all clear to both M&E and respective program sectoral technical staff?
- Are the indicator performance targets reasonable? Are they ambitious enough to make a difference to the program beneficiaries? Are the targets justifiable, i.e., based on an agency's past experience with a Title II program or another similar program? Are the targets comparable to the targets for similar interventions in the country? Are targets clearly defined as cumulative or not? Have the targets been revised using the baseline survey data?
- Does the program have a clearly defined comprehensive M&E plan that details all the monitoring activities, tools, methodologies, frequency, analysis plan, data quality assurance plan, communication strategy, data usage strategies and feedback mechanism? Does the program have an M&E system developed? Does the program meet the data/information needs of the M&E plan?

#### M&E implementation

- How functional is the routine output monitoring system? Does it have well-developed data collection forms, a data flow diagram, defined responsibilities for each partner and/or sector, aggregation levels, and a clear link showing how the information will be aggregated and reported on the Annual Results Report (ARR) and Standardized Annual Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ)? What percentage of staff time is devoted to routine monitoring?
- Does the system produce reports on time? Do the users find the reports helpful? Does the report present data in an easy-to-understand format? Does it help the technicians, managers, front line staff and partners monitor output level progress against targets? Does the report offer interpretation of the data presented?
- What is users' perception of the system's effectiveness? How can this be improved? What processes are in place to provide feedback on results at each level?

- Does the monitoring system measure outcome-level changes? Does the system use appropriate methods and tools? How often does it measure outcome? Is the system too burdensome to the M&E team?
- How often does the system produce outcome monitoring reports? How useful are the reports to the users? Do the reports present data in an easy-to-understand format? Do they help technicians, managers, front line staff and partners measure the adoption of program-promoted techniques? Do the reports interpret the data?
- Does the outcome measurement system investigate and present reasons for the coverage and/or underachievement? How useful are these findings are to the users? How can this be improved?

#### Data quality

- What is the quality of data collected and reported through the M&E system?
- How does the program manage data quality?
- How does the program M&E system maintain data quality? How effective is the system? How can this be improved?
- Does the system ensure all five dimensions of data quality: validity, reliability, timeliness, integrity and precision? How has this system been working? How can this system be improved?
- Does the program have an internal Data Quality Assessment (DQA) system? What is the quality of the tools used for DQA? How has the system been working?

#### Use of data in program management

- How are programmatic decisions being made by management? Are they based on evidence? What types of evidence were used in making decisions?
- Is there any evidence suggesting that program management and technicians used M&E data to make programmatic decisions? How effective was the communication strategy in monitoring results? Which communications strategies are useful and what needs to be improved? How could they be improved?
- Is there a systematic approach to learning from successes while also acknowledging and learning from problems? How are the lessons being captured, documented and communicated to the stakeholders? Is the system working? What could be done to improve the learning process?
- What challenges do the M&E team face in influencing programmatic decisions through M&E data? How could they be overcome?

### M&E capacity

- What is the program's M&E capacity (staff, budget, core competencies of staff) vis à vis the M&E roles and responsibilities? What can be done to improve capacity?
- Is the organizational structure supportive of M&E? What are the barriers and how could they be eliminated?

### Environmental indicators

- How does the program track environmental indicators?
- Does the program have capacity to measure environmental indicators? What are the challenges in monitoring them? Give some recommendations for addressing the challenges.

### Sustainability/exit strategy

- Has a sustainability/exit strategy been developed? Are there clearly defined indicators for measuring the progress in implementing the sustainability/exit strategy?

## **KM**

### Internal learning

- Do internal reporting systems, including staff meetings and discussions, allow for examination of what did not go as planned, where adaptation is needed or where a new idea could be applied?
- Do internal reporting systems have feedback systems that extend to the beneficiary level?
- Does the program have any systems in place whereby lessons can be shared across consortium partners or across technical areas?
- How often do program managers hear a new idea from field staff? What system is in place to encourage staff to bring new ideas? How effective is the system?
- How does the program identify, capture and document lessons learned? How are lessons learned shared, and how often? What evidence does the program have showing that it successfully used lessons learned to improve program quality or avoid mistakes?

### Cross-organizational/cross-program learning

- How are the promising practices and lessons learned disseminated to other organizations? How are promising practices and lessons learned from other organizations channeled into the program?
- What strategies does the program use to apply promising practices and lessons learned from other agencies, programs or countries?
- Is there any evidence suggesting that the program learned from others or used or adapted techniques or tools from other agencies, programs or countries?

### Incentives

- Does the management structure/culture support staff spend time creating and sharing knowledge (i.e., documentation, report-outs in meetings, brownbags, mentoring)?
- Do job descriptions identify clear knowledge sharing activities that should take place?
- Does the culture support the sharing of new or challenging ideas? How do program managers provide feedback to staff on their information or ideas?

### Processes and mechanisms for sharing

- Are there processes in place to facilitate the sharing of lessons face-to-face (i.e., through meeting topics, brownbags, mentoring projects, task teams) or remotely with field locations (e.g., by phone, Skype, remote meeting software)?
- Is there an easily accessible and widely publicized repository of lessons learned, case studies and other information? If so, are there quality guidelines and a staff member with a role in managing and publicizing added information?
- Are there identified technical leaders and other experts who are accessible for consultation when needed?

## **Commodity management**

### Commodity pipeline

- How does the food pipeline work? Please elaborate on the processes, from ordering to receiving at the port, inland transport, warehousing and distribution.
- Who is responsible for call forward/sales order, port off-loading, transport to the transit shed or port warehouse, inland transport to the primary or secondary warehouse, warehouse management, commodity accounting, beneficiary selection, distribution to end-users and end-use monitoring?

- Which processes work well in the entire food pipeline, and which need adjustments?
- Is the program using web-based supply chain management to submit sales orders/call forwards?
- Has the program had any issues with sales orders/call forwards? If yes, how did the program manage them?
- What problems has the program faced while receiving commodities at the port, and how were those managed?
- What problems has the program faced with inland transport of commodities to primary or secondary warehouses or distribution sites, and how were those managed?
- What problems has the program faced with warehouse management, and how were those addressed?
- Were there any issues with the beneficiary selection process, and how were those managed?
- What problems has the program faced in distributing commodities to program beneficiaries, and how were those managed?
- What problems has the program faced with end-use monitoring, and how were those managed?
- Has the program faced any problems with accounting for commodities, and how were those managed?
- What types of losses have occurred, and how did they occur? How did the losses affect the program, including on subsequent ordering? What changes were made in the commodity management systems in response to the losses?
- So far, what lessons has the program learned about commodity management?

#### Monetization

- What is the program's history with monetization?
- How is monetization currently being done?
- What problems have occurred with monetization, and how were those managed?
- What has been the cost recovery rate on monetization over the life of the program? What is the cost recovery rate on the most recent monetization?
- How is monetization being used to support market development?

## Reporting

- How are commodity reports prepared? Is the program using quarterly web-interfaced commodity reporting to submit reports?
- What problems have occurred in report preparation, and how have those been managed?
- Has there been any comment from the donor on commodity reports, and how did the program respond to those comments?

## **General management**

- How well has the vision for the program been articulated? How effectively has this vision been imparted to staff within the different consortium partner agencies?
- How are strategic and operational plans developed for the program? What has worked well in this process? What has not worked well?
- How have implementation-related problems been identified, analyzed and solved? What has worked well in terms of problem solving? What has not worked well?
- How well does information get communicated, including within the program, with implementing partners at different levels, and with external contacts and donors? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
- How well has the program communicated with outside stakeholders? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
- What are the most importance lessons learned on program management?

## **Financial management**

### Budget questions

- What is the current life of the activities-approved budget? How has this budget been revised since program start-up?
- What are expenditures through the last reporting period?
- What percentage of the approved budget was spent by the end of last fiscal year?
- What percentage of the approved budget is expected to be spent by the end of the program?

### Cash flow

- How is cash for program implementation provided to partners?

- How effective has cash flow been managed in the program? Have there been any significant delays in cash flow either from the donor to the prime Awardee, from the prime Awardee to the major partners, or from the prime Awardee to its implementing partners? What was the cause of the delays? What changes were made in managing cash flow?

#### Reporting

- How are program financial reports prepared?
- What problems have occurred with financial reporting, and how have these been resolved?

#### Cost share

- How is the cost-share commitment being met?
- What percentage of the cost-share commitment was achieved by the end of the last fiscal year?
- What percentage of the cost-share commitment will be achieved by the end of the program?
- What other forms of cost-share have arisen since the program was initiated? How are these being reported?

#### Audits

- What program funding audits have been completed since the program was initiated? What were the audit findings? How have these been addressed?

### **Human resource management**

- What positions in the program are still not filled, and why? Break down the number of positions vacant by sector. What efforts have been made to fill these positions?
- Is it difficult to get the necessary staff locally?
- Have the issues of compensation or the expectations of candidate qualifications been problems?
- Can any of the above be compromised? Is staff retention a problem? Are there frequent staff turnovers? Are there any glaring reasons why this is so? How can staff turnover be minimized?
- What is the process for orienting new staff hired to replace those who leave?

- What is the proportion of women to men among the staff? Is recruiting women difficult, and if so, why?
- Is there a staff development plan? Does the program provide coaching to new staff?
- How effective is staff input in performance appraisals, and are staff's expected needs met?
- Are there opportunities for job rotation?
- Do staff have clear job descriptions, and are roles and responsibilities clearly laid out?
- In general, how do staff perceive the work environment? What is their level of job satisfaction?