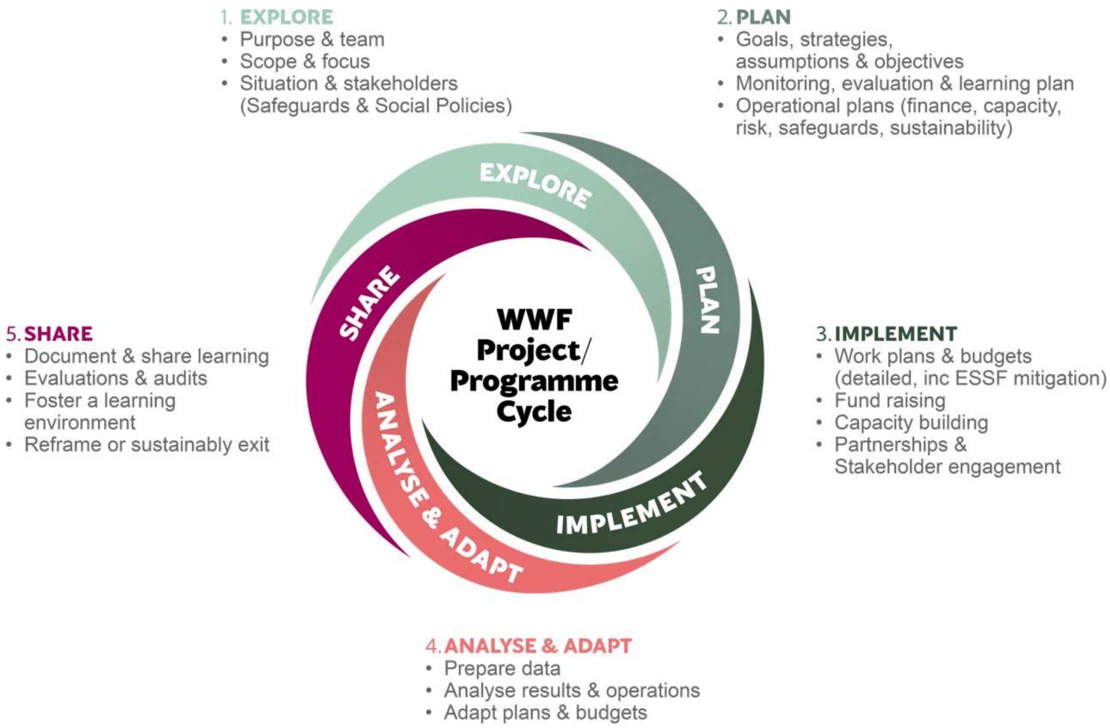
Guidance for Implementing the WWF Project & Programme Standards

Step 2.2

Monitoring Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Plan



Step 2.2 Monitoring Evaluation & Learning Plan

Contents

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Read in conjunction with:	WWF PPMS Overview here and here Concept and Proposal templates (at the same links)
Version history	Version 1 March 2006 Version 2 January 2024
General expectations:	This document is intended as guidance to support the implementation of the *WWF Standards of Project and Programme Management* (PPMS), which define the generally expected standards of practice. Although each step in these *Standards* must be completed, the level of detail depends on the circumstances of individual projects and programmes. Accordingly, each team will have to decide whether and to what level of detail they want to apply the guidance in this document. The term Project is used throughout this document as shorthand for Projects, Programmes and Initiatives; the guidance applies equally to all of these.

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan

Typical outputs for this substep:

- ***A broad set of key questions to consider over the life of the project/ initiative***
- ***Audiences and their information needs and preferred communication modes***
- ***A detailed monitoring plan, with indicators and methods***
- ***Knowledge gaps identified and prioritized***
- ***Finalized monitoring, evaluation, & learning plan***

(Refer to the WWF Proposal template (section 6 and Annex 5) for more specific MEL expectations of a mid-large project/ initiative (over €100K p.a.). Note also the WWF technical and financial report formats)

1. Introduction

Projects/ initiatives need to be able to demonstrate progress towards goals and objectives if stakeholders, teams, and donors are to stay engaged and committed. We need to be able to understand what is working, what is not, and why. This requires that project teams design good monitoring, evaluation and leaning (MEL) plans that are integrated across the cycle.

A MEL plan goes beyond identifying indicators to track progress on your goals and objectives; it also lays out the key questions that you will seek to answer and learn from through M&E, and defines when, how, what data needed and who will be involved in the process. Good MEL creates a strong evaluation and learning culture that is critical to supporting strong and sustainable conservation work.

Tip – a MEL plan is more than a matrix

A MEL plan is not simply a table of indicators and their data tied to the project results. Rather a MEL plan is typically in narrative form with an accompanying matrix and should include how the project will track implementation and results, resources and responsibilities for MEL, supporting tools and systems, plans for any formal evaluations, and how knowledge or learning products will be generated and shared.

1.1 Purpose and Importance of a MEL Plan

A good MEL plan helps you to determine **progress on key results**, answer priority questions, **test the assumptions** that underpin your theory of change, identify capacity gaps and learning needs, and provide the material and processes to **make management decisions** as the project progresses.

A MEL plan is important because it provides a succinct way of organizing and **summarizing a lot of information**, including what is going to be measured and how, and assigns responsibility and frequency to help ensure that the MEL activities are actually done. Unless the project is very small, MEL work requires significant resources to make it happen – human, financial and systems. If you don't have a clear plan, you will not be able to allocate appropriate resources and put MEL into practice!

The project team decide what they need to know (i.e. what questions are the most important), how they are going to answer those questions (e.g. with a self assessment, tracking indicators, external evaluation, etc.), how data will be analysed, and how the results of data collection will be shared to various audiences - including internally for improvement and learning.

1.2 Definitions and Key Concepts

Box 1. Definitions

Monitoring – The periodic collection and analysis of data. In a project context this is primarily in relation to stated project goals and objectives, as well as progress against work plans and operational plans (budgets, risks, safeguards etc.). It can also include context (ambient) monitoring.

Evaluation – In general terms, evaluation refers to the assessment of monitoring information; converting data into knowledge and understanding. Evaluation also refers more specifically to an assessment of a project in relation to specific performance criteria (typically this takes place at mid term and end term of larger projects - see PPMS step 5.3).

Learning – Reflecting on our experience and knowledge gained to identify how a situation or future actions could be improved and make actual improvements.

These definitions are generally as per CMP Conservation Standards[1] and as per general consensus within WWF.

Note that other organisations, including some funders, and individuals may use different terms differently or place a different emphasis.

Try to focus on the concepts and apply them to your context, and take some time to establish a common understanding within the project team and with partners.

1.3 When to develop a MEL Plan

You should formally develop your monitoring plan at Step 2.2 of the cycle. By exploring your project situation and stakeholders, creating a theory of change, and developing goals and objectives that fulfil the necessary (SMART) criteria, your team should already have done much of the preparatory work to enable good MEL.

As noted above, monitoring, evaluation and learning processes must be integrated with your planning processes and application of the project cycle (diagram 1) in order to create a strong link from strategy to results and adaptive management.

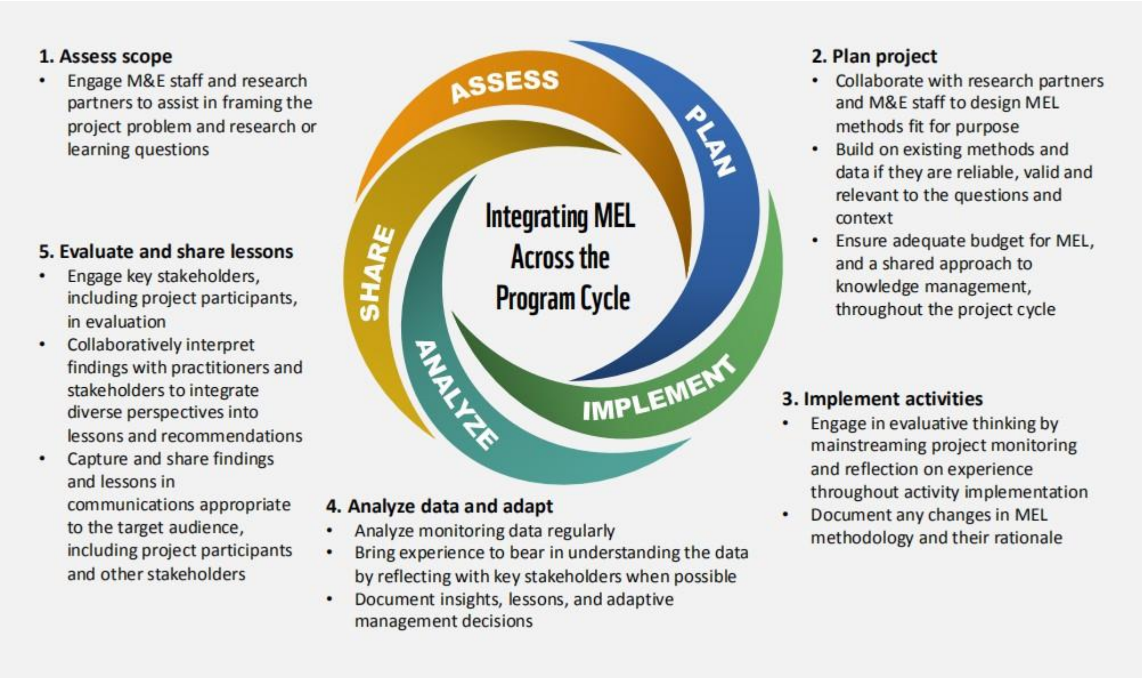
Tip - Practical MEL Plans

Monitoring must be **practical** – define a good **balance of indicators** (the minimum necessary to meet needs) and identify **cost-effective** data sources and methods for collection.

A MEL plan describes the full learning agenda, summarising the multi-pronged approach for **gathering and using data** (including, for example, team meetings, strategic reviews, dashboard updates, annual reports, external evaluations, team/ partner pause and reflect sessions).

[1] Further terms are defined in the WWF Terminology Network Standard here.

Figure 1 – Integrating MEL Across the Programme Cycle[2]



Box 2 – Complexity of Monitoring Impact at Scale

In the case of large muti-country/global programmes that seek to catalyse a transformational or system-wide change, progress and attribution can be difficult to track. As scale, implementing partners and stakeholders increase, so does complexity.

To establish a monitoring and evaluating progress at local, national and international scales requires a consistent approach across outcomes and indicators at each scale - a vertically integrated strategy. Annex 1 provides an example of a large multi-country programme with "nested" project to country to programme level objectives. Establishing consistent objectives at each scale provides the basis to "roll-up" results and clarify attribution through the use of "common" indicators.

Having said this, it is recognized that much important data will not align neatly to common indicators; in practice aggregation of results can be difficult, and attribution of impact very difficult. In such situations, we can still analyse data at different scales and consider 'plausible associations' between the results at those different scales.

[2] From CARE-WWF Alliance *Impact Evaluation in Mozambique* (2020). Note this diagram shows the [CMP Conservation Standards] version of the cycle at its centre (the PPMS cycle is WWF's version of this cycle – see cover page).

2. How to develop a MEL Plan

Note. While the guidance below focuses primarily on the monitoring plan part of a MEL program, it is recommended that the plan includes a general description of the broader MEL questions and why they are important. This description would include reference to evaluation, monitoring, learning, and reporting (sharing) and would identify knowledge gap areas to give a more complete picture of the whole learning agenda, and how all the elements involved in MEL works together. For example, questions would typically include those that respond to the industry standard evaluation groupings[2].

See Annex 4 for an example from the Cerrado Land Alive Landscape Initiative.

Box 3 - Summary of how to develop a MEL Plan.

Define…

1. Broad MEL needs
    a. Purpose of the MEL
    b. Key audiences and information needs
    c. MEL questions
2. What to monitor (indicators)
3. How to monitor
    a. Methods and data sources
    b. Roles and responsibilities

And start to consider supporting tools/ systems, how data will be analysed and reported, formal evaluations, how knowledge or learning products will be generated etc. (PPMS Steps 4 and 5)

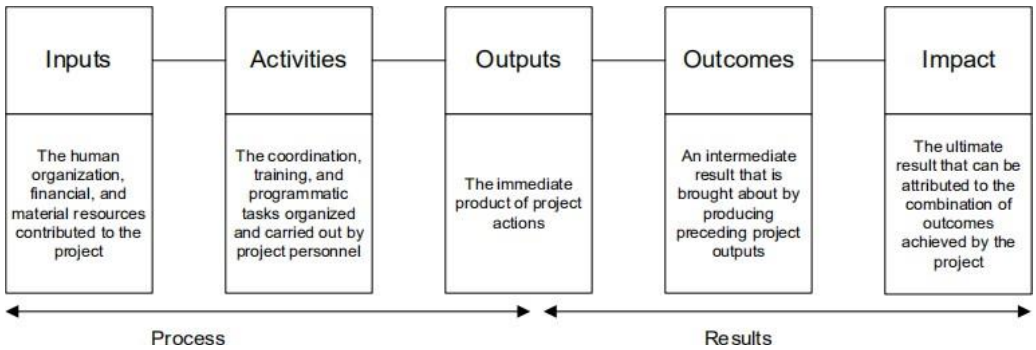
2.1 Define Your Broad MEL Needs

Effective monitoring uses the minimum amount of human and financial resources to provide the necessary information. To define your broad MEL needs, consider the broad purpose of the monitoring, your key audiences and their information needs, and the MEL questions that you seek to answer.

2.1 a Broad Purpose of your MEL

Start by defining the main purpose of your MEL Plan. Are you focused on evaluating **process** (implementation) or **impact** (results)? Or a combination of both? Answering this may help to narrow down the number and type of indicators (qualitative or quantitative) you will use. Figure 2 below summarises key components to consider when developing a MEL Plan, in relation to a generic theory of change.

Figure 2. Key components to consider when developing a MEL Plan



Note: Monitoring and evaluating process may include some outputs, as these are closely tied to activities. Monitoring and evaluating impact may also include some limited outputs, especially if their achievement represents important progress. If an impact evaluation strives to demonstrate return on investment, it will also assess inputs. (Adapted from FOS)

[2] (1) strategic relevance and design, (2) effectiveness (3) impact, (4) efficiency and (5) sustainability

Process MEL answers the question: Is the project doing what it said it would do – and is it doing these things well? Process MEL examines the implementation of project activities, procedures, and/or administrative and management functions. For example, a process evaluation could examine whether the project team followed its work plan, met key deadlines, did a good job of involving stakeholders in its activities and delivered planned outputs.

Impact (or Effectiveness) MEL answers the question: To what extent are the project's actions effective in achieving the planned results? Impact MEL examines whether results have been achieved over the nearer term (outputs and short-term outcomes) and the longer term (medium/ long term outcomes and impacts). In the context of the work your team has done, this means measuring results at key points of your theory of change (e.g. results chain). It may also mean revisiting your situation model to ensure that it is accurate, since that analysis helped inform your strategy selection.

Tip: Consider your assumptions
When measuring impact, your team may also want to look at your situation model to understand if your assumptions about key pressures and contributing factors were correct. This will help you assess if you chose the right strategies – in addition to assessing whether those strategies achieved the desired impact.

Determine also whether you will use your monitoring information for **learning** purposes and/or demonstrating **accountability**.

Monitoring and evaluating for learning purposes is done with the intent of gathering data primarily to help improve projects (and the associated processes and strategies). This type of monitoring tends to be ongoing - a regular check to allow for reflection and review of progress.

Monitoring for accountability purposes is done to determine whether a project is performing as expected, and is linked to audiences (see 2.1b below). This type of monitoring usually happens at key points in a project's life (e.g. regular project reporting intervals or at the completion of the project).

These purposes are not mutually exclusive, and the distinctions can be blurry. The main difference lies in the intent or purpose behind your MEL Plan and how the data is to be used. See Annex 2 for a further explanation of different monitoring and evaluation approaches (and also of terminology that you may hear used in relation to M&E).

In general by focussing your monitoring efforts on the core assumptions you have made (described in your situation model and theory of change), and the key uncertainties you have identified - you are more likely to collect only the information that will be useful for addressing specific information needs (e.g., status of pressures, achievement of results, areas of uncertainty/risk).

2.1 b Key Audiences and Information Needs

Also at an early stage, define your **main audiences and their information needs** - what do they want to know, how often, and what type of evidence will this require?

There may be multiple audiences for your MEL Plan, each with their own requirements. Typically these include donor agencies and partners, interested stakeholders and project participants, your organisation and project team and if required, regulatory authorities. You will need to determine **for whom** you are doing the monitoring, what they **need to know** for decision-making purposes, **when** they need the information and in what **format**, and what **evidence** is required to meet their needs. If you have limited resources, you may have to prioritise your MEL work by identifying who are the most important people to report to. Some of the common audiences are highlighted below in Figure 3 (CMP Conservation Standards 4.0).

Figure 3. Common Monitoring Audiences and their Information Needs (CMP v4.0)

AUDIENCE	TYPICAL INFORMATION NEEDS/INTERESTS
Project team and partners	Is your team implementing the activities as expected? Is your team achieving its objectives in the expected time frames, and are assumptions valid? What is working, what is not, and why? How can your team improve your strategies?
Donors	Is your team implementing the activities as expected? Is the project achieving objectives in the expected time frames? Are the assumptions behind this project valid?
Communities or stakeholders affected	Is your team implementing the activities as expected? How will the project affect them?
Conservation community	What worked, what did not, and why? What may be generalizable from the project to other contexts?
Academics and students	What worked, what did not, and why?
Auditors and certifying entities	Is the project complying with laws and regulations? Is it following best practices?

Clearly project teams and donors will need other operational and process data beyond this e.g. finances, risks, ESSF status, compliance with donor and Network requirements.

Other potential audiences and considerations for information needs (TNC CbD 2.0)

Influencing key actors, including building the evidence base for conservation. Is there a group whose behaviour you are hoping to change? What type of evidence do they require? Assessing how information has led to changes in behaviour in the past can provide an understanding of the required quality and quantity of evidence. Note that one group of key actors is the conservation community itself and evidence that a strategy works is important to influence broader adoption of the strategy by the conservation community as well as external stakeholders. This can be an example of scaling up a project/programme (also known as multiplication or magnification).

Mitigating risk of negative impacts and other reputational risks. Are there potential, credible negative impacts to nature and people? Have organisational commitments been made public for which proof of delivering on these commitments is required?

Mitigating legal risk (if applicable). What legal guarantees, if any, are you responsible for? What evidence would be necessary to defend your organisation publicly or in court?

2.1 c Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning questions

You should also define any key MEL questions, ideally in collaboration with your priority audience(s) and other stakeholders who you intend to report to. MEL questions go beyond reporting on measures of success (indicators) and ask higher level questions such as whether the intervention is worth it, or could have been achieved in another way? Overall your MEL questions should lead to further adaptive action such as project improvement, replication or redesign.

When developing your MEL questions, you should identify whether your audience has specific time constraints. This will be a major factor in deciding what information you can gather (or not).

The box below identifies some broad types of M&E questions by focus area.

Box 4 - Broad types of M&E questions (Source: evaluationtoolbox.net.au)

Process	How well was the project designed and implemented (quality)
Outcome	Did the project meet the overall needs? Was any change significant and was it attributable to the project? How valuable are the outcomes to WWF, stakeholders and partners?
Learnings	What worked and what didn't? Were there any unintended consequences? (positive or negative/ internal or external) Were there any emergent results? (more than the planned results)
Investment	Was the project cost-effective? Was there an alternative that may have provided a better investment?
What Next	Can the project be scaled up? Can the project be replicated at other sites? Is the change self-sustaining or does it require continued intervention?

A similar set of questions would respond to the industry standard evaluation groupings - (1) strategic relevance and design, (2) effectiveness (3) impact, (4) efficiency and (5) sustainability. See PPMS Step 5.3 for WWF guidance, including a template Terms of Reference, for Evaluations.

2.2 What you will monitor – indicators

With your MEL purpose, audiences and learning questions identified, the next step is to identify what specific indicators and/or data you need to collect to address your information needs and where this information will come from.

An indicator is defined as a measurable element related to a specific information need - such as the status of your focal interests, progress towards objectives, or a change in pressures or drivers.

Indicators may be assessed in quantitative or qualitative terms – or as a mix of both.

Figure 4. Quantitative and Qualitative Data – Main Advantages and Disadvantages

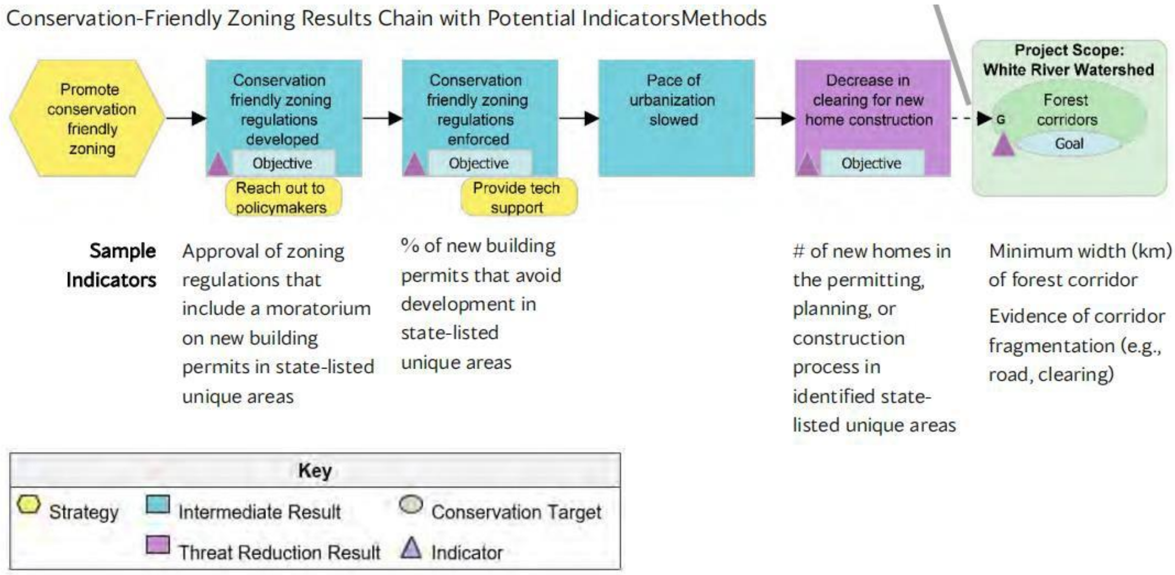
	Advantages	Disadvantages
Quantitative Data	Easy to analyze Allow for broad generalizations across the sample	Do not provide contextual background helpful for analyzing responses
Qualitative Data	Provide in-depth description, detail, and/or richness High validity	Difficult to analyze Difficult to generalize

Quantitative indicators are those that can be measured in numbers or percentages and that can be put into categories or in rank order. They are often presented in graph or tabular form.

Qualitative indicators[3] are in-depth descriptive information that are typically observed but not measured in numbers or percentages. Examples include level of awareness, engagement or commitments made.

During your planning phase you should have already identified and be prepared to measure key results along your theory of change (ToC). In addition to these, you may want to consider other contributing factors not included in your ToC but which were causally linked in your situation model. These factors may affect your ability to achieve your goals and objectives. Doing so will help increase your ability to demonstrate your potential attribution to change.

Figure 5. Example of developing indicators using your theory of change. (CMP CS 4.0)



Monitoring wider contextual factors

There may also be some broader issues or enabling conditions outside the control of your strategies (e.g. political stability, economy, market trends, climate change effects), or there may be interests of your key stakeholders (e.g. health, livelihoods or security issues) that you want to monitor because they could have an important influence on the success of your strategy. Your challenge will be finding the right balance between what you need to monitor and what might provide additional supporting evidence.

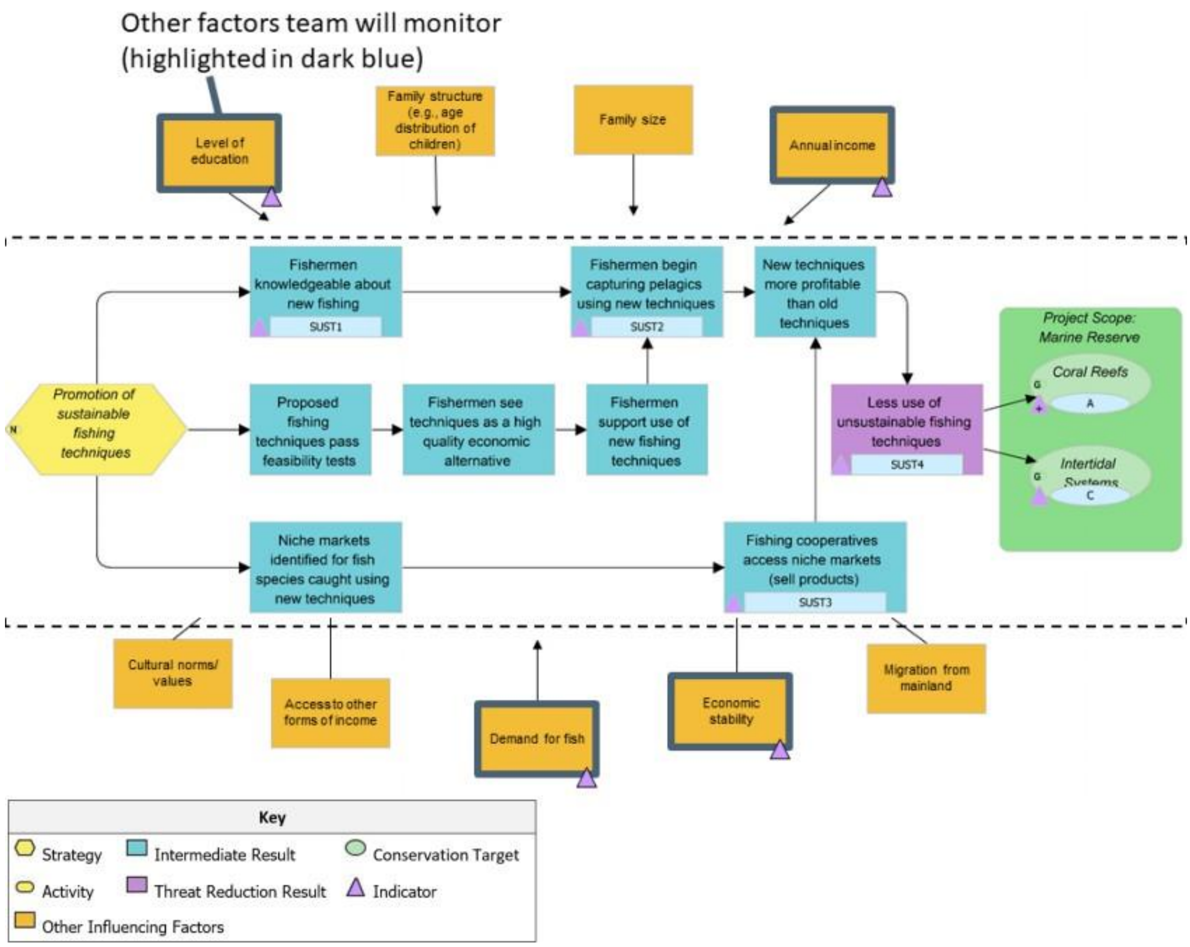
Figure 6 shows example of other potential factors a project team might want to monitor.

Relevance to wider agendas

As with all your project work, you should ensure that your partners and stakeholders buy in to the indicators that you select. Where relevant, you should align your indicators with those of WWF's global priorities and with indicators that are relevant to other institutions and stakeholders e.g. Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Demonstrating contribution to national governments or international policy agendas (eg., socioeconomic and development priorities) provides a good basis for greater cooperation and dialogue with key actors.

[3] Note that a Likert's (type) scale can be used to capture qualitative data in a quantitative fashion, and the data expressed on a scorecard or similar.

Figure 6. Other factors to consider when monitoring and evaluating a project (FOS)



Good indicators meet the criteria of being *measurable, precise, consistent, sensitive* and should be tied to key factors, results, or assumptions made during the development of your situation model or results chains. If you have developed several indicators to measure the same concept, rate the indicators based on these criteria and only use the top rated indicators.

Box 5 – Criteria for good indicators

Measurable – Able to be recorded and analysed in quantitative and qualitative terms

Precise – Defined the same way by all people

Consistent – Not changing over time so that it always measures the same thing

Sensitive – Changes proportionately in response to the actual changes in the condition being measured

2.3 How you will monitor

2.3 a Methods and Data Sources

Monitoring and evaluation plans should make use of data already being collected by others and the source of your monitoring data depends largely on what each indicator is trying to measure. Your project will likely need multiple data sources to answer all of the questions you want to answer.

Data sources may include data being collected by governments, academics, industries, Indigenous organisations, community groups and NGOs, and may include survey data, government statistics, model results, experimental results, and remotely sensed data.

Box 6 – External data sources

Other sources for data include:

- Living Planet Index,
- TRAFFIC trade figures
- United Nations climate data
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans.

Consider partnerships with organisations that have already invested in infrastructure to support monitoring and evaluation activities. Note that before deciding to depend on others to supply data, it's important to assess your monitoring and evaluation design and information needs against data from existing efforts and the possibility that these data efforts will continue.

Your proposed method/source of data should be **referenced or briefly summarised** in the MEL Plan. Methods may need to be defined more fully in a separate document, especially where the method is not well known to those carrying out the monitoring.

Once it is determined *how* data will be collected (methods), it is also necessary to decide *how often* it will be collected (frequency). This will be affected by audience requirements, available resources, and the timeline of your project. Some data will be continuously gathered by your project (eg., number of training or workshops held). Other types of data may depend on the frequency and priorities of external sources.

Box 7 – Criteria for good monitoring methods

Methods should meet the following criteria:

Accurate – The data collection method has little or no margin of error.

Reliable – The results are consistently repeatable - each time that the method is used it produces the same result.

Cost-Effective – The method does not cost too much in relation to the data it produces and the resources the project has.

Feasible – The method can be implemented by people on the project team.

Appropriate – Acceptable to and fitting within site specific cultural, social, and biological norms

When determining how data is to be collected - ensure to select the most cost-effective method(s) possible that will give you data that is accurate and reliable enough to meet your needs. This is especially important when WWF teams are collecting their own primary data (due to no satisfactory secondary data sources being available). In the case of community surveys or focus groups, balance the potential burden on respondents against value of engaging them.

2.3 b M&E Roles and Responsibilities

The next element of the MEL Plan is to assign roles and responsibilities. It is important to decide from the early planning stages who is responsible for collecting the data for each indicator. This will probably be a mix of M&E staff, research staff, and project staff. Everyone will need to work together to get data collected accurately and in a timely way.

Data management roles should be decided with input from all team members so everyone is on the same page and knows which indicators they are assigned to. This is particularly important for reporting purposes. An easy way to put this into the MEL Plan is to expand the indicators table with additional columns for who is responsible for each indicator. See Annex 1 for an example of a monitoring plan format that includes roles and responsibilities.

3. Summary and moving forward to Steps 3, 4 and 5

Collectively the purpose, audience, information needs and appropriate indicators selected - provide you with your draft monitoring, evaluation and learning plan. In addition to these elements you will also need to decide when, where, and by whom data will be collected. And in preparation for Steps 3 (Implement) and 4 (Analyse & Adapt), your team should consider protocols for how you will store, manage, and access data and how you anticipate analysing and using data to meet the information needs of your key audiences. As part of your work planning and budgeting (Step 3), your team should include time and financial resources to support monitoring activities and data management.

WWF has already established some standard expectations for analysis and reporting, such as standard templates for WWF technical and financial reports, and standardized sharing of basic project information through the Insight CPM. As and when there is further evolution of WWF Network PMEL systems, this guidance will be updated accordingly.

Box 8 - Tips and general expectations for a good MEL plan

1. Goals, objectives and strategies should be clearly defined before you attempt to develop indicators.
2. You cannot measure everything, despite what audiences would like! The number of indicators should be the "**minimum but sufficient**" required to show whether the Goals and Objectives are being achieved and to test key assumptions.
3. **Establish baselines early**. If you cannot establish baselines within the first few months of a project, then most likely you need to review the methods or the indicators.
4. It is assumed that you will also monitor your **Activities** (in a simple, light way against your workplan) and your **Resources/Finances** (via your finance system).
5. Monitoring of **risks, sustainability and ESSF safeguards** is also important e.g. via status updates to your risk and ESSF mitigation plans, or by including this in your monitoring plan.
6. **Operationalize your monitoring plan** and think ahead to data analysis. Consider methods, responsibilities, budgets, use of data, and audience needs up front. Plan time to regularly 'pause and reflect' on progress.
7. Align with relevant **internal or external indicators** as appropriate e.g. wider programme goals, Global Practice Outcomes and 2025 Targets, SDGs.
8. **Social/ poverty/ gender data / indigenous peoples/ people with disability** (where relevant). Where possible and appropriate, data should be disaggregated by social group. Consider methods that allow the voices of partners and community members to be heard.

4. Resource and References

WWF products, tools, systems

WWF Project/Programme Plan (Proposal) Template here (internal site) and here (external site)

WWF Technical Progress Report (TPR) Template here (internal site) and here

WWF Policy Advocacy Toolkit, 2022 here (internal site) and here (external site)

WWF Monitoring Advocacy, 2017 (guidance and appendices) here

Insight CPM Standard here (internal site) and here (external site)

WWF Brazil. 2020. Cerrado Alive Landscape Initiative Concept.

Other references and resources

CMP Conservation Standards (Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation) v4.0

Foundations of Success, *Designing Monitoring and Evaluation Approaches for Learning (2019)*

https://fosonline.org/library/designing-monitoring-evaluation-approaches-open-standards-fos-guide/

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Conservation by Design ver. 2.0
https://conservationbydesign.org/introducing-cbd-2-0/

P.J. Stephenson, 2019.The Holy Grail of biodiversity conservation management: Monitoring impact in projects and project portfolios

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pecon.2019.11.003

Stephanie Mansourian and P.J. Stephenson, 2023. Exploring Challenges and Lessons for Monitoring Forest Landscape Restoration

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40823-023-00092-z

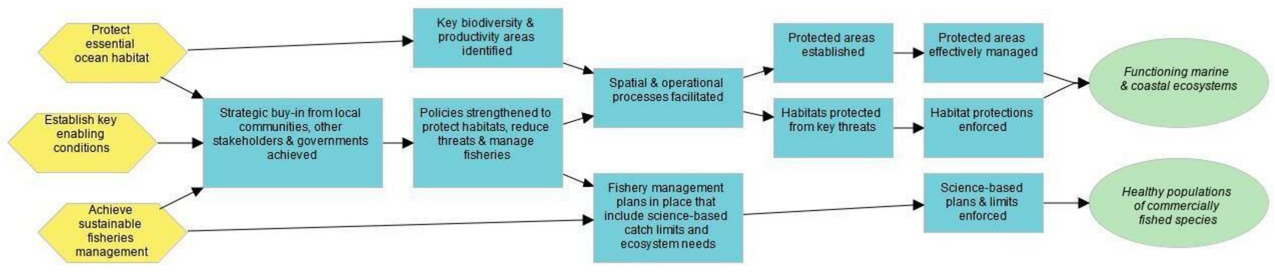
ANNEXES

Annex 1. Example of a Monitoring Framework for MEL

Spreadsheet version here.
Columns can be added as necessary e.g. to further articulate indicators, related to common indicators (internal or external), or link to monitoring protocols.

Information needs	**Indicators** (what will you measure?)	**Related Indicators** (add column(s) to reference key internal or external indicators)	**Method/ source of data** (how will you measure?)	**Location** (where will monitoring be done?)	**When** (timeframe & frequency of data collection)	**Who to provide and use** (who will provide and analyse the data?)	**Baseline data** (most recent figure and date, or when it will be defined)	**Planned intermediate result**			**Planned final result** (value and date)	**Cost** (estimate for monitoring the indicator)
								FY	**FY**	**FY**		
Goals	Good goals are SMART and are normally linked to biodiversity or human wellbeing.											
Objectives												
Risks/ Sustainability / other factors (as necessary)	Monitoring of both risks and ESSF Safeguards mitigation should be included either here or managed via status updated to your Risk and ESSF mitigation plans											
ESSF Safeguards												

Annex 2. Hypothetical Global/Regional/Country scale marine programme



The above diagram is an example of a high level theory of change (ToC) aimed at protecting priority marine ecosystems and associated species and habitats. The programme may be implemented at various scales - global, regional or country levels together with SMART goals and objectives specific to each scale. In order to roll up and aggregate results and provide a measure of impact, project goals and objectives must link to higher-level programme goals. Linking each scale is facilitated through the development of a consistent hierarchy of objectives from global initiatives to regional programmes to country/office level projects. Progress at each scale is measured through the use of a small set of "common" indicators that provides the mechanism for aggregation of results.

The ToC above provides the overarching strategic framework for teams to develop more specific and detailed outcome statements - depending on their particular geopolitical context and factors (situation analysis). In this example, the ToC seeks to implement three complementary strategies
- protect ocean habitat, achieve sustainable fisheries, and establish key enabling conditions.

The habitat protection is dependent on identifying areas with high productivity and biodiversity values - creating a spatial focus for action (regional or country level). Targeted stakeholder buy-in leads to strengthened national policies - the enabling conditions for change and ultimately the establishment and effective management of marine protected areas (MPAs).

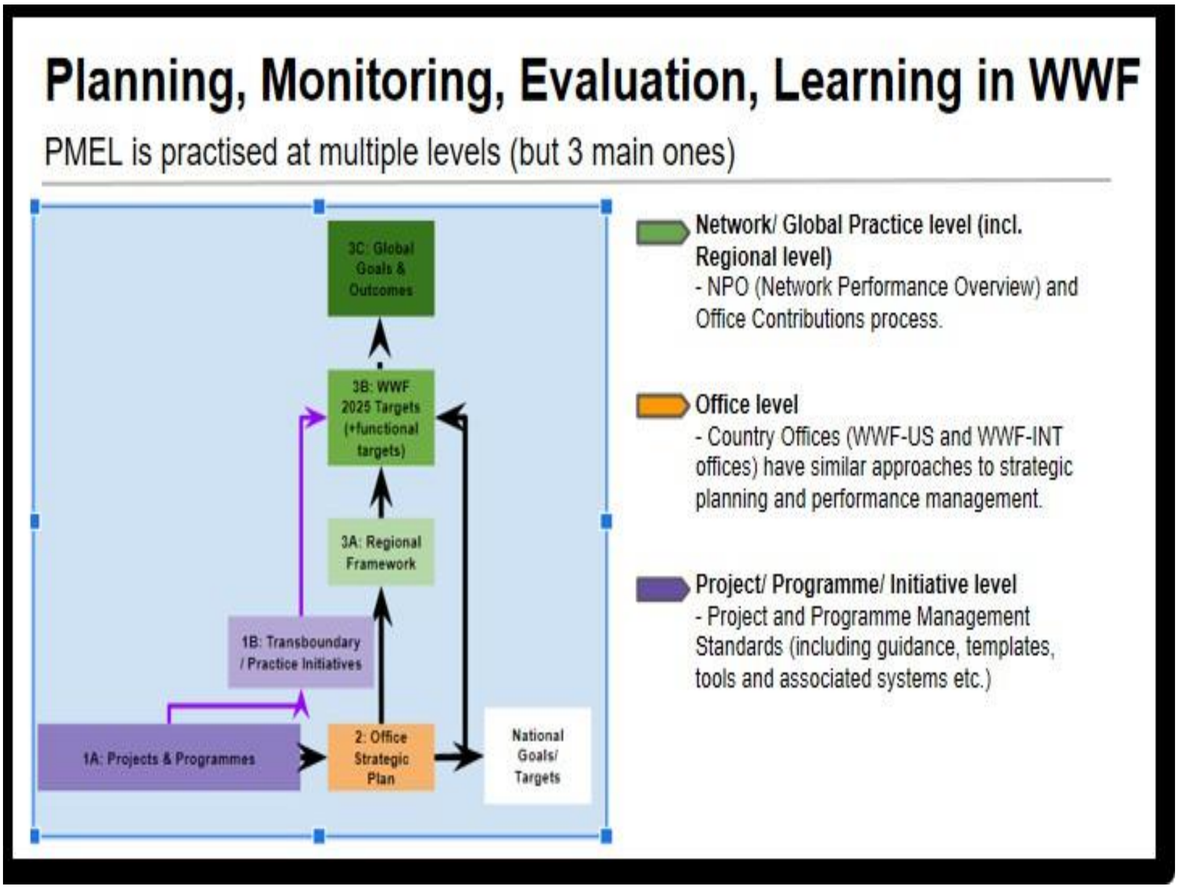
Achieving sustainable fisheries is dependent on establishing effective science-based fisheries management plans. Again targeted stakeholder buy-in from key actors involved in and affected by fishery activities is expected to result in pressure to strengthen policies for improved fishery management plans

Hierarchy of Goals and Objectives (habitat example)

Global Goal	By 2050 marine and coastal habitats are effectively protected and managed to reduce threats to the most important habitats and ecosystems.
Programme Goal	By 2030 MPA coverage increased to protect important habitats and reduce threats in priority geographies (eg., Coral Triangle)
Country Objectives 1	By 2025 marine ecological hotspots across Indonesia, PNG and Philippines have been identified and mapped.
Country Objectives 2	By 2030 X% increase MPA coverage and connectivity increased across Indonesia, PNG and Philippines protect important habitats and reduce threats.
Project Objective 1 Indonesia	By 2023, marine ecological hotspots across Sumatra's coastal zones identified and mapped.
Project Objective 2 Indonesia	By 2025, X% increase in MPA coverage and connectivity across Sumatra protect important habitats and reduce threats.

Whilst the objectives in this example are repetitive - it's easy to see the potential for simplifying and accelerating strategy development at the various scales. Each scale would use the same indicator to assess progress eg., # of ecological hotspots identified; hectares of MPA coverage; level of connectivity between MPAs; MPA Management Effectiveness scores (eg., METT). Employing common indicators across scales allows for the aggregation of results and to determine impact at project, office and Network levels. The key is to address these issues during your planning processes and when establishing objectives.

Having an overarching framework, as the ToC above, helps to guide teams to develop coherent and vertically integrated action plans that can be rolled up to demonstrate progress and impact at various scales. Of course, activities will vary depending on context. The following diagram provides a visual example of how WWF strategies are linked to both internal and external priorities.



Annex 3. Examples of Monitoring and Evaluation Approaches (FOS)[4]

Impact Monitoring / Evaluation:
Interpretation 1: Examines whether desired results along a results chain are being achieved – from intermediate results to threat reduction results to target results (interpretation used in this manual; synonymous with Interpretation 1 of performance M&E and effectiveness M&E)
Interpretation 2: Focuses on the ultimate impact (usually on a conservation target but sometimes on a threat reduction result; synonymous with Interpretation 1 of status M&E)
Interpretation 3: An evaluation with a rigorous design (experimental or quasi-experimental) and an aim to establish causality

Performance Monitoring /Evaluation:
Interpretation 1: Examines whether desired results along a results chain are being achieved – from intermediate results to threat reduction results to target results (synonymous with Interpretation 1 of impact M&E and effectiveness M&E)
Interpretation 2: Same as Interpretation 1 but focuses on intermediate results only
Interpretation 3: Focuses on whether activities and tasks were carried out effectively and as planned (synonymous with "process evaluation," as described in this manual).

Effectiveness Monitoring / Evaluation:
Used synonymously with Interpretations 1, 2, and 3 of performance monitoring / evaluation.

Status Monitoring / Evaluation
Interpretation 1: Focuses on the ultimate impact (usually on a conservation target but sometimes on a threat reduction result; synonymous with Interpretation 2 of impact M&E)
Interpretation 2: Focuses on conditions of various factors (e.g., conservation targets, threats, and drivers) as they currently are, without intervention

Monitoring vs. Evaluation
In addition to these distinctions, some people consider "monitoring" to be less rigorous and for internal purposes, while they see "evaluations" as more rigorous and used for accountability purposes. We see this distinction as somewhat artificial and not very informative – again, the key is to use your results chain to measure effects and influences along that chain and use that information to adapt and learn – regardless of what term you use to describe the process.

[4] Foundations of Success, *Designing Monitoring and Evaluation Approaches for Learning (2019)* www.fosonline.org

Annex 4. Extract from the Cerrado Alive Landscape Initiative: MEL Approach

Adaptive Management: Evaluation, Monitoring, Reporting and Learning

We propose a multipronged approach to adaptive management which will improve our performance through evaluation, monitoring (KPIs, effective reporting and learning. A summary table is provided (Table 7), followed by explanatory text. Our approach will be developed, implemented and refined over time. We understand that WWF Practices are developing an integrated set of targets and indicators to which we will undertake an alignment exercise to ensure a good flow of information.

TABLE 7. OUR ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH (SEE ALSO M&E PLAN IN ANNEX 6)

	What	When	Who
Evaluation	▪ Big questions of strategic design, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability	▪ Yearly (via self-assessment/reflection) ▪ Midterm and end of term	▪ Cerrado Team, working group and partners ▪ Independent – midterm and end of term
Monitoring	▪ Biome Health Report ▪ Status and Effectiveness Indicators ▪ Progress markers	▪ Every 3 years ▪ Mostly yearly, some longer term and some shorter	▪ Data from multiple sources[3] ▪ Progress markers with partners/actors
Reporting	▪ Initiative KPIs ▪ Technical Progress Reports ▪ Other periodic Reports	▪ Yearly ▪ Semi annually	▪ Cerrado Team and Partners
Learning	▪ Key research/ analytical questions ▪ Lesson learned	▪ As needed ▪ From reflection sessions	▪ Cerrado Team and others

Evaluation. We intend to gather, analyze, and reflect on relevant data and information to answer critical evidence-based management questions (listed below). Answering this set of questions will help us to review what we set out to achieve, the progress we have made, what has helped or impeded progress, whether we have been efficient, whether our results and work is likely to be sustained and most importantly, how we can improve so the greatest possible impact in achieved.

In addition to these adaptive, or evidence-based, evaluative questions, we propose to be cautious in our selection of monitoring indicators so that we only collect purposeful information. A selection of high-level indicators is shown below, and we will continue to further develop and professionalize what and how we undertake our initiative's monitoring.

- *Strategic design:* Are we employing the right strategies and doing the right things, given our niche/role/added value, aims, operating context, and progress (including consideration of why we have or have not been effective in the past)? What could we improve?
    - *Monitoring data needed:* General monitoring of context (biome, state and national context, attitudes and associated key actors), particularly to deepen and update the

[3] [3] The Cerrado Health Index would be developed using several resources for inspiration and information. These include the LPR, the CBD, Brazil's National report to the CBD, Scotland's Environment Ecosystem Health Indicators, etc.

understanding and *brief* problem analysis conducted during the workshop of November 2019. Note—this will largely be qualitative/anecdotal, rather than targeted studies performed to better understand aspects of operating context and situation. However, targeted research on trends and scenario analyses may be important to consider.

- *Effectiveness:* Are we on track and making progress as planned and on our strategic approaches? Are key actors changing behavior? What key external factors are supporting or impeding progress? What about internal factors? What could we improve?
    - *Monitoring data needed:* Data on indicators defined for outcomes and associated milestones (see M & E plan in Annex 6).
- *Impact:* Do we see evidence that we are advancing our initiative goal and outcomes as hoped? What key external factors are supporting or impeding progress? What about internal factors? What could we improve?
    - *Monitoring data needed:* Data on indicators (see M & E plan in Annex 6) defined at status level for goals and threats. In particular, the development of a biome health report which would have both conservation status measures and pressure measures.
- *Efficiency:* Are we delivering on our activities and outputs as planned? Are we making the most valuable and timely use of our human and financial resources? Are we working effectively with partners and other key stakeholders? (Are roles/responsibilities clear? Is communication effective?) What could we improve?
    - *Monitoring data needed:* Tracking of activities and outputs. Tracking of estimated expenditure and effort toward delivery.
- *Sustainability:* Are we cultivating the constituency, capacity, and capital needed to ensure that; A) our work can continue as needed effectively and efficiently, and B) to ensure that the results we've had to date and the long-term practices/behaviors we are trying to advance will persist and possibly, grow (even without our continued involvement)? Have we helped create good governance?
    - *Monitoring data needed:* Sustainability metrics attached to outcomes and milestones in particular; tracking of budget requirements and funded and unfunded needs.

Monitoring: Additional thinking on measures of success, is available in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Annex 6). Our monitoring approach will involve collecting simple, credible data that will be informative and to which we can respond to in practical ways. In addition, since our monitoring approach is very partner/actor-focused (as this is where we are most likely to observe change), we aim to bring key partners into the design, analysis and sharing of monitoring and evaluation information. Along with some more traditional indicators (see Table 8) (some of these were sourced from proposed indicators for Aichi targets, SDGs, and from WWF's own Practices and ACAIs), we intend to develop (with our partners) "external and graduated progress markers" as described in *Outcome Mapping*[4] . From an Outcome Mapping Learning Community presentation (2013), the reasons to apply a "progress marker approach" is that it will:

- Help to articulate the complexity of the changes that are required,
- Allow negotiation of expectations between the program and its partners,

[4] Earl, S., Carden, F. and Smutylo, T. (2001) Outcome Mapping. *International Development Research Centre.*

- Permit early assessment of progress,
- Encourage the program to seek the most profound transformations possible, and
- Identify timely course corrections.

This approach is potentially innovative in introducing a qualitative "journal-based" approach to tracking and understanding behavior change of key actors. This means that for select key actors (to be decided) along each strategic pathway, we will propose (ideally with the selected actor to make this a shared effort) desired behavior change(s), and on an agreed schedule, conduct mini-assessments as to the degree to which behavior has progressed and why (or why not). By concentrating some of our monitoring effort on agreed behavioral change we reinforce the importance of partners and collaboration, and this type of monitoring can be undertaken by anyone. This will also help us gather feedback from our partners/actors/stakeholders regarding any needed change in our own organizational approaches and help provide evidence of contributions to change.

Although our resources and capacity are limited for adaptive management, we propose to develop over time a model approach as it is critical to achieving our outcomes and improving performance. This will be based on a simple, easy-to-do approach that will meet reporting requirements and help us make sure we are doing what we say we will do (in terms of activities and outputs), and measure the effectiveness of our solutions (by achieving results and turning the drivers and threats in the right direction). We will share what we learn to improve transparency and accountability across all those involved in or touched by this initiative, and in the early years of this Initiative we may seek additional facilitation help to progress our efforts.

TABLE 8. SOME INITIAL PROPOSED INDICATORS (SEE ALSO ANNEX 6)

Initiative Level	Indicator
GOAL: Status/Impact (Biome Health Report)	▪ Extensiveness of natural habitat ▪ Level of connectivity or fragmentation (to be discussed with Forest & Wildlife Practice) ▪ Ecosystem benefits (TBD, e.g. carbon storage, water quantity/quality) ▪ Index of valuation of Cerrado ▪ Pressure indicators such as resource consumption, rate and extent of conversion etc.
LONG TERM OUTCOMES	▪ Area and rate of deforestation or loss of natural habitat
	▪ Area and rate of fragmentation
Halt Conversion	▪ Progress toward conversion-free supply chains reported by agricultural entities implementing DCF commitments (i.e., soy & beef)
	▪ Percent of market demand met with conversion-free products
Rehabilitation	▪ Area rehabilitated
	▪ Farmer or land holder perceptions of productivity and value of rehabilitated land (as compared to converted land (TBD)
Protected Areas	▪ Area under protection & type of PA
	▪ Area of PA Lost or degraded
	▪ PA Management Effectiveness rating

Restoration	▪ Area of natural habitat pledged for restoration
	▪ Area and 'quality' assessment of restoration
	▪ *Indicators TBD re: stakeholders involved and scaling the approach.*
20, 000 Families benefit	▪ Measure of change in economically viable products generated with little or no negative impact on environment
	▪ Percent change in income levels by citizen, family, community or cooperative
	▪ Number of families accessing market commercializing biodiversity-based products

Reporting. The Cerrado Initiative will follow WWF's policy, procedures, and guidelines in terms of technical and financial reporting. Technical reporting will be done on a six-month basis using TPRs, and Initiative indicators and KPIs reported yearly. WWF-Brazil will use the platform *http://cerrado.wwf.org.br/* to inform about progress. Regular reporting as required through the Environmental and Social Safeguards process also will be undertaken.

Learning. The Cerrado Initiative will gather, analyze and evaluate monitoring data as indicated above to periodically assess progress towards attainment of our outcomes and goal. These analyses will inform and guide our work and data will be shared with our partners and other external audiences as needed to support broader progress. To these ends, the Brazil Cerrado team meet monthly to discuss advances and challenges in implementation of the workplan, and to stay abreast of any short-term changes. Similarly, the Cerrado team frequently interacts with other WWF Brazil teams and with close partners in both formal and informal settings. The WWF Cerrado working group will meet quarterly during the first phase of the Cerrado initiative to regain momentum and reinforce Network commitments and connections, in particular from the Food, Markets and Forest Practices and from WWF China, UK, NL and the US. The interaction and participation with several ACAIs will also provide opportunities for learning.

To further adaptive management and learning, the Cerrado Initiative will undertake a facilitated self-reflection process. This process will not only consider progress on activities, more importantly it will explore effectiveness, impacts, risks and assumptions, and changes in context so that WWF Brazil and its partners can better assess change and more rapidly adapt. One area where attention will be paid is that of Environmental and Social Safeguards, using the assessment/risk analysis tool to help frame the process. In addition, we will look to the WWF Network and several external partners to participate in these self-reflection sessions, and to offer up facilitation services. We may also consider producing white papers on key topics to inform this process given how quickly the social, economic, and political context can change.

A strategy review will be conducted every three years with the WWF Brazil team and will involve the network and relevant external organizations.

To complement monitoring and evaluation efforts and those of our partners, the Initiative team will continue to actively engage in several WWF Practices, with focus on Food, Forests, and Markets where there are opportunities for learning and exchange. Cerrado Initiative team members also engage in other practices, such as wildlife, and participate in several ACAI, for example, on forest restoration and *Nature Pays.*

We have also identified some priority studies that will be undertaken during the lifetime of the initiative (see Table 9); these are important to improve our understanding of the context and to help us adapt approaches when necessary.

TABLE 9. KNOWLEDGE GAPS (TO BE DEVELOPED FURTHER AS NECESSARY)

Short description of knowledge gap and/or assumption to be tested	How? (evaluation, monitoring, prototyping?)	Output and When?
Information on climate change, how it will affect the initiative goals and strategy	Modelling and scenarios	Ongoing
How the initiative will contribute to species conservation	Monitoring	Ongoing
Evaluation of ecosystem services: (1) The connection between restoration and water; (2) natural capital valuation	TBD; Natural capital valuation approach	By 2024
Natural regeneration in Cerrado	TBD	By 2026