

Our approach to technical Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) at the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems

Transforming evaluation and change theories into practice.

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Sebastian Galindo, Ph.D.
Erica L. Odera, Ph.D.



PURPOSE

Describe the choices made to structure and carry out an adaptive and theory-driven approach to evaluation within a large multi-project lab with standardized accountability requirements.

Discuss some of the challenges faced, and the unique solutions crafted, to maintain strong monitoring and accountability while fostering adaptive learning.

Demonstrate the critical role of theory to inform the evaluation process and the intrinsic relationship of M&E with organizational learning.

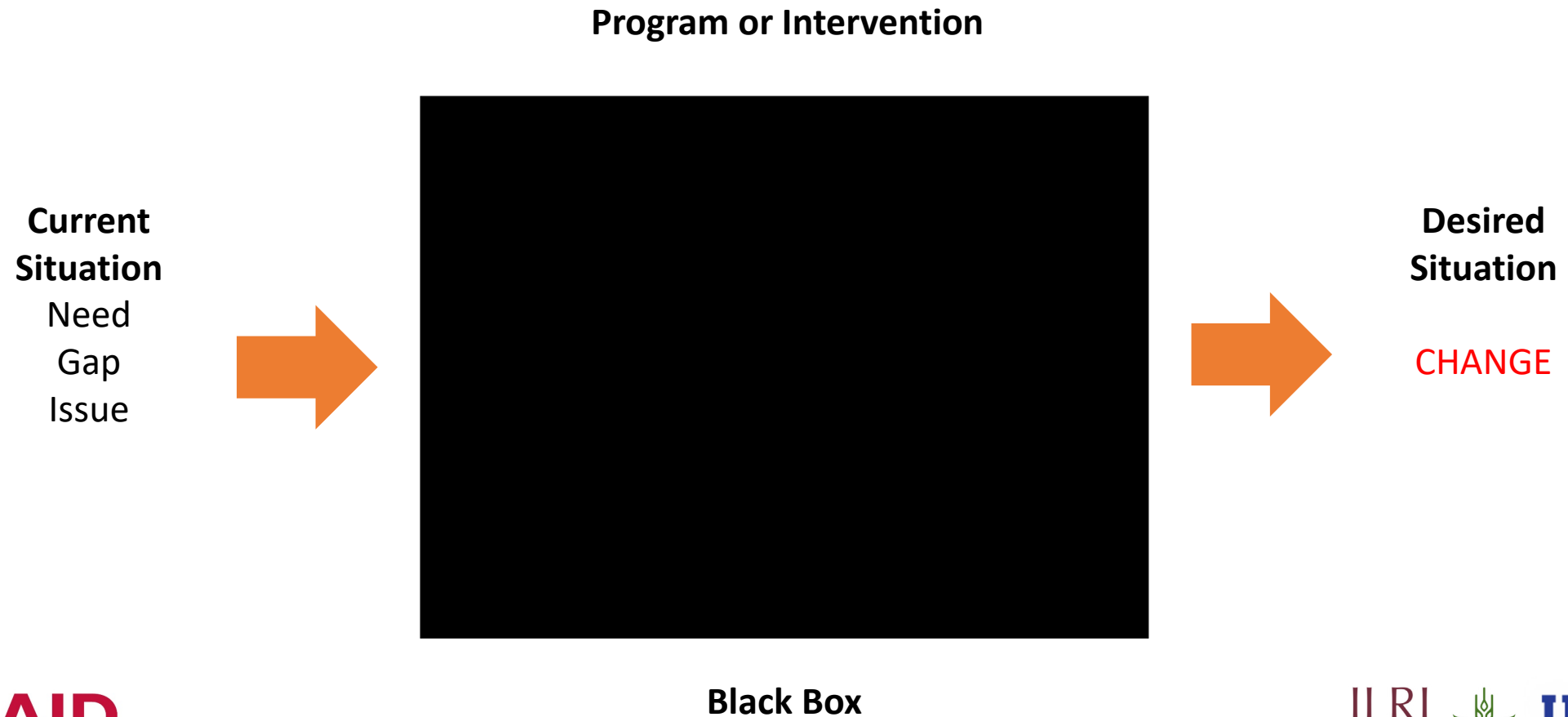


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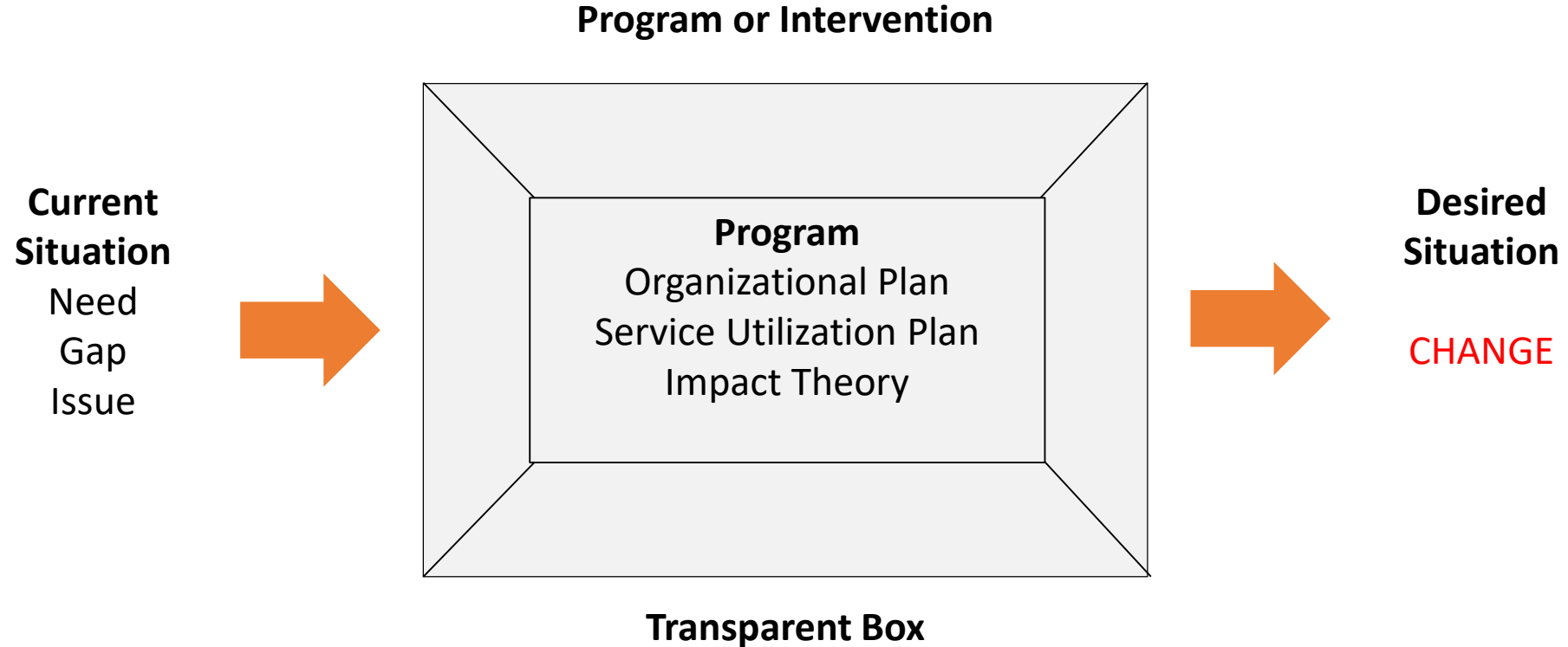
BACKGROUND

Relevance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (M&E+L)



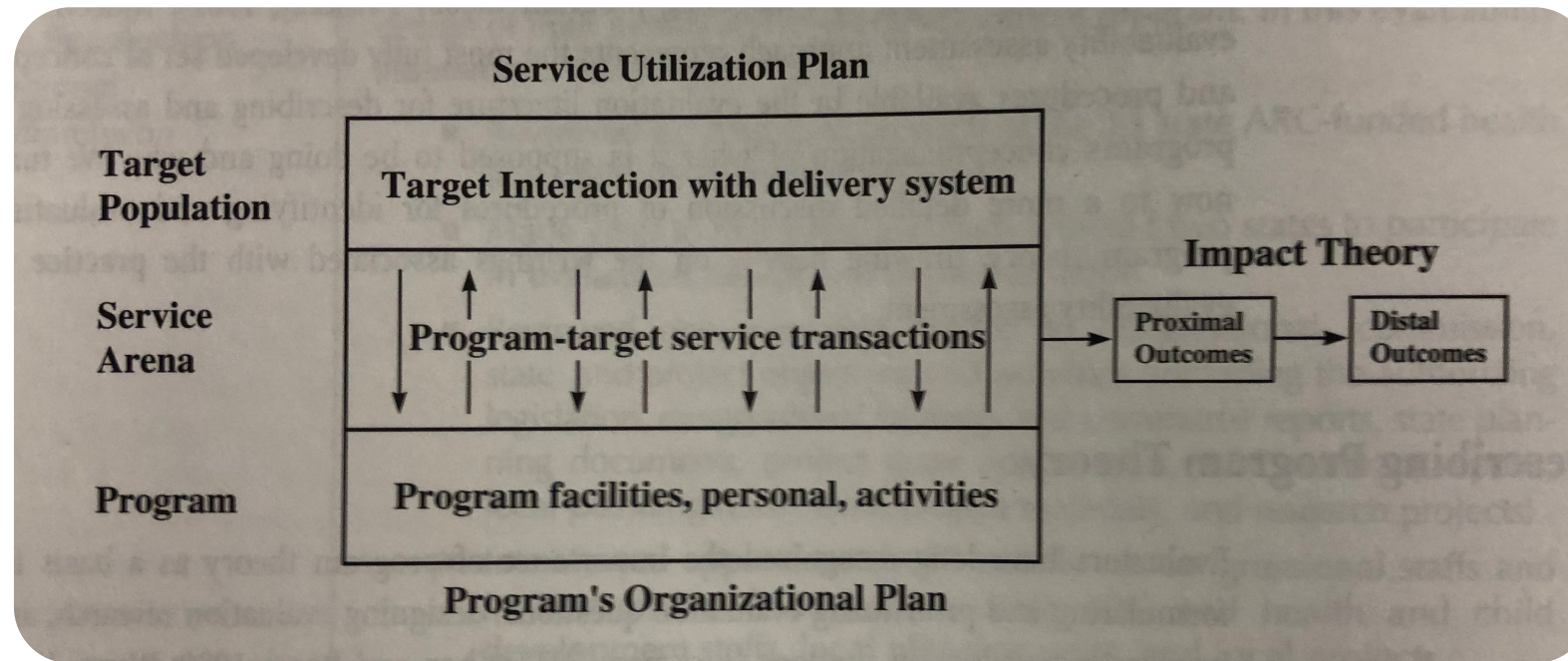
BACKGROUND

Relevance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (M&E+L)



BACKGROUND

Relevance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (M&E+L)



Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman (2004)

BACKGROUND

Relevance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (M&E+L)

- Patton (2016) outlines eight essential principles to guide the developmental evaluation process.
 - Developmental purpose
 - Evaluation rigor
 - Utilization focus
 - Innovation niche
 - Complexity perspective
 - Systems thinking
 - Co-creation
 - Timely feedback

BACKGROUND

Relevance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (M&E+L)

Learning Organization

- Learning occurs across units & levels simultaneously.
- Promotes systems thinking and organizational memory.
- Demonstrates organizational capacity for change.
- Involves widespread participation of stakeholders in decision-making and information sharing.

BACKGROUND

Relevance of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (M&E+L)

- Evaluation is concerned with documenting, studying, and assessing change.
- Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory (2003).
 - Elements of diffusion (i.e., the actual innovation, the communication channels, the social system, and the effect of time)
 - Attributes of innovations (i.e., relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability)

BACKGROUND

Initial development of the Lab and its evaluation component

- Feed the Future (FTF) is a U.S. Government's initiative created to “reduce global hunger, undernutrition and extreme poverty” (FTF, n.d., p.6).
- FTF Innovation Labs are specialized hubs responsible for implementing the FTF initiative.
- The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems is led by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) in partnership with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).

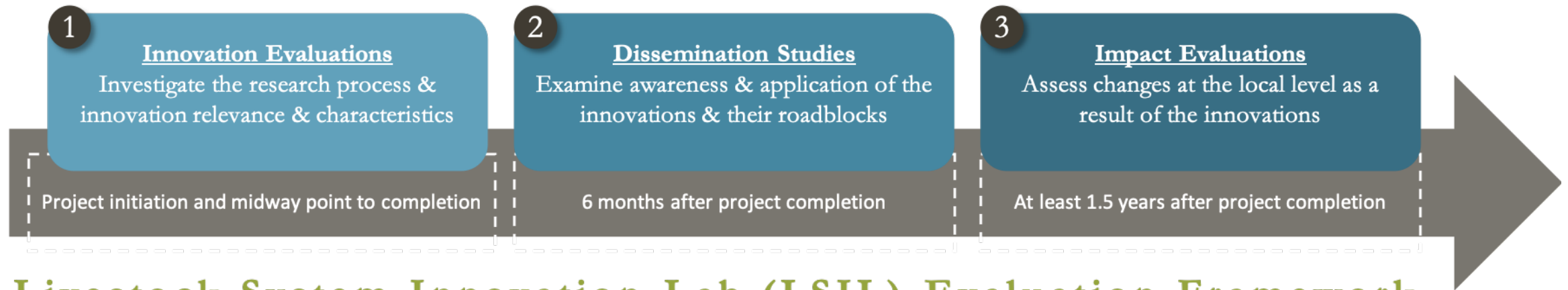
BACKGROUND

Initial development of the Lab and its evaluation component

- Evaluating a FtF Innovation Lab is particularly challenging because of its multiple levels of implementation:
 - USAID
 - Innovation Lab (Management entity, Areas of Inquiry, Cross-cutting Themes)
 - Sub-awardees
- USAID has developed a framework of indicators (FTF, 2018) to standardize M&E across the FTF program.
- Most of the FTF indicators are focused on outputs rather than outcomes.

BACKGROUND

Initial development of the Lab and its evaluation component

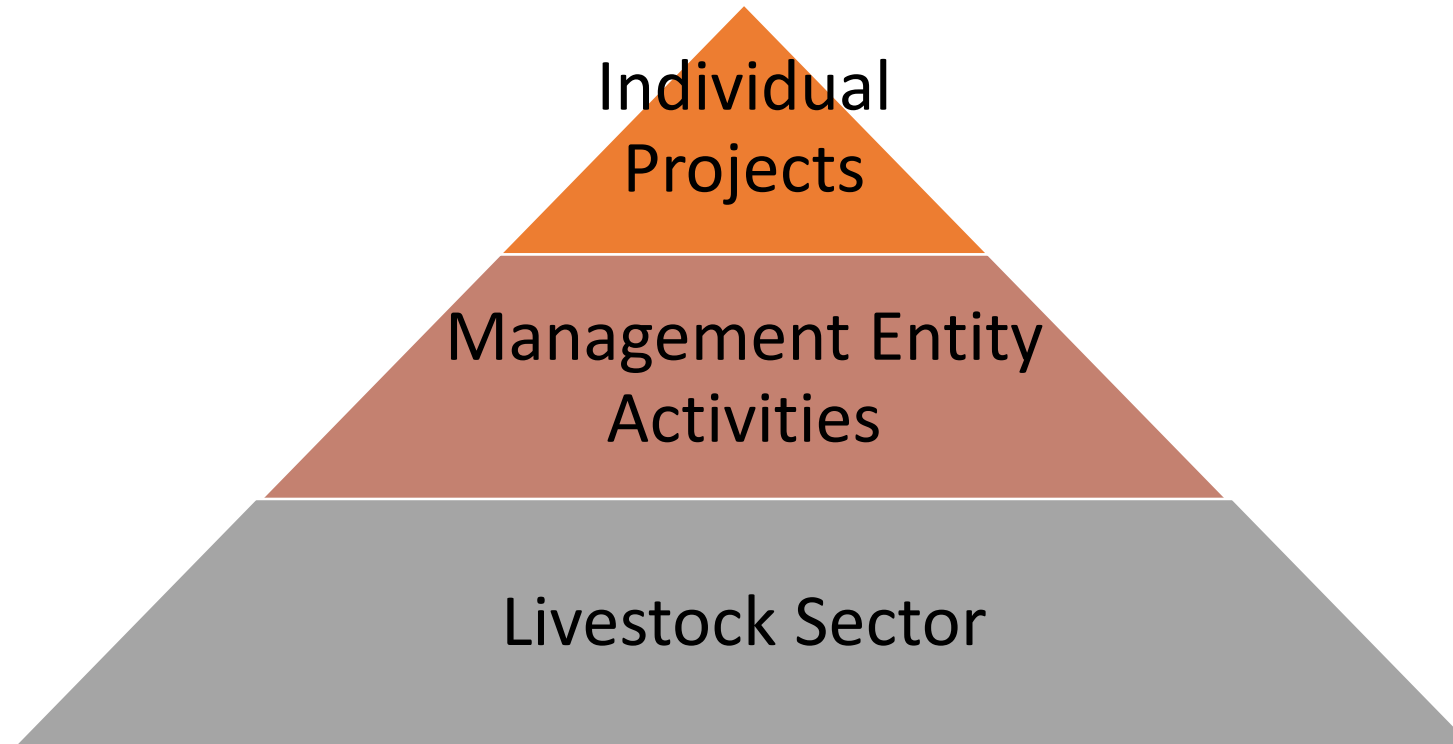


Livestock System Innovation Lab (LSIL) Evaluation Framework

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

Contextual Background

- The Livestock Innovation Lab has a unique challenge and opportunity when it comes to monitoring and evaluation because it has to consider three units of analysis.



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

Contextual Background

- There are also three major components influencing the M&E structure

Accountability

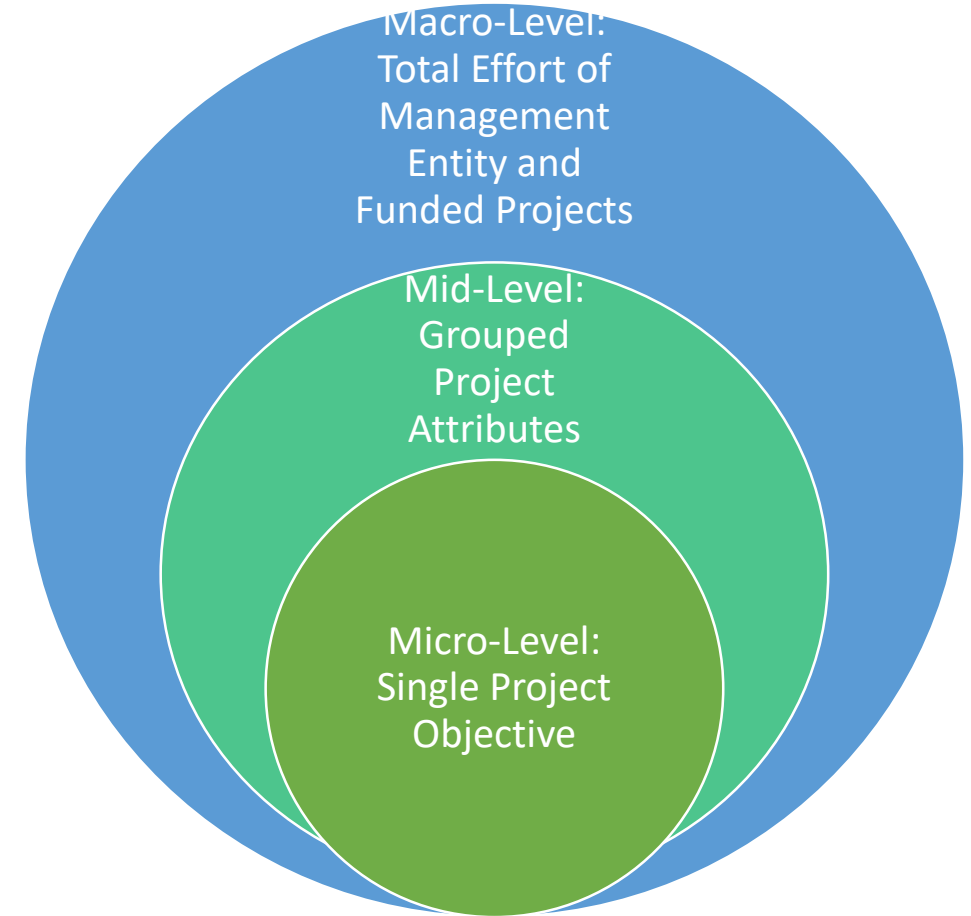
Management

Scholarship

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

Approach #1: Results frameworks

- Results frameworks are a way to align objectives with indicators. That way, when you are tracking the numerical outputs that indicators capture, you can answer the question “for what purpose”?”
- The Lab has created results frameworks for the Management Entity itself as well as each individually funded project. Both types of results frameworks have a mix of USAID and lab-created indicators.
- This allows the lab to examine the indicators for different purposes.



Management Capacity		
OBJECTIVE 1: Achieve and maintain high standards in management performance through effective structures, a dynamic and adaptive personnel team, and a culture of open communication within the ME, the LSIL and with internal and external stakeholders.		
ID	Feed the Future or LSIL Custom	Indicator
IR 1.1: Establish and maintain effective management entity structures and operating systems.		
ID 1.1.1	LSIL Custom	Amount of time between hiring replacements to maintain a full staff complement
ID 1.1.2	LSIL Custom	Number of advisory committee meetings held

Objective	Indicator	Feed the Future or Custom	Disaggregate	2020 Target	2020 Actual
Objective 1: Use expert judgement and secondary data to estimate the health risks of consuming unprocessed milk in Rwanda					
Indicator 1.1	Number of studies conducted and strategies developed to increase the consumption of ASF in the project target areas	LSIL Custom	TOTAL	1	
			Studies	1	
			Strategies		
			Strategy Stage		
			New		
			Adapted		
			Strategy developed with a view for adoption by:		
			Mainly Men		
			Mainly Women		
			Both		
			Comment:		

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

Approach #2: Using technology within reporting- Piestar

Featured Photo



Farmer group meetings in Burkina Faso in collaboration with CIRAD colleagues, April 1, 2019.

Project title: Enabling Value Chains to Create Sustainable Income for Vulnerable People in Crop-Livestock Systems of Burkina Faso and Malawi

Vipham - KSU - Linking cattle nutrition to human nutrition: A value chain approach to improving the production, handling and consumption of animal source foods in Ethiopia

Vipham, Jessie Module Marked as Complete

- › Dietary associative effects in ruminant nutrition and implications for diet formulation (#EX) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned
- › Approaches to maximize impact of research and publications. (#EX) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned

Minten - IFPRI - Improving the evidence and policies for better performing livestock systems in Ethiopia

Minten, Bart Module Marked as Complete

- › STATA Training (with application of the Dairy sector) (#21) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned
- › STATA Training (with application of the Dairy sector) (#24) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned
- › Managing data repositories taking the dairy value chain survey as an example (#23) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned
- › Efficiency and Productivity Analysis (with applications to the livestock sector) (#26) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned
- › Market Policy and Value Chain Analysis (with a focus on Agriculture and Livestock) (#25) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned
- › STATA Training (with application of the Dairy sector) (#22) Traditional / In-Person Cleaned

LSIL Custom Indicator Modules

Publications & Presentations

Institutional Capacity Development

Technologies, Practices & Approaches in Extension

Strategies & Studies on ASF Consumption

Policy Meetings

Organizational Development Assistance

Organizations Applying Technologies, Practices & Approaches

FtF Indicator Modules

Other Project Participants

Short-term Training

Degree-granting Students

Technologies, Practices & Approaches

Applied Technologies.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

Approach #3: Innovation studies

- Identification of alignments and misalignments among the innovation attributes, the communication channels, and the social system.
- Approached as a learning opportunity and not as an evaluative process.
- Allowed the researchers and evaluators to see the projects from new perspectives.
- Timing and methods were revised.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

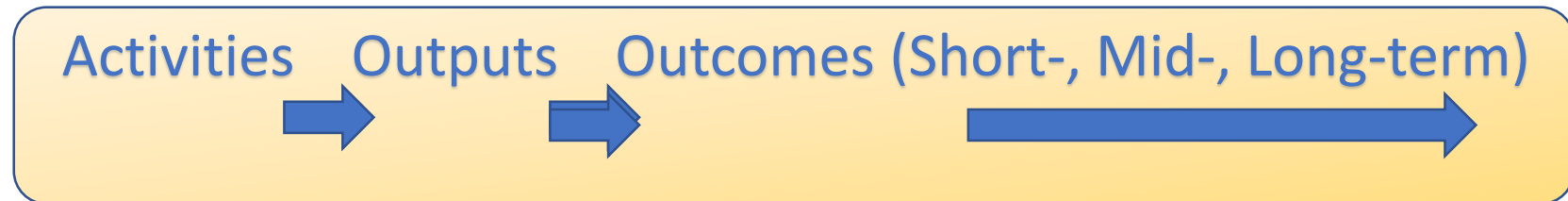
Approach #4: Dissemination studies

- Two main challenges
 - Sub-awardees funding and scope
 - Limitations related to the Livestock Systems Innovation Lab's mission/mandate
- Strategies & lessons learned
 - Scaling plans
 - Partnerships with academic programs at UF, specifically the Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP)
 - Innovation Platforms, Symposia, Annual Meetings

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE M&E STRUCTURE

Approach #5: Impact assessment

- Challenges normally associated with impact evaluation
- Theory-based evaluation approaches
- Contribution analysis
 - Intermediate outcomes
 - Theory of change
 - Expert judgement
- Program theory and Problem evidence
 - Program-centered approaches - Problem-centered approaches
- Impact Pathways



IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Day-to-day activities

- Sub awardee skills and comfort with M&E
- Adapting to changes or updates to donor requirements
- Important trade-offs when collecting data- balancing data quality, usability, and resources

IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Role of evaluation

- Evaluation as a learning activity
- Integrating evaluation and research – doing evaluation for more than just checking the boxes
- Regardless of size of the project, involve evaluators from the beginning or, at least, access evaluation resources available online

IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Utilization of evaluation findings (data-information-decision-change)

- Enhance program processes
- Support evidence-based decision making
- Continue, modify, or discontinue activities
- Understand and communicate progress and value of activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Fulfill the mission of the project

Disclaimer

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Thank you for your attention!



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