TARGET SETTING GUIDE

MISSION GUIDANCE TO TARGET SETTING FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES

DECEMBER 2020

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADS</td>
<td>Automated Directives System</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>Agreement Officer’s Representative</td>
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<td>CDCS</td>
<td>Country Development Cooperation Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Contracting Officer’s Representative</td>
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<td>DDI/ED</td>
<td>Center for Education in the Bureau of Development, Democracy and Innovation</td>
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<td>DEC</td>
<td>Development Experience Clearinghouse</td>
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<td>DEEP</td>
<td>Data and Evidence for Education Programs</td>
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<td>DO</td>
<td>Development Objective</td>
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<td>IP</td>
<td>Implementing Partner</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>Intermediate Results</td>
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<td>J2SR</td>
<td>Journey to Self-Reliance</td>
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<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interview</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MEL</td>
<td>Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning</td>
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<td>MEO</td>
<td>Mission Education Office</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MSI</td>
<td>Management Systems International</td>
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<td>OU</td>
<td>Operating Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIRS</td>
<td>Performance Indicator Reference Sheet</td>
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<td>PMP</td>
<td>Performance Management Plan</td>
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<td>PPL</td>
<td>Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOW</td>
<td>Scope of Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-IR</td>
<td>Sub-Intermediate Result</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USG</td>
<td>United States Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>WORQ</td>
<td>Workforce Outcomes Reporting Questionnaire</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This guidance note provides information to Mission Education Offices (MEOs) on best practices for establishing ambitious and realistic targets for both output and outcome level indicators. While the primary audience for this note is USAID Mission staff, USAID Implementing Partners may also find the information in this note useful as they work with Missions on setting targets.

This note begins by explaining why targets are important. Targets are one method in appraising progress relative to expectations established during planning. They serve as an important accountability mechanism for USAID Operating Units (OUs) and are an important tool for managing strategic, project and activity objectives. ADS 201 requires that targets be set at the activity level and makes targets optional at the strategic and project levels.

In order to set targets, this note sets out a framework for setting targets that follows three principles: collaborating with key stakeholders on relevant documentation and information prior to the target-setting process; documenting the target-setting process including any decisions, analyses and assumptions; and socializing the results of each stage of the target-setting process with stakeholders.

The first stage of the target-setting process is setting the indicators. This stage includes reviewing the relevant theory of change and statement of work to identify indicators for measurement. After indicators are identified, staff should think through the ramifications of each indicator’s definition, validity and cost and prioritize specific indicators for measurement. Prioritization of indicators is crucial as measurement has financial and resource impacts that need to be considered.

Next, staff will want to set the stage for target-setting by assessing potential stakeholders to bring into the process, gathering available data that will inform the process and determining the baseline, if necessary. It is important to note that gathering data does not necessarily mean that a Mission or an Implementing Partner needs to conduct primary data collection. Existing secondary data from local data systems or previous activities is often more than sufficient for the purposes of setting targets.

With stakeholders and data gathered, the next step in the process is to set the target. Setting a target includes planning a process with stakeholders to establish the target, running any necessary analyses and consulting and agreeing with stakeholders on a final target. When coming up with the final target, it is critical to consider the potential divergent interests of the key stakeholders involved. For example, it may be beneficial to go with a more ambitious target if it creates political incentives for key stakeholders.

Finally, Mission staff should periodically review progress towards targets and determine if a target should be revised. A good rule for determining if a target should be revised is to determine if progress towards that target has deviated more than 10 percent from what was originally planned. If there is a substantial deviation that require a target to be revised, Missions should investigate why the deviation occurred and document it for future learning and use.
INTRODUCTION

The USAID Education Policy (2018) shifts target-setting activities from top–down to bottom–up approaches and prioritizes country focus and ownership. While missions must establish their own targets for programs and activities, Automated Directives System (ADS) 201 only offers general guidance for annual and end-of-project targets for indicators. The Center for Education in the Bureau of Development, Democracy and Innovation (DDI/ED) commissioned the Data and Evidence for Education Programs (DEEP) activity to develop a Target Setting Guide for the education sector’s standard performance indicators. The content is intended to be general enough to apply to any performance indicator (standard, supplemental, or custom), and is balanced with the use of examples from the education sector.

USAID missions are the primary audience for this Target Setting Guide. In particular, the guide is intended to assist Mission Education Offices (MEOs) in understanding best practices for establishing targets for both output- and outcome-level indicators that are ambitious, yet reality- and evidence-based. It also informs the inputs (data, knowledge, consultations, external resources) needed to establish targets. This Target Setting Guide helps to contextualize target setting, whether missions are conducting country or regional strategic planning, engaging in project design, or reviewing activity-level target setting. The framework, processes, and analytical methods described herein can apply to any performance indicator, and specific examples and annexes apply to the standard performance indicators for education.

A. WHY SET TARGETS

Targets and Benchmarks. While a target is a planned result for achievement in a specified timeframe, a benchmark is a normative standard of performance for an indicator. For example, ES.1-1 specifies the percentage of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2. For this indicator, minimum proficiency in reading is the benchmark or standard that USAID wants learners to attain in reading by the end of Grade 2. Minimum proficiency is one benchmark within a larger Global Proficiency Framework for reading. Reasonably, a mission or implementing partner (IP) cannot expect all of its learners to attain minimum proficiency in reading. Therefore, the project or activity sets a target for the percentage of learners that will achieve minimum proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2. The exact target depends on a number of contextual factors and details, such as the investment per beneficiary, specific details on the scope as per the Scope of Work (SOW), as well as results of analytical methods.

A target is an indicator’s “specific, planned level of result to be achieved within a specific timeframe with a given level of resources” (USAID 2020). Operating units (OUs) and missions are responsible for setting targets for performance indicators. Targets stake out performance goals for the end of project

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1 The Guide may be useful information for implementing partners (IPs), and they can apply elements of it in their own target setting for activities and Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plans.
2 USAID distinguishes between standard and custom performance indicators. Standard indicators are used by USAID and U.S. Department of State to collect data for global aggregation, while custom indicators monitor progress towards results in combination with standard indicators. DDI/ED also has supplemental indicators that measure intermediate outcomes for learning; supplemental indicators are aggregable across portfolios.
or interim periods (e.g., annually). Targets are used to measure output and outcome indicators. ADS 201 requires that targets are ambitious, but achievable, given the limitations of resources and budget.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF TARGETS WITHIN USAID POLICIES

The Journey to Self Reliance (J2SR) is the framework to which USAID has reoriented its strategies, partnership models, and program practices in order to achieve greater development outcomes and work toward a time when foreign assistance is no longer necessary. To move self-reliance from theory to reality, USAID uses the Program Cycle, the Agency’s operational model for development programming, to develop strategies, partnerships, and activities to help partner countries achieve self-reliance. As part of the Program Cycle, targets play a key role in helping to plan how best to assist partner countries in achieving self-reliance.

Targets are one way to appraise progress relative to expectations established during planning. They function as an accountability and transparency mechanism for OUs, missions, and IPs. Targets serve many purposes for strategies, projects, and activities, including concretely focusing attention on their purpose, demonstrating expected achievements, facilitating the justification for implementation, linking budget to results, and encouraging stakeholders toward expected results. When actual performance deviates substantially from a target, it is an opportunity to investigate why. The deviation might indicate the need to adjust the design, implementation, or target itself. Achievement of targets is one way to measure performance, along with evaluation, learning, and research.

TARGETS WITHIN THE PROGRAM CYCLE

The USAID Program Cycle (see Exhibit 1) is a continuous cycle encompassing constraints, programmatic processes, learning/adaptation, and results. Within a mission, the cycle operates within the constraints of development policy, budget, and resources. Targets are set during the three programmatic processes: (1) country/regional strategic planning, (2) project design and implementation, and (3) activity design and implementation. Furthermore, targets are integral to gauging achievement of results during monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of strategies, projects, and activities. Thus, targets facilitate learning and adaptation by taking stock of relative achievement, and targets are one accountability mechanism for results.

The country/regional strategic planning process leads to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Incorporated within the CDCS is the Results Framework, consisting of indicators for the Intermediate Results (IRs). Indicators at the IR level are not required to have targets. If a Mission chooses to have targets for the CDCS, the mission conducts target setting during the development of the Performance Management Plan (PMP), which generally occurs in the three-month period after the approval of the CDCS.
The project design and implementation operationalize a result or set of results. The project aligns with the CDCS in that a project coincides with one IR within the Results Framework. A project encompasses multiple activities within a portfolio (e.g., education). When missions opt to design projects, they should edit the indicators and targets within their PMP accordingly.

An activity is an intervention or set of interventions that are implemented underneath a project. Activities are implemented by a broad array of IPs, and they come with Activity MEL Plans that include performance indicators that require baselines and targets. Activity MEL Plans are developed by IPs after activities are awarded but before major implementation. IPs must submit the Activity MEL Plan to the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) or Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) within 90 days of the award’s start date. Target setting occurs either during the development of the award or during the development of the Activity MEL Plan. The AOR/COR reviews the submitted Activity MEL Plan and approves it after any needed revisions.

**Target setting at the strategy, project, and activity levels.** This Guide details a collaborative framework for target setting consistent with the Program Cycle in ADS 201 and intends to be broad enough to be applicable for target setting at the strategy, project, and activity levels. The process and considerations described in the Guide present strategies, projects, and activities as hierarchical, but distinct. Missions will likely find that target setting for each level does not always happen in a linear or distinct fashion. Moreover, target setting at different levels interact and influence each other.

Some mission personnel prefer to approach design in a bottom-up fashion, starting with activities, then projects, and building to a strategy. ADS 201 and the Program Cycle articulates a seeming top-down approach, starting with the strategy, then project, and concluding with activity. In fact, the cyclical nature of the design process implies the possibility of starting at any one point in the Program Cycle and moving to adjacent design processes. This Guide does not take a position on any approach to designing interventions. No matter the design approach, it is important to ensure proper logic, linkages, and coherency among the strategy, projects, and activities.

**INDICATORS AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL**

The achievement of targets functions as flags for managers overseeing strategy, project, or activity progress. If targets are too easy to achieve, then the indicator performance relative to the target does not provide useful information on the project or activity. When a result deviates from a target by more than 10 percent (or 10 percentage points for results already measured in percentages), it is an opportunity to investigate why the project or activity did not achieve the target or exceeded it.

There are a few reasons why strategies, projects, or activities do not achieve targets, including flawed or changed assumptions in the design, technical problems with the design, and shifts in implementation priorities from USAID or other stakeholders. The appropriate adjustment depends on the reason why

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3 In cases when targets are set before the award, USAID and partners can agree on preliminary targets that are revised following receipt of the award and more in-depth analysis by the partner in the first 90 days of the award.
the target is not achieved. While the adjustment might include a revision to the target, additional adjustments to the technical design or the implementation are possible.

Indicators and achievement of targets are one way to measure and help manage the success of a strategy, project, or activity. However, indicators and targets can become technically focused and not capture broader development trends, progress, or contextual changes in a country. Targets are required and meant to be useful, but providing a bigger picture of the success and progress also requires taking stock of trends or changes not always captured by indicators and the achievement of targets. A narrative of success should consider progress beyond quantifiable numbers of indicators.

Contact the DDI/EDU Helpdesk with any questions on the guidance or follow-up needs for technical assistance on targets for education performance indicators.

B. COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

This section details a suggested collaborative framework for target setting, with three guiding principles and four general stages to conduct the process.

There are three guiding principles.

1. **Collaborate.** The first principle begins with the collection of any relevant documents or information. Then, it entails engaging key stakeholders to share and discuss the information obtained.

2. **Document.** The second principle encourages stakeholders to record any assumptions, decisions, findings, analysis, or deliverables produced throughout the process.

3. **Socialize.** The third principle emphasizes sharing the decisions, findings, analysis, or deliverables with key stakeholders so that all parties can understand how the process is proceeding at each stage.

These are principles that ideally happen at all four stages of the process. The four stages are the basic actions underlying an efficient target setting process. Exhibit 2 summarizes the underlying actions at each stage in the proposed framework.

**Exhibit 2: Framework for Setting Targets**
I. SET THE INDICATORS

Target setting functions within the context of a designed strategy, project, or activity and its indicators. This section explains how a Theory of Change (TOC), Results Framework, and Scope of Work (SOW) influence target setting and covers the validity, definition and prioritization of indicators.

REVIEW THEORY OF CHANGE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The TOC demonstrates “how and why, and under what conditions, the mission believes – based on the given parameters and best available information – that it will be successful in advancing” the goal of the strategy, project, or activity (USAID 2020). The TOC starts as a development hypothesis: an if-then statement about how the strategy, project, or activity will bring a desired change in the specific country, sector, or intervention. Importantly, it also addresses key assumptions about the context and describes the pathways of change. Recognizing the assumptions in the TOC informs the limitations of what the strategy, project, or activity can achieve and the components incorporated into the design.

The Results Framework illustrates how the TOC logically functions by linking an overall goal to dependent IRs with their own sub-IRs. Indicators measure the outcomes and outputs associated with the overall goal, IRs, and sub-IRs. Outcome indicators are normally used at the goal- and IR-level, while output indicators are more common at the sub-IR-level. It is important to understand the development hypothesis and how the goal, IRs, and sub-IRs in the Results Framework logically link together to achieve the goal.

Depending on the level at which the target is being set, different documents will be most relevant to review. For targets at the strategy level, it is important to review the TOC and the Results Framework from the CDCS. These same documents are important to review for project-level targets, in addition to the PMP and the project-level TOC. Finally for an activity-project level target, the SOW and work plans are additional key documents to consider. Given the interdependence among levels of the Results Framework, results at one level will affect results at another level. This means that the “performance indicator targets for end outcomes should be consistent with performance indicator targets for intermediate outcomes and performance indicator targets for outputs within the same results chain” (USAID 2017).

The TOC development is usually an iterative, evolving process that feeds from learning as an activity, project, or strategy develops. As such, it is important to always link any revisions to both outcomes and outputs, as well as the indicators used to measure them.

Read this case study for an example of collaboration and socialization in which technical, operations, field, and finance representatives convened to review and discuss the TOC to: (1) understand how it represented the activity implementation, (2) discuss the link between observed and expected outcomes, (3) share contextual factors affecting both the implementation and outcomes, and (4) diagram the linkages between assumptions, outputs, and outcomes, and to re-orient, remove, or create outputs and outcomes as needed.
RESOURCES AND BUDGET WITHIN SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of the resources and budget, and how the strategy, project, or activity uses its resources and budget can constrain the expected results. Specifically, the scope of the resources and budget invested affect the potential gains for the strategy, project, or activity. If available, the SOW in conjunction with a work plan delineates the timeframe for implementation and M&E, as well as the level of implementation effort (e.g., tasks and activities) for each result/outcome. The progression of implementation influences how the components of the strategy, project, or activity lead to anticipated results. Therefore, the SOW and work plan are critical for understanding how the strategy, project, or activity is planned to unfold, which provides important context for setting intermediate targets. Since the progression of performance indicators are rarely linear throughout the whole time frame, any intermediate targets need to account for the timing of the implementation.

THINK THROUGH MEASUREMENT

Performance indicators operationalize the measurement of the goal, IRs, sub-IRs, outcomes, and results for strategies, projects, activities. The targets are commitments made to achieve specific levels of progress in the results of indicators for strategies, projects, or activities. How an indicator is defined and measured can affect target setting, so it is relevant to think through the measurement and validity used in the target setting process.

INDICATOR’S DEFINITION

All indicators require a performance indicator reference sheet (PIRS). Missions and IPs must create PIRS for custom indicators to define key terms and the method for calculation. For standard performance indicators, the existing PIRS detail the definitions of terms and the accepted methods for measuring indicators. Consult the PIRS to understand the details of the standard performance indicator’s definitions and how it is measured, as well as to analyze its implications for target setting. In particular, the analysis that leads to a recommendation for the target should use the same data source and measure the indicator in the same way as the analysis used to monitor the indicator during implementation.

INDICATOR’S VALIDITY

An indicator should be a valid measure of a goal, IR, sub-IR, outcome, or result, meaning it “clearly and adequately represents the intended result” (USAID 2020). Crafting custom indicators or selecting standard performance indicators means ensuring the validity of the indicators for the concepts measured from the goal, IRs, sub-IRs, outcomes, and results.

INDICATOR’S COST

All indicators cost something to measure. Different types of indicators have different cost implications related to the data collection and analyses required to properly measure them. The table below highlights the cost implications for different types of indicators.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INDICATOR</th>
<th>INDICATOR EXAMPLES</th>
<th>COST IMPLICATIONS</th>
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| **Output**        | ES.1-3: Number of learners in primary schools or non-equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG assistance  
|                   | **ES.2-52:** Number of individuals affiliated with higher education institutions receiving capacity development support with USG assistance  
|                   | **YOUTH-1:** Number of youth trained in soft skills/life skills through USG-assisted programs | The cost of collecting data on standard output indicators is low. Usually these indicators rely on activity-generated monitoring data or on external data sources, such as government student enrollment records. |
| **Outcome: Basic Education** | **ES.1-1:** Percent of learners who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2 with USG assistance | Reporting on the top-line basic education outcome indicator may be quite costly. To initiate reporting under the 2020 guidance, the IP will be required to implement a benchmarking setting exercise and conduct assessments of learning outcomes of a representative sample at least twice during the activity lifecycle: at the baseline and at the endline. Additional measurements may be required to monitor progress of improvement of the learning outcomes. Benchmarking setting workshops may cost about $100,000 per language; national assessments can cost between $100,000 and $1,000,000 per assessment, depending on the size of the sample and the number of disaggregates (e.g., language, subject, grade, population sub-groups). |
| **Outcome: Youth** | **EG.6-12:** Percent of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs | Standard indicators measuring the outcomes of youth workforce development require the use of the WORQ tool. The use of this tool requires in-country adaptation. The administration of the WORQ needs to take place at baseline, at completion of the training and 6 months following the training. The WORQ can be administered to the entire population of beneficiaries or to a sample of beneficiaries. The cost of the tool piloting and adaptation can be up to $100,000. The cost of the actual assessment varies depending on the sample size and geography, though it is likely to range between $50,000 and $200,000. |
| **Outcome: Higher Education** | **CBLD-9:** Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance | The top-line indicator for measuring outcomes of higher education strengthening activities requires custom solutions to measure performance improvement. While USAID provides extensive guidance, there is no standard tool that is universally applicable. Therefore, the costs of adapting the guidance and developing a context-appropriate, valid, and reliable tool can vary across contexts and activities. |
PRIORITIZE INDICATORS FOR MEASUREMENT

Before undertaking any target setting process, prioritize indicators for measurement. This means determining a realistic number of output and outcome indicators that track the information required to understand the progression of the strategy, project, or activity. The goal is to devise a right-sized approach and avoid instituting too many indicators, since the number of indicators to monitor impacts the financial and management resources for data collection, monitoring, analysis, and management decisions.

In particular for target setting, ADS 201 mandates that all performance indicators have targets. Prioritizing the indicators for measurement facilitates the eventual target setting process by informing how the process can vary in terms of the timeframe, intensiveness, and resources available to the process. There are five factors to consider while prioritizing indicators:

- **Importance of indicator.** If an indicator is fundamental for measuring strategy, project, or activity performance, measures an area of substantial investment, or has an otherwise high political value to USAID and/or the partner government, then it is a high-value or high-visibility indicator and considered higher priority.

- **Indicator type.** Whether the performance indicator is an output or outcome is a critical distinction and influences the analyses used for setting targets. Target setting for output indicators usually relies on context analysis, implementation planning analysis, and past performance analysis of comparable projects or activities. In contrast, outcome indicators tend to use context analysis, historical trend analysis, analysis of applied research and evaluation findings, benchmarking, expert judgment, and expectations and accountability, though there is

Different standard performance indicators might be a valid measure for a project or activity, or they might not quite measure the full scope. For example, a project or activity with the goal of improving the employability of marginalized youth by using activities that provide technical skills training, soft skills training, and internships with private sector employers could use the indicators:

**EG.6-12** – Percent of individuals with new employment following participation in USG- assisted workforce development programs – could be a valid outcome for that goal.

**EG.6-13** – Percent of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs – could also be a valid outcome for the goal, but considered of second-tier relevance since EG.6-13 measures an aspect of the goal (e.g., soft skills) and EG.6-12 measures the goal (e.g., new employment).

**Custom indicator** – Percent of individuals employed in private sector – would directly measure if participants found employment in the private sector, but a PIRS would need to define the exact definitions (e.g., employed and private sector) and measurement of the indicator.

**Outcome vs output.** Output indicators are a tangible, immediate, and intended product or consequence within USAID’s control. Outcome indicators are a higher-level or end result at the Assistance Objective level. An outcome is expected to have a positive impact on and lead to change in the development situation of the host country.
some overlap with the analyses most commonly used for output indicators. While not always the case, higher priority indicators are usually outcomes.

- **Indicator disaggregation.** Disaggregates outlined in the standard indicator PIRS are required as applicable. For all indicators measuring individuals, sex disaggregates are required. Additional time and effort are required to measure disaggregates properly.

- **Newness of programming area.** Indicators for newer areas of programming can warrant a higher level of priority given the unknowns that surround them. With a new indicator, for example, the lack of past data or a relative lack of familiarity with the programming area could mean more time and effort in its target setting process. Working with a new indicator might involve more time in verifying the feasibility of any proposed target to set it within what is reasonable to expect in the operating context.

- **Availability of resources.** The personnel, budget, and time available to the mission or any potential stakeholders affects how to prioritize indicators and disaggregates for measurement. In particular for target setting, the availability of resources shapes the target setting process and any analysis for recommending targets. In general, certain analyses recommended for outcomes are more resource-intensive in terms of the number of personnel to execute the analysis and time to conduct analysis implying a higher cost.

When selecting indicators to use in the target setting process:

**Do:**

- Choose indicators that require data that can be realistically collected with the resources available.
- Choose indicators that use data that can be verified.
- Choose indicators that produce reliable results when measured repeatedly so it truly reflects observed changes.

**Do not:**

- Choose performance indicators that the program activities cannot affect (e.g., outside the TOC).
- Choose indicators that do not accurately depict the outcome or output.
- Choose too many indicators serving or testing the same purpose or result.
- Choose or define indicators with a vague definition that is open to interpretation.
The political influences and incentives of different stakeholders can affect the design and monitoring of projects and activities and, in turn, play a role in the target setting process. Political considerations within target setting are real and play on the target setting process at every level. How to analyze and manage those considerations is beyond the scope of this Guide, but it does include considerations of the target setting steps in which political considerations play a relevant role. In order to address the political pressures of target setting, it is critical to understand the economic, institutional, and/or sociocultural positions of relevant stakeholders. It is also important to maintain a collaborative and open communication approach.

For example, after a change in a USAID strategy, missions could organize a meeting with the relevant stakeholders to discuss changes in indicator prioritization and share the benefits and challenges of such change to current targets and programming. Similarly, specific partner government strategies and policies can also influence which programming indicators get prioritized.

2. SET THE STAGE

This section discusses the assessment of potential stakeholders, potential sources of data for standard education indicators, and baselines and their implications for target setting.

ASSESS POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

A stakeholder encompasses any “individual, community, group, or organization with an interest in the outcome of a program, either as a result of being affected by it positively or negatively, or by being able to influence the activity in a positive or negative way” (Dearden et al. 2003). In target setting, the goal is to identify and consult key stakeholders who have substantial influence and substantial importance to successful target setting. Influence concerns the stakeholder’s capacity to engage in the target setting process or provide relevant information for the process, while importance is the priority of including the stakeholder in the process.

When identifying critical stakeholders, it might be helpful to document stakeholders’ individual roles, interests, and incentives, or conduct a formal stakeholder mapping if necessary (see Annex B for an illustrative example of a stakeholder analysis adapted to target setting at the activity level).

The process of identifying the relevant stakeholders for a target setting process facilitates informed decision-making about which parties to include. The party leading the stakeholder assessment and the potential stakeholders for target setting will differ slightly among a strategy, project, or activity (see an illustrative example below). Maintaining a collaborative approach ensures the right information is available to set targets and orients key stakeholders toward setting realistic and ambitious targets. Potential stakeholders in target setting include mission staff, IP staff, partner government personnel from relevant ministries, and staff from local partners of IPs.
GATHER AVAILABLE DATA

The indicator and how it is measured according to the PIRS informs the sources of available data. Taking stock of the available data informs the baseline and subsequent target setting process, as different analytical approaches to set evidence-based targets depend on the amount and type of available data.

Common sources of available data include official government records, official reports from IPs, and secondary data from other organizations. The PIRS lists data sources for each standard performance indicator for education. Missions should contextualize the data sources to their country or area of focus. If the data required do not exist, the mission will need an actionable plan to collect primary data within budgetary and time constraints. Alternatively, the mission can conduct target setting using analytical methods (e.g., benchmarking and expert judgment) that do not rely on primary data. Annex C lists the standard performance indicators for education and their data sources.

DETERMINE THE BASELINE

ADS 201 requires baselines for all performance indicators. A baseline is the “value of an indicator before major implementation actions of USAID-supported strategies, projects, or activities” (USAID 2020). Baselines are the basis from which a strategy, project, or activity measures change over time and are fundamental for target setting. Since baselines are the starting value, the target specifies a value that is considered an improvement from the baseline value. In the case of the standard performance indicators for education, targets will specify increases over the baseline values. The baseline also influences the analysis for target setting in that the analytical processes used to determine the baseline for an indicator should be similar or the same for the target. Planning for baselines often starts in activity design in order to properly plan and budget resources.

In addition, ADS 201 requires baselines for any reported disaggregate of a performance indicator. However, the requirement does not extend to targets. While targets are not a requirement for disaggregates, they are encouraged in situations when the disaggregate targets will foster learning or provide useful data for a project or activity. Targets for disaggregates are important when the strategy, project, or activity targets specific sub-groups or anticipates differences in results among the sub-groups.
BASELINE SCENARIOS

- **Baseline data already exists and can be used to set targets.** The baseline data exists before the activity begins. For example, third party data from a government ministry is available and valid for a baseline, or a previous project or activity generated data that are a valid baseline. Using existing data is a good choice for outcome indicators when the budget or timeframe does not allow for primary data collection and the existing baseline data represent a reasonably similar population or geographic area.

- **Baseline data needs to be collected in order to set targets.** The project or activity needs to conduct primary data collection prior to or close to the beginning of the project or activity. Primary data collection is more expensive and time consuming than using already existing data. However, primary data collection might make sense for highest value outcome indicators.

- **Baseline value of targets is zero.** It is common to have a baseline of zero for output indicators like number of teachers trained or number of teaching and learning materials distributed. However, without baseline data for outcomes, there is no minimum value from which to determine a change over time. If one assumes zero, there is a large risk of attributing too much of the change to the strategy, project, or activity. However, the workforce development indicators – EG.6-11, EG.6-12, EG.6-13, and EG.6-14 – are required to have a baseline of zero.

Irrespective of the baseline scenario, it is important to maintain comparable data collection protocols, instruments, and procedures during implementation so all data is comparable throughout the full implementation timeframe. This ensures that the data collected during implementation are valid and reliable for gauging changes and determining the achievement of targets. If changes to data collection protocols, instruments, or procedures are needed, these changes should be documented for consideration in the data analysis process. Annex C lists the standard performance indicators for education with their likely baseline scenarios and data sources.

COMPLICATIONS WITH BASELINE DATA

Existing data presents a few challenges, but the main challenge is how applicable it is to the strategy, project or activity, target population, and context. In addition, existing data might have data quality issues in terms of integrity, precision, and timeliness. Another factor is obtaining enough information about data collection instruments, data collection processes, and analytical procedures to maintain reliability. In some cases, access to existing data for the target population might be challenging or difficult for data collectors (e.g., data for persons with disabilities). Finally, existing data might require additional quantitative analysis to derive a baseline number for the performance indicator.

Collecting primary baseline data introduces greater costs in money and time. Furthermore, it entails a substantial amount of planning so that data collection instruments and processes are properly developed.
Identifying the baseline scenario for an indicator is a sensible place to collaborate among stakeholders to determine the available information to set a baseline. Annex D contains suggestions for baseline scenarios detailed by standard performance indicator for education.

For EG.6-13, third-party data or primary data from an applicable soft skills assessment that measures the desired skills and population as the indicator for the strategy, project, or activity could be the source for the baseline. If primary data collection is needed, stakeholders will need to either select and adapt an existing assessment or develop a new assessment to help measure the soft skills of interest. Social skills, communication skills, higher-order thinking, self-control, and positive self-concept are soft skills strongly associated with workforce development outcomes like employment and income.

Throughout this process, stakeholders should document their assumptions and rationale for selecting sources of information and the process for gathering them so that the process can be replicated for future measurement efforts. The process and methods used to set the baseline estimates influence the methods used for the target setting analysis and any subsequent monitoring of the indicator. Once established, the baseline is shared and recorded in the draft PMP, Project MEL Plan, or Activity MEL Plan.

3. SET THE TARGET

This section focuses on the target setting process, analytical methods used to recommend targets, and guidance on setting ambitious, realistic targets.

PLAN A PROCESS

There is a recommended target setting process, but missions can adapt the target setting process based on their situations. Time available in terms of level of effort for personnel and competing other demands is one consideration, along with the budget and resources available to the mission to dedicate to target setting. In addition, the importance of the indicator influences the scope of the target setting process. The process can be streamlined for lower priority indicators that require less consultation and specialized skill sets or knowledge to complete the analysis.

Planning for target setting means deciding which analyses will lead to recommended targets and designating which person or team of people will conduct the analysis. The initial planning can take the form of a two-hour meeting with all the key stakeholders. The stakeholder analysis informs the full range of stakeholders involved. Depending on the target setting level, the potential key stakeholders can include Mission Team Leads, AOR/COR, Mission Program Officers, Mission Education Technical Specialists, Mission MEL Advisors, MEL Support Contract MEL Specialists, IP Education Specialists, IP MEL Specialists, personnel from partner government ministries, and local partners of IPs. Please note the key stakeholders can also vary depending on whether the target setting is meant for a strategy, project, or activity, and when in the program cycle it occurs. The goal of the initial planning meeting is to determine what analyses will be executed to recommend targets for each indicator and designate a person or team to conduct the analysis. A team of internal and/or external specialists with experience in data analysis, MEL, and program design, ideally with previous experience in target setting and country-specific knowledge, would lead the process. It is also worthwhile to consider the balance between analyst skill sets and incentives. For example, analysts recruited from IPs might have the sector...
knowledge and/or technical skill set to complete a desired analysis, but their motivations in setting the ultimate target will differ from USAID Mission personnel.

ANALYZE

Strategies, projects, and activities have annual targets and final targets for performance indicators. The annual targets are interim targets for each implementation year, while the final target represents the end of strategy, project, or activity achievement. Two common approaches to target setting rely on the annual and final targets. One approach sets the annual targets, then the final target is the aggregation of all the annual targets or the annual target from the final year. Another approach sets the final target before distributing progress across the annual target to build up to the final target.

**Target Setting Tip.** Targets are a tool for decision making and program monitoring. They should reflect an activity’s workplan and should be examined with any change in that workplan. Targets selected after rushed or insufficient analysis might be too easy or too difficult to achieve, leading to less useful information for monitoring and management decisions.

Analysts or a team of analysts can come from staff at the mission, IPs, or external consultants. The people who serve as analysts will depend on the level of target setting (i.e., strategic, project, or activity) as well as the experience and skill sets needed to execute the analyses determined for the indicators. For output indicators, MEL specialists and technical education staff can likely complete the analysis. In general, implementation planning analysis and past performance analysis are best suited for outputs. For outcome indicators, the people serving as analysts will depend on their skill set and experience to execute the selected analytical method. The analytical methods most applicable to outcomes are applied research and evaluation findings analysis, reviewing data from past activities and programs, expectations and accountability, expert judgment, and historical trend analysis.

Prior to the selection of any additional analytical method, analysts should either conduct a context analysis or reference one relevant to the current activity, project, or activity to which they are setting targets. A context analysis studies the key factors in the country and development sector that are likely to positively or negatively affect the strategy, project, or activity. The factors encompassed by context analysis (e.g., priorities, strategies, reform activities, or political will) can include the partner government; the policy, economic, security, or regulatory environment; and any bilateral or multilateral donors (e.g., strategies and programs in the country and sector).

Once the analysts have completed their analysis, they can recommend targets by drafting a memo or filling in the targets for the relevant indicator in the PMP, Project MEL Plan, or Activity MEL Plan. Analysts record the assumptions in their analyses and explain the methods used to recommend targets. This information can fill out the Rationale for Targets section of the PIRS. It is important to document assumptions and methods so that anyone reviewing the targets will understand how the targets were set and why the specific number was

Progress for an indicator is not always linear. When setting annual and final targets, do not always assume that annual targets are equal size increases that build up to the final target. Sometimes progress over time is not linear. For example, more progress in the first few years can be followed by a plateau at the end, or there may be less progress at the beginning followed by a sharp increase at the end. Documenting the plausible drivers of progress is useful as it can help target setting revision and future processes.
chosen. In addition, documenting the assumptions and methods can be helpful if the targets require adjustment in the middle of implementation as the information can help justify the adjustment.

The selection of analytical methods for a target is a perfect opportunity for collaboration. Key stakeholders can convene to discuss the best approaches for recommending a target and then determine the team or individual that will conduct the analysis. For example, a reading project has ES.1-1 (percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2) as an outcome indicator for one of its IRs. The key stakeholders decide that the Mission Education Officer and two staff from the mission’s MEL support contract should lead the analysis for targets on ES.1-1.

Based on recommendations from key stakeholders and the data available, the team of analysts determines that they will conduct context analysis, historical trends analysis, and expectations and accountability analysis. The context analysis completed by the Mission Education Officer takes into account the TOCs from the strategy and project, the country’s national education strategy, and an existing education sector assessment. The historical trends analysis completed by a MEL support staff analyzes historical data from the country’s curriculum-based assessment. The assessment has a benchmark for minimum proficiency in reading. After considering the context and the historical trends analysis, the team determines an end of project target of 4 percent. During expectations and accountability analysis, the team consults assessment and curriculum specialists at the Ministry of Education (MOE), who advise increasing the target by 2 percentage points so that the target properly aligns with the interim goals of the national education strategy.

Once the targets are recommended, the analysts write the recommended targets and include a detailed explanation of the context analysis, historical trends analysis, and expectations and accountability analysis used to recommend the target values and assumptions in the analysis. The team shares the recommended targets with methods and assumptions with the stakeholders at a review meeting. When the targets are accepted, the final targets become part of the project’s ES.1-1 PIRS and the Project MEL Plan. This target may also affect the CDCS PMP and any associated Activity MEL Plan.

While there are many analytical approaches that can help set evidence-based targets, there are eight recommended analytical methods useful for standard performance indicators in education. Annex D contains information on the data sources, recommended use, and detailed steps for executing each one.

**APPLIED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FINDINGS**

This method examines recent rigorous evidence to inform recommended targets. The goal of this method is to obtain a sense from peer-reviewed and grey literature of what similar projects or activities have achieved. Findings from research and evaluation used to inform targets must be drawn from a comparable project/activity and indicator. Project or activity comparability is affected by the country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale. Indicator comparability means the indicator measures the same construct in the same way.

This method requires a sufficient foundation of research or evaluations published in peer-reviewed journals or by reputable organizations, such as bilateral and multilateral donors for a comparable indicator. It also needs an analyst with sufficient background in the literature or an analyst with the time and research skills to find, read, and understand the research.
REVIEWING DATA AND TARGETS FROM PAST ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

This method reviews targets from similar projects or activities programs in order to inform targets. Similar to applied research and evaluation findings, there is a risk of misapplying findings. It is important that targets are drawn from a comparable project or activity and indicator. Program comparability is affected by the country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale. Indicator comparability means the indicator measures the same construct in the same way.

It requires a sufficient foundation of past project or activity reporting that contains targets and results for a comparable indicator. Also, the method needs an analyst with sufficient background in the reports or an analyst with the time and research skills to find, read, and understand the targets and results.

EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This method solicits the viewpoints from representatives of key stakeholders on how specific results affect targets. It permits analysts to account for political and institutional constraints that might moderate or expand targets.

The method requires the availability of decision makers representing key stakeholders and the decision makers to have reviewed a brief of primary analysis to understand the recommended targets. Analysts need time to consult with decision makers from key stakeholders and the experience to execute key informant interviews or focus groups. Analysts should be able to clearly explain the recommended targets from the primary analysis in a way that is comprehensible and non-technical.

EXPERT JUDGMENT

This method uses consultation with sector and/or country experts to determine what is feasible or possible for an indicator’s recommended target.

Analysts should be able to clearly explain the recommended targets from the primary analysis in a way that is comprehensible and non-technical. They need time to identify, contact, and interview experts, and should have experience conducting interviews. The experts must have availability and time to review a brief of primary analysis to understand the recommended targets.

HISTORICAL TRENDS

This method studies existing primary or secondary data to establish a reasonable trend from which to project future performance for the project or activity. There is a risk in extrapolating a trend too far out into the future.

The analyst must have access to historical data that can calculate statistics comparable to the target’s indicator. This means the statistics measure the same construct. Applying this analytical method depends on the availability of the same or similar (and highly correlated) macro level data that USAID uses to measure its program. This method is the most quantitatively intensive and complex, therefore, the analyst must be experienced with analyzing data with statistical methods. Ideally, the analyst will have analyzed similar quantitative data and applied the precise quantitative analysis in previous work.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

This method reviews the project or activity details, and allocation of resources (e.g., personnel, time, budget, and capacity of partners) to understand the scope and potential level of anticipated results.
The analyst needs access to project or activity documents. They will also need enough time to review the relevant documents for the requisite information as well as consult with MEL staff and technical education staff familiar with the project or activity. Combining the document review with consultation helps ensure reasonable and valid targets are set. The analyst should have familiarity with the project or activity design and implementation, as well as MEL principles, such that they can understand the documentation and interact knowledgeably with MEL staff and education technical staff.

PAST PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

This method examines the results from a project or activity implemented in previous years, usually in the same country and sector, with a similar type of intervention. There is a risk of misapplying findings. It is important that findings from a past project or activity are contextualized for the scope, budget, and timeframe of the new project or activity.

The analyst should have access to the pertinent documents. They need the ability to distinguish key differences between the predecessor project or activity and the new project or activity so that any comparisons drawn from past performance do not lead to poorly recommended targets. Familiarity with both the predecessor and new project or activity is ideal.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SELECTING AND APPLYING ANALYSES

Exhibit 3 illustrates guiding questions for choosing and applying an analytical method. While the visualization can aid selection, it is not deterministic. It clarifies which suggested methods apply to an indicator and its target. Multiple methods might apply, but missions need to decide which of the applicable methods make sense given personnel, time, budget, and strategic or political priorities within USAID or related to the partner government.
Exhibit 3: Guiding Questions to Choose Different Method(s) for Target Setting

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Are there contextual factors that will significantly limit or enhance achievement of performance indicators?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Context Analysis
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: All indicators, preceding another analytical method

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Is there a work plan, implementation plan, and budget available?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Implementation Planning Analysis
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Primarily for outputs

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Is the project or activity a follow-on to a previous USAID project or activity with the same indicator?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Past Performance Analysis
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Primarily for outputs, but also applicable for outcomes

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Are there historical data measuring the same construct in the same way?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Historical Trend Analysis
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Primarily for outcomes

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Are there evaluations or research for similar interventions that measure the same construct?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Applied Research and Evaluation Findings
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Primarily for outcomes

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Are there similar USAID interventions that have reported results and targets for the indicator?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Benchmarking
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Primarily for outcomes

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Do you need to validate analysis with country or sector experts?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Expert Judgement
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Best applied after initial analysis using another method

- **GUIDING QUESTION**: Are there key stakeholders with viewpoints that will affect targets?
  - **POTENTIAL ANALYSIS**: Yes → Expectations and Accountability
  - **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION**: Best applied after initial analysis using another method
CONSULT AND AGREE

A collaborative target setting process is the best way to foster realistic but ambitious targets. This means incorporating the right blend of stakeholders, in particular, thinking beyond personnel at USAID or IPs and considering representatives from partner governments and local partners. Targets only set by technical specialists are likely to be less useful and less sustainable.

Once the analysts have recommended targets, it is important to review them in a consultative fashion, possibly as part of a two-hour review meeting (usually best for outcomes) or direct meeting with the person responsible for approving the targets (better for outputs). Engage the same key stakeholders in this review that were present for the planning of the target setting process. The analysts need to sufficiently document their analytical methods and assumptions that influenced their targets along with their recommended target values. Analysts present the targets to key stakeholders and explain the analytical methods, assumptions, and how targets were calculated. The stakeholders then discuss any concerns about the targets with analysts, noting the nature of the concern and the rationale. If the concerns about recommended targets are significant and the targets are not approved, then analysts conduct follow-up analysis to address the concerns. The goal of the consultative review is to approve the targets recommended by the analysts or suggest revisions to the targets before accepting them.

Realistic yet ambitious targets. ADS 201 stipulates that performance indicator targets are realistic but ambitious, meaning they are achievable for USAID given the inputs (e.g., personnel, time, and budget). There is an inherent tension between realism and ambition. The ambitiousness of a target is bounded by the constraint that it is achievable. This means ambitious targets are not aspirational. Instead, ambitious targets might establish values that are more than what initial analyses might recommend, but within the 10 percent deviation range for PPR. The PPR process has some built-in accommodation for missions to set ambitious targets within the acceptable deviation range.

During the consultation and review, consider the potential divergent interests of stakeholders. Each stakeholder might have a perspective on the target to be reached. For example, the partner government might want an aspirational target with a high but difficult number to reach. Meanwhile, an IP might focus more on the cost and difficulty of reaching such a target, thereby wanting a target easier to achieve, while local community partners might concentrate less on the overall target and more on the ability to reach vulnerable and marginalized groups. In short, understanding the different interests of stakeholders and how their interests influence their view on the target selected facilitates the management of the consultation and review.

4. REVIEW AND REVISE

This section focuses on review and adjustment to targets after they are finalized. It differentiates between systematic review that occurs annually and ad-hoc review that responds to a crisis or substantial change in country context.
MONITOR PROGRESS

Missions systematically review targets. Systematic review occurs annually at the start of the fiscal year for projects and activities. Targets in CDCS PMP are reviewed during a midcourse stocktaking during the CDCS’s five-year life. A systematic review examines how much results deviated from interim targets for performance indicators. With any target for which results deviated by more than 10 percent, it is important to determine why the deviation happened. Ideally, the stakeholders involved in the systematic review are the same stakeholders as in the target setting process.

In certain cases, there is ad-hoc review of targets. Ad-hoc review normally occurs in response to a crisis (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic) or substantial alteration in context (e.g., change in partner government or its policies; modifications to U.S. Administration or USAID policy) that affects the strategy, project, or activity implementation. In this case, the design and implementation of the strategy, project, or activity can substantially change, leading to the addition, discontinuation, or revision of goal, IRs, and sub-IRs. Any variation will flow down to the PMP or MEL plan, necessitating revisions to indicators and their targets. Given existing demands on personnel and the time-sensitive nature of events that force ad-hoc review, such reviews and any adjustments to targets might prioritize outcome indicators. Even in a crisis or conflict-affected context, missions or IPs should maintain consultations to the extent possible. In a mission where conflicts or crises are common, the mechanisms to review or update targets in response to shocks or stressors should be planned for in the MEL plan. These processes should begin according to clearly defined triggers that stem from context monitoring and the initial analysis of risks.

Adjustments to targets have different implications depending on whether they occur within a strategy, project, or activity. For a CDCS, changes to the goal or DO require an amendment approved by the mission’s Regional Bureau and the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL). While revisions to IRs and sub-IRs do not need formal approval, the mission should inform its Regional Bureau and PPL. Revisions to the targets for a project occur within the Project MEL Plan. While target adjustments at this level are considered updates that do not need formal approval, the Program Office within the mission should be informed due to implications for the CDCS PMP. Adjustments to targets in an Activity MEL Plan need review and approval from the AOR/COR and may need an agreement or contract modification.

DIAGNOSE TARGETS

Systematic review focuses on indicators for which the results deviate from the targets by 10 percent or more. In those cases, the mission needs to investigate the reason for the deviation between the result and the target. Consider whether there is a critical assumption in the design or the target setting process that did not hold. Examine if a change in operational context affected implementation beyond the scope of what USAID could expect to be managed. Look into whether there is a flaw in the analysis used to recommend the target or whether the target setting process lacked key information or data from stakeholders.
In ad-hoc reviews, the considerations are more strategic. In particular, an unanticipated change in context could affect the design and its Results Framework, so it is important to know how the context change affects the design or alters the Results Framework. According to the USAID Policy Framework (2019), about 80 percent of the places where USAID has programs are in acute crisis, recovering from crisis, or experiencing smaller-scale upheaval. Assure that the Results Framework and Workplan assumes conflict and crises are a feature of the environment that should be understood, planned for, and mitigated to the extent possible. Review the goal, IRs, and sub-IRs to assess which ones need to be revised, discontinued, or added. A revised IR or sub-IR might need new annual or final targets for its indicator, while a new IR or sub-IR will need an indicator and targets, meaning there is a fresh target setting process to execute.

**RESOLVE**

Systematic review can result in target adjustment. It is advisable to adjust the target when the source of the deviation is attributable to (1) a key assumption in design or target setting that does not hold, (2) change in operational context beyond the control of the project or activity, and (3) mistaken analysis or missing information and data during the initial target setting process. Missions want to avoid adjusting targets when the deviation relates to a failure of implementation that the project or activity should have managed, such as failing to plan for recurrent shocks and stressors, including conflicts, crises, or seasonal variation in access (e.g., rainy season making certain locations inaccessible). Otherwise, there is a risk of adjusting targets downward and diminishing the accountability function of targets. Any adjustment of targets should involve consultation and agreement between key stakeholders before finalization.

Ad-hoc review also leads to adjusted targets or entirely new targets. Missions adjust targets for indicators related to revised IRs or sub-IRs, and new targets are developed for entirely new IRs or sub-IRs. Target adjustments for revised targets occur after re-analysis, while new targets are developed based on an original target setting process. Similar to systematic review, it is important to involve key stakeholders and reach agreement on any adjusted or new targets.

**Systematic review and necessary adjustment of targets** throughout the implementation of a project or activity ensures targets are maintained as realistic and ambitious, and also continue to generate data for sound management decisions. Adjustments to targets are warranted when assumptions for target setting no longer hold, there is a significant change in the operational context, or the analysis used to recommend the target had a flaw.
REFERENCES


EnCompass and Management Systems International. 2019. Table 1: USAID standard and supplemental indicators in the education sector. Washington, DC: USAID.


ANNEXES

ANNEX A: GLOSSARY

Applied research and evaluation findings analysis – Analysis that examines recent rigorous evidence to inform recommended targets. The goal is to obtain a sense of what similar projects or activities have achieved based on published research and evaluations.

Baseline – “Value of an indicator before major implementation actions of USAID-supported strategies, projects, or activities” (USAID 2020).

Benchmark – A normative standard of performance for an indicator.

Context analysis – Analysis that studies the key factors in the country and development sector that are likely to positively or negatively affect the strategy, project, or activity. The factors encompassed by context analysis (e.g., priorities, strategies, reform activities, or political will) can include the partner government; the policy, economic, security, or regulatory environment; and any bilateral or multilateral donors (e.g., strategies and programs in the country and sector).

Expectations and accountability – Analysis that investigates the viewpoints of representatives from key stakeholders on how specific results affect targets. This method permits analysts to account for political and institutional constraints that might moderate or expand targets.

Expert judgment – Analysis that obtains views of sector and/or country experts to determine what is feasible or possible for an indicator’s recommended target.

Historical trend analysis – Analysis that studies existing primary or secondary data to establish a reasonable trend from which to project future performance for the project or activity.

Implementation planning analysis – Analysis that reviews the project or activity details, allocation of resources (e.g., personnel, time, budget, and capacity of partners) to understand the scope and potential level of anticipated results.

Outcome – A higher-level or end result at the Assistance Objective level. An outcome is expected to have a positive impact on and lead to change in the development situation of the host country.

Output – A tangible, immediate, and intended product or consequence of an activity within USAID’s control.

Past performance analysis – Analysis that examines the results from a project or activity implemented in previous years, usually, in the same country and sector with a similar type of intervention.

Program Cycle - “USAID’s operational model for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming in a given region or country to advance U.S. foreign policy. It encompasses guidance and procedures for: (1) making strategic decisions at the regional or country level about programmatic areas of focus and associated resources, (2) designing projects and supportive activities to implement strategic plans, and (3) learning from performance monitoring, evaluations, and other
relevant sources of information to make course corrections as needed and inform future programming” (USAID 2020).

**Stakeholder** – “Individual, community, group or organization with an interest in the outcome of a program, either as a result of being affected by it positively or negatively, or by being able to influence the activity in a positive or negative way” (Dearden et al. 2003).

**Target** – An indicator’s “specific, planned level of result to be achieved within a specific timeframe with a given level of resources” (USAID 2020).

**Theory of change** – “How and why, and under what conditions, the mission believes – based on the given parameters and best available information – that it will be successful in advancing” the goal of the strategy, project, or activity (USAID 2020).
ANNEX B: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS EXAMPLE

Stakeholder analysis can begin with the mission (i.e., for a strategy or project) or IP (i.e., for an activity) compiling a stakeholder table with the pertinent information about each potential stakeholder. The suggested columns of information in the table are the following:

- **Stakeholder** – name of the stakeholder
- **Role** – identify the stakeholder’s role in the project or activity
- **Incentives for engagement** – determine the stakeholder's incentives to engage in target setting
- **Key capacities and information** – what capacities and information does the stakeholder bring to the target setting process
- **Importance rating** – rate the stakeholder's importance (i.e., priority of including the stakeholder in target setting) from 1 to 5, where 1 is not important, 2 is slightly important, 3 is fairly important, 4 is important, and 5 is very important
- **Influence rating** – rate the stakeholder’s influence (i.e., capacity to engage and information for target setting) from 1 to 5, where 1 is not influential, 2 is slightly influential, 3 is fairly influential, 4 is influential, and 5 is very influential
- **Impact if not included** – how will the stakeholder’s lack of involvement compromise the target setting process?

Exhibit 4 offers an illustrative example for a stakeholder table.
**Exhibit 4: Illustrative Stakeholder Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAKEHOLDER</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES</th>
<th>KEY CAPACITIES AND INFO</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
<th>INFLUENCE</th>
<th>IMPACT IF EXCLUDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Oversees contract</td>
<td>Accountable for results of contract</td>
<td>How project fits into CDCS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No strategic perspective for CDCS, no approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEO</td>
<td>Manages mission education portfolio</td>
<td>Understands how project fits in sector portfolio</td>
<td>Technical details of standard indicators</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack critical view on details of standard indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission MEL Specialist</td>
<td>Responsible for mission MEL and PPR</td>
<td>Needs data for regular reporting and PPR</td>
<td>Requirements of PPR and USAID Washington</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lack input about reporting requires for PPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP COP</td>
<td>Oversees project implementation</td>
<td>Accountable for results of project relative to targets</td>
<td>Experience managing target setting process for projects</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No strategic perspective for project and IP, no approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP MEL Specialist</td>
<td>Responsible for project MEL</td>
<td>Needs targets for project reporting</td>
<td>Details of indicators to be reported</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Targets set without accounting for details of collection and monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP Education Specialist</td>
<td>Manages technical details of intervention</td>
<td>Needs technically feasible targets for project</td>
<td>Technical limitations of project components</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Targets might lack technical feasibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE Curriculum Specialist</td>
<td>Coordinates curriculum department’s involvement with project</td>
<td>Wants successful implementation of new curriculum developed</td>
<td>Partner government priorities for new curriculum and project</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack government perspective on new curriculum relative to targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE Assessment Specialist</td>
<td>Coordinates assessment department’s involvement with project</td>
<td>Wants reasonable targets for learning gains of students</td>
<td>Partner government expectations for students’ learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No government perspective on measurement of indicators and targets related to learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Partner Reading Specialist</td>
<td>Manages local partner implementation of teacher training</td>
<td>Wants classroom perspective to influence project and its targets</td>
<td>Teachers’ ability to implement new curriculum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No classroom perspective on technical feasibility of targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While not required, developing a stakeholder matrix that visualizes the categorical ratings of importance and influence is helpful to illustrate results of the analysis. For each stakeholder, the stakeholder matrix plots the importance ratings on the x-axis and the influence ratings on the y-axis. Exhibit 5 provides an illustrative example of a stakeholder matrix based on the importance and influence ratings in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 5: Illustrative Stakeholder Matrix

**Low importance and high influence.** Quadrant A contains stakeholders with low priority for participating in target setting but high capacity to engage in target setting, or who hold valuable information to inform the process and/or analyses. Stakeholders in quadrant A are potential key stakeholders depending on the added value of their information or capacity to engage in target setting.

**High importance and high influence.** Quadrant B has stakeholders designated with a high priority for participating in target setting and also high capacity to engage in target setting, or who hold valuable information to inform the process and/or analyses. Stakeholders mapped into quadrant B are key stakeholders who engage in full, collaborative target setting processes.

**Low importance and low influence.** Quadrant C includes stakeholders designated with a low priority for participating in target setting and also low capacity to engage in target setting. They may not have valuable information to inform the process and/or analyses. Stakeholders in quadrant C are not necessary to include in target setting.

**High importance and low influence.** Quadrant D has stakeholders designated with a high priority for participating in target setting but low capacity to engage in target setting. They also may not have valuable information to inform the process and/or analyses. Stakeholder in quadrant D are potentially politically or institutionally important stakeholders with low capacity to engage in target setting or who have limited information to contribute to the process or analyses. These stakeholders are included in target setting if their involvement will promote critical support for the success of target setting or the overall project or activity.
## Annex C: Data Sources and Likely Baseline Scenarios by Standard Education Indicator

**Exhibit 6: Standard Indicators for Education and Likely Data Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data Source to Set Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-1. Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs that include results from primary data collection and analysis using leveled reading assessments in USG activity areas. (3) Analysis of secondary data on reading outcomes (e.g., ASER, EGRA), data aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-2. Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of primary school</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs that include results from primary data collection and analysis using leveled reading assessments in USG activity areas. (3) Analysis of secondary data on reading outcomes (e.g., ASER, EGRA), data aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-3. Number of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-4. Number of learners in secondary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-6. Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-12. Number of education administrators and officials who complete professional development activities with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-13. Number of parent teacher associations (PTAs) or community-based school governance structures engaged in primary or secondary education supported with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-14. Number of classrooms built or repaired with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-45. Percent of primary-grade learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of decodable, leveled, AND supplementary readers in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs that include results from primary data collection and analysis based on site visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDICATOR</td>
<td>DATA SOURCE TO SET TARGETS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-46. Percent of individuals who transition to further education or training following participation in USG-assisted programs</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs. (2) USAID WORQ Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-47. Percent of learners with a disability targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs that include results from primary data collection and analysis using leveled reading assessments in USG activity areas. (3) Analysis of secondary data on reading outcomes (e.g., ASER, EGRA), so long as the data align with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-48. Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance with an increase of at least one proficiency level in reading at the end of Grade 2</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs that include results from primary data collection and analysis using leveled reading assessments in USG activity areas. (3) Analysis of secondary data on reading outcomes (e.g., ASER, EGRA), so long as the data align with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-49. Number of primary or secondary textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLM) that are inclusively representative provided with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-50. Number of Public and Private schools receiving USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-51. Number of learning environments supported by USG assistance that have improved safety, according to locally-defined criteria</td>
<td>(1) Primary data, at the level of the learning environment or learner level, collected by IP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-53. Number of learners in pre-primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-54. Percent of individuals with improved reading skills following participation in USG assisted programs</td>
<td>(1) Direct assessment of reading skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-1. Number of host country higher education institutions receiving capacity development support with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official Government Records, if aligned with USG activity areas and targeted beneficiaries. (2) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-2. Number of individuals attending higher education institutions with USG scholarship or financial assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-52. Number of individuals affiliated with higher education institutions receiving capacity development support with USG assistance</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDICATOR</td>
<td>DATA SOURCE TO SET TARGETS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-11. Average percent change in earnings following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td>(1) USAID WORQ Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-12. Percent of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td>(1) USAID WORQ Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-13. Percent of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td>(1) Data from soft skills assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-14. Percent of individuals who complete USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td>(1) Official reports from IPs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 7: Standard Indicators for Education and Likely Baseline Scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>BASELINE SCENARIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-1. Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-2. Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of primary school</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-3. Number of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-4. Number of learners in secondary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-6. Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-12. Number of education administrators and officials who complete professional development activities with USG assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-13. Number of parent teacher associations (PTAs) or community-based school governance structures engaged in primary or secondary education supported with USG assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-14. Number of classrooms built or repaired with USG assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-46. Percent of individuals who transition to further education or training following participation in USG-assisted programs</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-47. Percent of learners with a disability targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-48. Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance with an increase of at least one proficiency level in reading at the end of Grade 2</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-50. Number of public and private schools receiving USG assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDICATOR</td>
<td>BASELINE SCENARIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-51. Number of learning environments supported by USG assistance that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have improved safety, according to locally-defined criteria</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-53. Number of learners in pre-primary schools or equivalent</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-54. Percent of individuals with improved reading skills following</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation in USG assisted programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-55. Percent of primary-grade learners targeted for USG assistance</td>
<td>Zero or previous performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.1-1. Number of host country higher education institutions receiving</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capacity development support with USG assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-2. Number of individuals attending higher education institutions</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with USG scholarship or financial assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-52. Number of individuals affiliated with higher education</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutions receiving capacity development support with USG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-53. Number of physical spaces built, repaired, or refurbished for</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher education with USG assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES.2-54. Number of USG-supported partnerships that address regional,</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national, and/or local development objectives through or with higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-11. Average percent change in earnings following participation in</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-12. Percent of individuals with new employment following</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-13. Percent of individuals with improved soft skills following</td>
<td>Third party data or primary data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG.6-14. Percent of individuals who complete USG-assisted</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workforce development programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX D: DETAILED EXPLANATION OF ANALYSES

APPLIED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FINDINGS

Data Sources. Evaluation reports or research reports either published in peer-reviewed academic journals or hosted on reputable databases of international development research, including USAID’s Development Experience Library (DEC) or Education Links, World Bank’s Open Knowledge Repository, Education Sub Saharan Africa’s African Education Research Database, Innovations for Poverty Action’s Search Studies, and International Initiative for Impact Evaluation’s Evidence Portal (also contained systematic reviews that summarize effectiveness of particular interventions across a variety of contexts).

Recommended Use. This method is best applied in situations in which there is a project or activity that is new to a particular context, but the project or activity is similar to other interventions (USAID or non-USAID) in other countries.

How to Conduct.

1. Compile a matrix of the project or activity’s key characteristics (e.g., country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale) and identify the indicator of interest in terms of the key construct and how it is measured.
2. Identify recent evaluations and applied research potentially relevant to the project.
3. Examine the comparability of the intervention (e.g., country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale) and indicator (e.g., indicator measures the same construct in the same way) in each potential study. Note caveats about differences in the intervention or indicator relative to the project or activity.
4. Examine findings and conclusions from evaluations and applied research to determine how they could affect project or activity performance and specific implications for target setting.
5. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Recommend annual and final targets based on the analysis.

REVIEWING DATA AND TARGETS FROM PAST ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Data Sources: Program descriptions, performance reports, and performance data of similar programs found on USAID’s Development Experience Clearinghouse.

Recommended Use. This method is best applied in situations in which there is a project or activity that is new to a particular context, but the project or activity is similar to other USAID-interventions in other countries.

How to Conduct.

1. Compile a matrix of the project or activity’s key characteristics (e.g., country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale) and identify the indicator of interest in terms of the key construct and how it is measured.
2. Identify other similar USAID projects or activities in other countries that serve as comparisons.

3. Examine the comparability of the intervention (e.g., country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale) and indicator (e.g., indicator measures the same construct in the same way) in each potential study. Note caveats about differences in the intervention or indicator relative to the project or activity.

4. Examine targets and results for the relevant indicators in the performance reports and data.

5. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Recommend annual and final targets based on the analysis.

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Data Sources. Strategy documents (e.g., CDCS, project design document, or contracts/agreements), recent sector assessments, analyses of policy conducted by USAID or other donors, conflict assessments or gender assessments applicable to the program, and related donor or partner government strategies and plans.

Recommended Use. Context analysis is useful to understand the strategic issues affecting the project or activity. It can apply to output or outcome indicators. The goal is not to execute new analyses, but rather consult existing pertinent analysis. Context analysis’ application depends on how much the achievement of the targets depends on interactions with the partner government, civil society, or local partners, or the degree to which the project or activity achievement of targets is affected by macro-level political, economic, security, or regulatory forces. Context analysis will not determine specific recommended annual or final targets, but rather identify to what degree contextual factors limit or enhance the project or activity’s performance and its associated targets.

How to Conduct.

1. Determine the main contextual factors that are likely to influence the performance of the project or activity.

2. Locate the relevant strategy documents, assessments, and analyses already written that are applicable to the main contextual factors.

3. Carry out a detailed review of the relevant documents on main contextual factors.

4. Document the factors in a matrix that details the contextual factor, the source document, how the factor is likely to limit or enhance the performance of the project or activity, and whether the project or activity has the ability to influence the contextual factor. The matrix should also show how the project or activity might influence the contextual factor and how the actions of the project or activity toward the contextual factor might limit or enhance the performance.

5. To verify findings, discuss findings of context analysis as necessary with representatives from organizations that developed strategy documents, assessments, and analyses.

6. Write the findings of the context analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Recommend how the findings affect the annual and final targets.

EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Data Sources. Sustainable Development Goal targets, USAID or partner government strategies, policies, or priorities.
**Recommended Use.** The method functions best as a secondary form of analysis that analysts use to fine-tune targets recommend by a different primary method.

**How to Conduct.**

1. Identify outcome indicators for the political or institutional incentives that could substantially affect expectations for targets.
2. For selected indicators, determine the relevant stakeholder and its likely source of the expectation for the targets (e.g., Sustainable Development Goal targets, strategies, policies, or priorities).
3. Review the pertinent source documentation for the expectation.
4. Compile a matrix that lists the stakeholder, expectation for targets, and source of the expectation.
5. Arrange for interviews or focus groups with stakeholders to discuss expectations for targets, draft protocols for discussions accordingly. Provide primary analysis for recommended targets to stakeholders.
6. Review findings from desk review and interviews or focus groups with stakeholders. Determine how those expectations affect the targets.
7. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Adjust annual and final targets in the primary analysis based on the findings of the expectations and accountability.

**EXPERT JUDGMENT**

**Data Sources.** Experts in specific sectors and/or countries.

**Recommended Use.** Ideally, this method complements other analytical methods such as applied research and findings, benchmarking, historical trends, or past performance. Expert judgment allows analysts to present their recommended targets generated from a primary method and consult with experts to validate or fine-tune the targets.

**How to Conduct.**

1. Identify a list of potential country or sector experts for the indicator and targets. Consider experts in government agencies, bilateral or multilateral development donors, universities, and research institutions.
2. Contact experts to conduct interviews to discuss their views on the indicator and its targets relative to their expertise. Provide primary analysis for recommended targets to experts.
3. Review findings from consultations with experts.
4. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Adjust annual and final targets in the primary analysis based on the findings of the expert judgment.

**HISTORICAL TREND**

**Data Sources.** Reports, records, statistics on indicators from USAID, partner government, World Bank, or UN agencies.
**Recommended Use.** Historical trends analysis is best applied to the project or activity’s highest-value outcome indicators.

**How to Conduct.**

1. Determine whether appropriate historical data is available for the indicator.
2. Identify potential data sources, such as reports, records, or statistics from USAID, partner government, World Bank, or UN agencies.
3. Obtain data and draft an analysis plan that explains how the analyst will analyze the data to recommend targets for the indicator.
4. Conduct the analysis, including any data cleaning, processing, and analysis.
5. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Recommend annual and final targets based on the analysis.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING**

**Data Sources.** Annual work plan or implementation plan and budget for the project or activity.

**Recommended Use.** This method is ideal for output indicators for which the provision of goods or services are mostly in the control of the project or activity.

**How to Conduct.**

1. Obtain work plan or implementation plan as well as budget for the project or activity.
2. Analyze the implementation plan and the timeframe for activities related to output indicators. Identify how this affects targets.
3. Examine the overall project or activity, the budget allocations per component, and each year in relation to the implementation plan to determine annual targets.
4. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Recommend annual and final targets based on the analysis.
5. Share findings with recommended annual and final targets with MEL staff and technical education staff. Revise targets based on their feedback and suggestions.
6. Submit recommended annual and final targets to AOR/COR. Revise targets according to feedback.

**PAST PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

**Data Sources.** Documentation from the prior project or activity – such as PMP, MEL Plans, performance reports (e.g., annual, quarterly, or final), or evaluations – that includes performance indicator data for the same indicator for which analysts are recommending targets.

**Recommended Use.** This method functions particularly well if the new project or activity is a follow-on or extension of a previous project or activity. The method is applicable for output and outcome indicators, but it is likely most accurate for output indicators.
How to Conduct.

1. Compile a matrix of the project or activity's key characteristics (e.g., country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale) and identify the indicator of interest in terms of the key construct and how it is measured.

2. Obtain documentation from prior project or activity (e.g., PMP, MEL Plan, performance reports, or evaluations).

3. Examine the comparability of the intervention (e.g., country, components of the intervention, dosage, intensity, and scale) and indicator (e.g., indicator measures the same construct in the same way) in each potential study. Note caveats about differences in the intervention or indicator relative to the project or activity.

4. Review past performance for the pertinent output and outcome indicators. Consider both the results and targets. This includes not just whether or not the targets were achieved, but also how much the results deviate over or under the target.

5. Document the results, targets, deviations, and any stated reasons for deviations of more than 10 percent. Consider whether any factors are similar or different in the new project or activity in comparison to the former project or activity.

6. Write the findings of the analysis. Document the steps in the analytical process and any assumptions. Recommend annual and final targets based on the analysis.