**TOPS/ Food Security & Nutrition Network**

**Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force Meeting**

**July – August 2012**

**HQ Participants on July 25, 2012:**

* Celeste Lemrow (Africare)
* Chung Lai (IRD)
* Diana Stukel (FANTA III)
* Edith Mutalaya (World Vision)
* Harry “Hap” Carr (CRS)
* Jodi Blackham (Samaritan’s Purse)
* Melissa Teuber (TOPS/Save the Children)
* Michelle Mwalimu (OICI)
* Milanga Abesurya (FANTA III)
* Susan Hahn (CRS)
* Tom Spangler (TANGO International)
* Arif Rashid (TOPS/ TANGO International)

**Participants from the field on August 10, 2012:**

* Angela Tavares (CRS, Zimbabwe)
* Dan Houston (USAID/FFP, South Africa Regional Office)
* Kelvin Luputa (Land O’Lakes, Zambia)
* TD Jose (CRS, East Africa Regional Office)
* Arif Rashid (TOPS/ TANGO International)

Thank you all for your participation. We like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Susan Hahn of CRS for making a presentation on SMILER and to Tom Spangler of TANGO International to take the responsibility of drafting the M&E guide. We also like to express our thanks to TD Jose for explaining Indicator Tracking Table to the field-based Task Force members.

We welcome Angela Tavares from CRS Zimbabwe to join the Task Force.

The HQ based M&E Task Force members requested TOPS to organize a meeting between the Food for Peace and the M&E Task Force to get more information on external evaluations and the terms of reference of the contractor.

**Revised outline of the M&E Guide and Next Steps**

* Based on the comments and inputs from the Task Force members, the outline of the M&E Guide is revised and shared with the TF members. If any member has any final comment, please forward them to Arif by August 20.
* TANGO will prepare the first draft. Tom Spangler from TANGO will coordinate the production of the draft guide.
* TANGO will forward the chapter/ section for review as they get drafted. The Task Force members will forward names of reviewers to Arif by **Friday (07/27/2012).** The field-based members are requested to forward names of reviewers to Arif by **August 20, 2012**. The reviewers for each section/chapter will be identified based on their strength/ knowledge of specific topic. The reviewers are expected to follow the timeframe for comments and inputs. The target deadline to complete the first draft is **October 31, 2012**.
* The contents for the guide will come from the existing M&E manuals/ guides developed by NGOs, Food for Peace Information Bulletins, USAID TIPS, FANTA and TOPS M&E Workshop slides and handouts, and USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 501 and 203.
* The primary target audience of the guide is the field-based M&E Officers working for Title II Development Food Aid Projects. It will be a “how to” guide with examples to help field-based staff to develop and/ or implement an M&E system. The guide will use terminologies and definitions used by FFP, FANTA and the Title II Development Food Aid projects.
* TOPS and the title II awardees’ will use this guide to design the M&E training so the M&E Guide and the training can play a complementary role in improving awardees’ M&E capacity.

**M&E Tools - CRS's SMILER and Indicator Tracking Table (ITT)**

On July 25, Susan Hahn from CRS made a presentation on [SMILER](http://www.fsnnetwork.org/resource-library/monitoring-and-evaluation/propack-iii-crs-project-package-guide-creating-smiler-me-) and ITT. CRS developed SMILER Guide to facilitate setting up an M&E system for projects. The SMILER approach helps to break down the development of an M&E system into easily understood parts. SMILER is an innovative, comprehensive and practical approach to make an M&E system operational; the objectives and their indicators are linked to a system to collect, analyze and report on data. The approach enables staff to turn the M&E planning documents in the proposal into a useful M&E system that can benefit all staff. The resulting system is documented in a project M&E Operating Manual.

Once a project gets awarded and project staff are hired, CRS organizes a one-week SMILER coaching session in which the participants with the help of an experienced SMILER facilitator (typically an M&E Technical Advisor) develop an operating M&E manual for the project. Tjos manual includes the following documents, organized with a Table of Contents: data flow maps, all of the routine data collection forms, reporting forms, map out the communication and reporting channels and flow, and instruction sheets on how to fill out each of the data- gathering forms and report formats.

The participants of a SMILER coaching session are M&E staff, technicians and managers. CRS recommends limiting the number of participants of a coaching session between five and six. Typically a Coaching session is designed for a week.

ITT stands for Indicator Tracking Table. It is an indicator table similar to an IPTT. TD Jose discussed the ITT on 08/10/2012. The ITT is particularly helpful for consortium or partnership projects in which typically one partner is responsible for reporting to the donor while the data are being collected by all partners. An ITT includes output level indicators from IPTT (those IPTT indicators collected during the routing monitoring process) DIP indicators, project specific indicators for technical components, and management indicators. One Indicator Tracking Table is developed for each partner organization with partner-specific targets. The partners report to the project M&E lead on the ITT indicators and track outputs against ITT targets. The M&E lead then compiles all information from ITT to produce project level report to be submitted to donor based on IPTT and other stakeholders. ITT helps the M&E team to divide the responsibilities and clarify roles for each partner. It establishes clear links between partner level monitoring data and the project level indicators and targets. It helps to minimize ambiguity in reporting and setting up targets.

CRS found both of the SMILER Guide and ITT extremely effective. They have extensively used both of the tools in a large number of countries in East and West Africa region. However a systematic evaluation to evaluate the effectiveness of these tools is yet to be conducted. Until now the evidence of effectiveness of both of the tools is anecdotal.

Next step: Arif will put together a survey and forward to the members participated in the meeting to get their opinion on recommending these two tools.

**Draft Midterm Evaluation Scope of Work**

M&E task Force decided to develop a guide on Midterm Evaluation Scope of Work. This is also in the Task Force’s this year’s work plan.

A working draft is developed and attached to this notes. The draft is developed based on Food for Peace Information Bulletin 09-06, Monitoring and Evaluation Responsibilities of Food for Peace Multi-Year Assistance Programs Awardees, USAID TIPS on Preparing and Evaluation Statement of Work (2010), USAID Evaluation Statements of Work, Good Practice Examples (2011), FANTA Guide on Title II Evaluation Scopes of Work (2002), ADS 203, and well defined Scope of Works and good practices.

The TF members are requested to review the draft and forward comments to Arif by **August 31, 2012.**

**TOPS' M&E Next year's work plan**

TOPS program organizes two to three M&E workshops per year. The West Africa Region has requested to organize a workshop on data analysis in Niger. Some members suggested organizing an M&E workshop focusing on data quality and other M&E topics in Guatemala. There was a suggestion to organize a data analysis workshop for DC based practitioners.

TD Jose suggested organizing a training on data analysis for the Anglophone countries. Dan Houston will discuss this with the projects in his region and will communicate this to Arif soon.

The HQ based M&E Task Force members also requested TOPS to organize a workshop on Consortium Management.

**CRS M&E Learning Workshop**

Hap made a brief presentation on the M&E Learning Workshop held in Malawi from 16 to 22 June, 2012. Twenty four M&E practitioners attended the week-long workshop including M&E Officers from 11 Title II Development Food Aid projects, two Feed the Future projects, CRS Regional M&E Advisors and Senior M&E Technical Advisors. Arif from TOPS participated in the meeting.

The purpose of the M&E Learning Workshop was to discuss in detail the experiences, learning, and good practices from staff working on Title II projects and from early experiences with FtF.

The workshop covered a wide range of topics including FFP and FTF standard indicators and their complementarities, beneficiary data collection, better practices and challenges in monitoring environmental indicators, current practices and challenges with trigger indicators, gender and the FTF Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index, Database and data management, Data Quality Assessments, Baseline and Final Evaluations, IPTTs, annual surveys, SMILER M&E system set-up and implementation, and ICT4D. This was a successful workshop and generated a lot of interest among the M&E practitioners.

**Implementation of the FFP Indicators Handbook, December 2011.**

CRS South Sudan just completed the baseline and there are issues with the instructions in the FFP Standard Indicators Handbook (December 2011) on how to ask some of the questions and also with the instructions on tabulation. It was discussed that FANTA has been asking the awardees to communicate their experiences with the baseline and end-line surveys using the new handbook.

It was suggested that the project should directly communicate their experiences to FANTA with a copy to Alexandra and the regional FFP M&E specialist so they get to know the issues as well.