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Measuring and Monitoring Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Collaboration

Guidance and Considerations



About USAID Advancing Nutrition

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Acronyms

CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CHAIN	Community Health and Improved Nutrition
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
IP	implementing partner
MSN	multi-sectoral nutrition
RISE	Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced
SAREL	Sahel Resilience Learning
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene

Executive Summary

USAID Advancing Nutrition developed guidance on measuring and monitoring multi-sectoral nutrition (MSN) collaboration among organizations and partners to improve nutrition outcomes. Generated from consultations with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission staff and a literature review, this document guides USAID Missions and implementing partners (IPs) in improving measurement, monitoring, and assessments of collaboration.

Collaboration is imperative to achieve the short-, medium-, and long-term goals of MSN activities. Measuring and monitoring collaboration can help USAID and IPs improve the effectiveness of collaboration that aims to improve nutrition. Planning and implementing collaboration measurement involve several considerations.

Measuring and monitoring collaboration should align with the goals of collaboration. This guidance outlines five types of collaboration that align with specific collaboration objectives: networking, cooperation, coordination, coalition, and integration.

Opportunities should be identified to measure and monitor collaboration in a way that will inform adaptive management. Opportunities for measuring and monitoring collaboration exist throughout the USAID Program Cycle at the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) or project or activity level. Measurement and monitoring efforts should align with the type of collaboration that is intended and its anticipated role in the project or activity theory of change. It should also be useful for informing decisions about how to improve programming at each stage of the program cycle.

Feasible reporting processes and indicators should be chosen that will generate the type of data needed to inform adaptive management. Reporting on collaboration and indicators can be used to generate evidence about collaboration implementation and success.

Introduction

This document provides guidance for United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Missions on measuring and monitoring multi-sectoral nutrition (MSN) collaboration among organizations and partners (see Box 1). The guidance may also be of use to implementing partners (IPs) aiming to improve measurement and monitoring of collaboration or assess collaboration as part of an evaluation. The guidance provides an overview of key considerations specifically for measuring and monitoring collaboration—but does not provide comprehensive guidance on activity measurement and monitoring.

We developed this guidance based on a literature review and consultations with USAID staff. For the literature review, we selected search terms to identify peer-reviewed literature related to measurement, monitoring, and evaluation of collaboration across sectors integral for achieving nutritional outcomes. We identified 905 results using these search terms in Google Scholar. When we screened the results, 32 met our inclusion criteria¹ and were thus included in the full review. We identified other articles through snowballing and obtained grey literature by searching the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse and soliciting resources from USAID. We completed consultations with 11 Mission staff working in Missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Senegal (i.e., the Sahel Regional Office), Uganda, Nepal, and Rwanda. These staff were recommended to us by USAID/Washington based on the Missions' work to monitor and improve MSN collaboration.

Multi-sectoral nutrition activities, as referenced in this document, are any activity that implement interventions with nutrition objectives either in multiple MSN sectors on its own or in collaboration with other activities. These interventions may fall under one or multiple sectors that contribute to nutrition outcomes, as defined by the *USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025*, including health, agriculture, environment, early child care and development, education, economic growth, social protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) (USAID 2014). It is not necessary for an intervention to have funding streams from multiple USAID Bureaus or offices to count as multi-sectoral.

In this document, we first define collaboration and why it is useful to measure and monitor. Next, we present a framework for identifying the type of collaboration best suited to your objectives and a Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) tool for monitoring the level or extent of collaboration. Then, we outline considerations related to planning for measuring and monitoring collaboration. Finally, we provide more detailed guidance on how to measure and monitor collaboration throughout the USAID Program Cycle and provide illustrative indicator examples.

What is Collaboration?

Collaboration can take many forms. This guidance focuses on collaboration among organizations. Inter-organizational collaboration can be described as two or more organizations that have continuing commitments to working together toward common social objectives (Greenwald and Zukoski 2018).

Definitions of collaboration are variable and context dependent. Collaboration can be seen as the cooperative way that two or more entities work together toward a shared goal, involving teamwork, communication, and consideration. In the simplest terms, collaboration is defined as a variety of parties coming together to reach a shared goal (Frey et al. 2006). Specifically, collaboration is the process of multiple stakeholders sharing resources and working together toward the achievement of a common goal (Mayer and Kenter 2016). Shared resources may be data, information, knowledge, perceptions, or concepts when organizations are working together toward a common purpose, to achieve that purpose

¹ Included results that meet the following three criteria: (1) on collaboration between *organizations* (excluded within organizations or between individuals); (2) about measuring or assessing collaboration (excluded those primarily about the impacts/effectiveness of collaboration, factors that facilitate/inhibit collaboration, or ways to collaborate); and (3) non-sector specific or multi-sectoral nutrition sectors as defined in *USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025*—nutrition, health, agriculture, WASH, environment, early childhood development, education, economic growth, and social protection (excluded other sectors like manufacturing, research and development, research, legal) (USAID 2014).

efficiently or effectively (Alberts et al. 2001). The lens through which collaboration is viewed changes depending on the type of organizations engaging in collaborative work, and the intended outcome(s).

In the context of this guidance, collaboration should be viewed as two or more organizations that have specific roles, perform interdependent tasks involving communication and leadership, and share the common goal of increased efficiency of resource use and program success (adapted from Rinkus et al. 2015 and Karam et al. 2016).

Why Measure and Monitor Collaboration?

Measuring and monitoring collaboration is a way to help strengthen the implementation and effectiveness of collaboration as part of a broader CLA strategy. The *USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025* highlights the need for collaboration for nutrition:

A dynamic and diverse global nutrition community is working towards a vision bigger than what any one organization or sector can achieve alone ... Enhanced coordination and collaboration is critical to optimize synergies, increase resource availability and impact, and promote knowledge sharing and learning, which together will result in more effective global efforts to improve nutrition. (USAID 2014:29).

Collaboration is especially important in nutrition work, as it is a multi-sectoral discipline requiring partnership and cooperation across sectors. MSN depends on successful nutrition-sensitive and -specific interventions, which necessitate effective collaboration among sectors and partners to achieve the desired results. Successful implementation of MSN interventions requires consideration of health, agriculture, economic development, gender, early childhood development, and WASH, among others.

A 2016 Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) assessment of MSN coordination and collaboration found that partners typically did not have specific objectives or metrics related to collaboration. The assessment recommended that IPs measure collaboration to—

- help prioritize collaboration
- improve accountability for collaboration
- monitor if collaboration is on track and determine needed adaptations
- gain recognition from USAID for collaboration.

Our consultation with USAID/Uganda emphasized that one benefit of measuring collaboration is the incentive it creates; partners collaborate when it amplifies their results and when improved activity performance gains can be seen through indicators.

Box 1. Organizational collaboration is...

Collaboration can be viewed as two or more organizations that have specific roles, perform interdependent tasks involving communication and leadership, and share the common goal of increased efficiency of resource use and program success (adapted from Rinkus et al. 2015 and Karam et al. 2016).

Collaboration Framework

In this guidance, we refer to “collaboration” generally, as an all-encompassing term. However, we specify **five distinct types of collaboration, all of which are equally valuable** (see figure 1). USAID and IPs should consider which type of collaboration is intended and most likely to be effective given the specific country context, length and goal of the activity, and intended outcomes. Some work may require intentional networking or cooperation to achieve the desired results, while others may call for greater communication, resource sharing, and joint decision making, as seen in other collaboration types.

Figure 1. Types of Collaboration

Type of Collaboration	Description	Examples
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loosely defined roles infrequent communication decisions made by organizations independently. 	Quarterly Mission MSN portfolio reviews
Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide information to each other somewhat defined roles formal communication decisions made by organizations independently. 	Quarterly meetings between MSN activities at district or national level
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defined roles; share information and resources; frequent communication some shared decision making some mutual investment of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An activity is funded by the Health Office and Economic Growth Office, with nutrition representatives from both offices frequently communicating, conducting joint site visits, etc. MSN activities are co-located in the same district and co-sponsor some public events
Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> share ideas and resources frequent and prioritized communication partners have input in other organizations’ decision making some mutual investment of resources. 	Annual work planning is discussed to develop complementary interventions but not carried out through a joint process.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistent communication characterized by mutual trust joint decision-making and budgeting resource sharing is systematically incorporated in activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> joint annual work planning report on common indicators activity staff seconded with a partner joint implementation or co-funding of some activities interventions target some of the same beneficiaries

Sources: Thompson, Perry, and Miller 2007; Noonan et al. 2012; Quinn et al. 2014; Moshtari 2016; SPRING 2016

Each type of collaboration can be viewed and utilized independently or sequentially, with one type serving as a building block for further collaboration over time. In many cases, it will be useful to first identify the specific type of collaboration desired, and then work on defining roles and responsibilities, communication practices, collaboration strategies, and resource requirements that best fit.

Collaboration requires intentional planning, time, and resources. Therefore, it is critical that Missions **determine the type of collaboration needed to achieve their intended objectives and invest appropriately**. This both ensures that investments in collaboration are sufficient to be effective—and that collaboration goals and investments are not more intensive than required. Specifying the type of collaboration needed can also make it easier to identify which collaborative practices are working well and which are falling short.

The framework can be used to set reasonable and achievable goals for beginning or improving collaborative work. If collaboration is not currently prioritized, the Mission can view the framework sequentially, and set a goal to implement practices of networking or cooperation by the end of the year, then coordination or coalition in subsequent years, ultimately building up to integration, when logical. In some cases, it may only be reasonable or necessary to aim for networking or cooperation, without aspiring toward other types of collaboration.

Certain types of collaboration may be more or less achievable based on who is collaborating. For instance, for two teams within a Mission, it may be quick and relatively straightforward to improve communication and integrate decision-making practices. Collaboration may be more complicated for several IPs if it is not already part of the activity design. Inter-organizational collaboration between IPs requires aligning goals, building trust via communication and decision making, and resource allocations, so it may be more realistic to aim for coordination in the short term, and build up to integration as a longer-term goal (if appropriate).

Alternatively, the USAID CLA Maturity Tool² presents another way that Missions or IPs can reflect on and categorize the level of collaboration that exists or is aimed for in a certain time period. This tool can be used to reflect on how collaboration practices change over time and the definitions can be adapted to align with the collaboration type (see figure 1) the activity aims to engage in.

- **Emergent:** Ad hoc collaboration, or collaborative work occurs without an intentional or systematic process. Work in this level is siloed, lacking the communication or trust necessary to more sustainable, long-term collaboration; partners are informed of USAID or IP plans, but not involved in decision making.
- **Expanding:** Teams sometimes work with other offices or teams within the same Mission or multiple IPs may work together. However, this collaboration is characterized by information exchange. No joint work planning or decision making occurs. The Mission, IPs, or host government counterparts may work together under specific agreements, but stakeholder involvement is limited to consultations or information gathering to inform decisions.
- **Advanced:** Strategic identification of specific teams, offices, or partners aims for the greatest impact on planning and implementation. The Mission or IPs make decisions about what form collaboration should take to increase synergies and collaborate accordingly.
- **Institutionalized:** Missions or IPs consistently and systematically implement practices such as using stakeholder analysis to identify and prioritize stakeholders and make decisions about which form collaboration should take to increase synergies. Strategic collaboration is resourced and is consistently and systemically implemented based on those decisions (LEARN 2017).

² USAID CLA Maturity Tool resource: <https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/cla-maturity-tool-facilitator-resources>.

Planning for Measuring and Monitoring Collaboration

When planning and implementing measurement and monitoring of collaboration, Missions and IPs should: (1) determine collaboration objectives, and (2) identify opportunities to measure and monitor collaboration. We discuss each in detail below.

Determine Collaboration Objectives

MSN activities often depend on collaboration in the short-, medium-, and long-term for efficient programming with measurable outcomes. **In the short-term**, collaboration is important when planning MSN activities to ensure that activities have the necessary funding and dedicated staff to be successful. Collaboration can be more challenging when sufficient time, attention, and resources are not given to the necessary communication, decision making, and work planning, so incorporating collaborative work into the planning process for activities and having specific collaboration objectives is key. Both the collaboration framework and maturity levels of collaboration, outlined in the previous section, can be used to identify specific collaboration objectives. These objectives should be reflected in the activity theory of change or results framework so that the role of collaboration in the activity and expected contributions are clear. This will provide an important foundation to determine what, when, and how to monitor collaboration.

In the medium- and long-term, collaboration can improve efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of MSN activities. When a Mission collaborates internally or IPs are intentional about collaborating throughout an activity, work can be done more effectively and efficiently. Collaboration is key given the complexity and multi-sectoral nature of nutrition work. USAID/DRC underscored this during our consultation; much of the nutrition work is done by emergency actors and humanitarian organizations intervening with lifesaving nutrition interventions. Prevention and system strengthening work is often lacking, so collaboration is key to ensuring sustainability of interventions. In the long term, intentional collaboration between key sectors of nutrition can lead to efficiencies in implementation and contribute to improved nutrition outcomes. For example, the Community Health and Improved Nutrition (CHAIN) project in Rwanda focused on increasing collaboration among the Mission and IPs working on MSN. This allowed new households to be reached in the distribution of iron-rich beans, due to the number of activities taken on collaboratively at the district level (see Box 2).

Examining each type of collaboration as a collection of smaller components helps prioritize what is needed and clarify where collaborative work can be improved compared with where it is already successful. Viewing collaboration as an indeterminate, big-picture concept gives the impression that it exists as a binary; either partners are collaborating or not. However, **collaboration is the sum of many routine practices** that partners may not consider critically or with intentionality. Clarifying the important components of collaboration allows each partner to refine their collaborative practices to create more effective and efficient nutrition programming. USAID/Sahel Regional Office stressed that collaboration works best when—

- It is intentional.
- You have a clear agenda.
- Clear outcomes and goals exist.
- Actors understand that collaborative work takes time.
- Time and funding is allocated to ensure success.

Box 2. CHAIN Project Example

The USAID Community Health and Improved Nutrition (CHAIN) Project in Rwanda was a \$122 million project implemented between 2014 and 2019. The project was made up of nutrition-specific and -sensitive activities. The project was managed by USAID/Rwanda Health Office and included activities from the Health, Economic Growth, and Economic Offices. The project implemented a collaboration model with the aim that increased collaboration will help activities meet their objectives, reduce costs through increased efficiency, and strengthen alignment and coherence between activities (David et al. 2018).

According to the Mission consultation, they reported that the Mission established and ran a coordination structure, including a coordination manager and project management team to run the coordination and collaboration efforts. At the district level, each year an IP nominated someone to serve as the district manager to support coordination and ensure accountability and ownership. The Mission also helped support coordination by creating a budget line item for collaboration given the time required to collaborate effectively. The Mission developed several indicators to monitor collaboration and the outcomes of collaboration:

- Increased reach indicator:
Number of new beneficiaries reached, due to collaboration (Definition: Beneficiaries from one CHAIN partner are successfully referred to and incorporated into the program of another partner).
- Increased quality collaboration indicators:
Number of beneficiaries receiving an expanded package of services, due to collaboration (Definition: Service quality is improved when a CHAIN partner's service is expanded by including inputs from another partner).
Changed or adapted your service on the basis of learning from another partner (Definition: IP makes a change to implementation based on learning from another CHAIN IP.)
- Collective action collaboration indicator:
Number of joint activities undertaken by CHAIN Partners at District Level (Definition: Joint site visits, training, district open days, BCC campaigns, and other non-meeting events can be reported here)
- Collaboration indicator:
Money saved due to CHAIN IPs collaboration (Definition: This indicator tracks how much money and resources saved due to the CHAIN IPs collaboration. For example, conduct one training with CHAIN IPs together where possible instead of having each IP conduct its own training. Here they will share the resources. Please include amount of money and the joint activity)

The Mission collected this data through a quarterly online survey sent to IPs. They then shared the data back with IPs which helped to encourage IPs to continue to improve coordination.

The mid-term project evaluation found that collaboration between health and agriculture activities helped the activities expand their reach and exceed their targets. Collaboration also helped economic growth activities to scale up more quickly and increase their coverage (David et al. 2018).

Many of the Missions we consulted reported strong communication between health and agriculture teams on MSN activities, but less involvement with education, maternal and child health, or other relevant sectors. Considering the level of communication or joint decision making, clarifies where gaps exist, and how they can be addressed to further nutrition progress.

In some instances, if only one sector drives decision-making, it is likely to undermine MSN collaboration, and, potentially, the ultimate nutrition outcomes. For example, decision-making led by a health team, without input from their colleagues in agriculture, may not be successful in improving nutrition outcomes if food security or food system barriers are not addressed. Investment of resources is a similarly key component of collaboration. USAID/Nepal noted that funding limitations often pose the greatest challenge to collaboration. Greater collaboration among offices and partners is an essential function of meeting the resource needs to execute MSN programming. Missions should examine which sectors and partners are contributing resources (financial and human) to identify opportunities for other sectors or partners to contribute in these areas. This assessment may also identify a sector or partner that is contributing financially to a MSN activity without holding joint decision-making power, which may highlight an opportunity for increased collaboration.

It is critical that Missions and IPs determine the specific goals of collaboration with MSN activities, then identify the type of collaboration required to achieve those goals to target collaboration efforts effectively and efficiently. To do this—

- Determine into which type or maturity level current collaboration practices best fit.
- Discuss whether that type or level of collaboration is achieving intended objectives and whether and how collaboration needs to be strengthened.
- Consider where there are opportunities to increase interaction and institutionalize collaborative practices where appropriate, depending on the intended type or level of collaboration. This might look like an increase in communication, an increase in shared resources and funding, or even a seconded staff member depending on the intended type of collaboration.
- Plan for how to implement, sufficiently resource, and measure and monitor that collaboration.

Identify Opportunities to Measure and Monitor Collaboration

Indicators can be a helpful tool in encouraging collaboration, but it is important to determine where incorporation of measurement for collaboration is most effective and efficient. Additional indicators will increase the workload of those involved in the collaboration. Be intentional about how many indicators to include and what those indicators are measuring. These data can be used to monitor activity performance and in adaptive management³ to guide decision making about collaborative work moving forward. For example, if the intention is for offices, or IPs to be engaged in “coordination,” indicators can provide information on whether the frequency and quality of their communication rises to that level or if it aligns more with practices associated with “networking.” If current practices are not in line with the intended type of collaboration, steps can be taken to improve communication, joint decision-making, and information or resource sharing to reach the intended level. Missions and IPs should consider what type of information they will need to make adaptive management decisions to ensure that the indicators provide useful information.

Measurement of collaboration can be done at the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), project, or activity level. At the CDCS or project level, collaboration monitoring can show the extent to which offices collaborate and the extent to which that collaboration creates synergies between activities and contributes to overall nutrition results. At the activity level, IPs

³ Adaptive management is defined in ADS 201.6 as “an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context” (USAID 2021:128).

can include collaboration indicators and reporting as part of their performance management plans or CLA plans. This can allow Missions to learn about the collaborative approaches used by IPs and the outcomes of the collaborations.

Activity-level indicators can be used to monitor collaboration at the CDCS or project level if more than one IP reports on the same indicator(s) and can be manageable for Missions to monitor. Activity-level indicators generate specific information related to IP implementation and performance that can be used for adaptive management. Measuring collaboration can also be part of activity process, performance, or impact evaluations to understand how collaboration was implemented and how efficient or effective it was. This measurement should align with the role that collaboration plays in the activity theory of change or results framework.

Consider feasibility when determining how and when to measure collaboration and to ensure that the investment in measurement aligns with the investment in collaboration and the collaboration goals. Just as not all collaboration relationships need to be “coalition” or “integration,” measurement of collaboration need not be intensive. Indicators should be used that are feasible for Missions and IPs to use given available resources and collaboration timeframes.

Measuring and Monitoring Collaboration Throughout the Program Cycle

This guide presents key considerations for measuring and monitoring collaboration at different points in the USAID Program Cycle (see figure 2). Standard best practices for measurement and monitoring apply and should be used when measuring and monitoring collaboration. Below, we discuss monitoring and measuring collaboration during country/regional strategic planning, project and activity design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. For each stage, we outline purposes and considerations for measuring and monitoring collaboration. We also present illustrative examples of indicators that Missions or IPs can use to measure and monitor collaboration, although they may not necessarily be applicable for all types of collaboration.

Country/Regional Strategic Planning

The purpose of measuring collaboration at this stage of the cycle is to allow Missions to monitor collaboration needed to achieve goals and results in the CDCS results framework. Missions can develop

indicators and establish targets to monitor collaboration progress as part of the CDCS and understand how it may or may not be contributing to intended results. For example, USAID/Uganda articulated collaboration as part of their strategy to achieve results in their 2016–2021 CDCS. They identified different levels of collaboration and integration that could be used and corridors where there was potential for high intensity collaboration and integration districts or corridors (USAID 2016). Staff reported developing specific goals for collaboration and monitoring collaboration across the portfolio through quarterly nutrition partner meetings. However, without portfolio-wide collaboration indicators, they found it challenging to distill collaboration for internal reporting.

Collaboration indicators may focus on collaboration across offices in the Mission or across activities (see table 1). While current official USAID reporting systems do not require reporting of indicators on MSN collaboration, these indicators can also help Missions think through, plan for, and more easily articulate collaboration that is happening on MSN across the Mission. Missions can collect these data themselves or require activities to report on common indicators for aggregation, and review them, for example during mission portfolio reviews or internal MSN working group meetings.

Figure 2. USAID Program Cycle



Source: LEARN n.d.

Table I. Collaboration Indicators for Country/Regional Strategic Planning

Indicator	Data Source	Frequency	Disaggregation
Number of nutrition activities with funding from two or more funding streams	USAID reporting	Annually	Geography, target population (e.g., children under 2, pregnant and lactating women, adolescents)
Number of joint MSN reviews or assessments between offices	USAID reporting	Annually	Offices (e.g., Health, Economic Growth)
Number of co-located activities that implement at least one type of intervention with nutrition objectives	IP reporting	Annually	Geography, MSN activity type (e.g., dietary diversity, breastfeeding, complementary feeding, WASH)
Number of activities that collaborate on MSN	IP reporting	Quarterly or annually	MSN activity type (e.g., dietary diversity, breastfeeding, complementary feeding, WASH), target population (e.g., children under 2, pregnant and lactating women, adolescents)

Project and Activity Design and Implementation

The purpose of measuring and monitoring collaboration at these stages is to monitor and adapt collaborations to support achievement of specific project or activity results. Indicators should relate to the specific types of collaboration needed to achieve the intended results, whether that collaboration is intended to take place between activities, or between IPs and host country government, civil society, or private sector actors.

A range of types of standard or custom indicators may be appropriate (see table 2). **Input or output indicators can be used to monitor the implementation of collaboration, while outcome indicators can be used to monitor the benefits of collaboration.** A combination of indicators can be useful to monitor intermediate steps required to achieve collaboration as well as longer-term collaboration outputs or outcomes. For instance, for USAID CHAIN in Rwanda, the Mission used a quarterly online survey to collect data from CHAIN IPs on their collaboration, including outputs such as the number of joint interventions implemented and outcomes such as the amount of money saved due to collaboration (determined through IP records). Activities may also report on the same MSN outcome or impact indicators, such as the prevalence of children 6–23 months receiving a minimum acceptable diet, to understand which activities are contributing to common results in specific locations.

In addition to reporting on indicators, it is useful for activities to provide a narrative description of collaboration as a standard section in quarterly and annual reports, including information about the specific purpose of collaboration, how they collaborated, the results of that collaboration, challenges faced, and how it can be improved. During Mission consultations, reporting on collaboration through annual or quarterly reports was most common. However, it was challenging for USAID to monitor collaboration and synthesize information about collaboration from these reports for Mission reporting.

Table 2. Collaboration Indicators for Project Design and Implementation

Indicator*	Data Source	Frequency	Disaggregation
Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of U.S. Government assistance (standard foreign assistance indicator EG 3.2.-5)	IP reporting	Quarterly or annually	Partnership focus
Number of MSN activities uploading documents or data to knowledge management or CLA platforms	IP reporting	Quarterly	None
Number of functioning MSN-focused CLA working groups or platforms	IP reporting	Annually	Geography
Number of joint interventions or events implemented by MSN activities	IP reporting	Quarterly	Geography, MSN activity type (e.g., dietary diversity, breastfeeding, complementary feeding, WASH)
Number of new individuals or households reached, due to collaboration	IP reporting	Quarterly	Geography, age, sex
Number of individuals or households receiving an expanded package of services, due to collaboration	IP reporting	Quarterly	Geography, age, sex
Cost savings due to collaboration	IP reporting	Quarterly	None

*Indicator EG 3.2.-5 is a standard USAID indicator; the remaining are examples of custom indicators.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring and monitoring collaboration should ideally be included in project- or activity-level monitoring and evaluation or performance management plans. Including collaboration indicators in projects and/or activities can help ensure that IPs set clear expectations and targets related to collaboration, IPs are held accountable for collaboration, that collaboration is sufficiently resourced, and achieves its intended results. For example, the Sahel Resilience Learning (SAREL) project provided monitoring, evaluation, collaboration and learning support to the USAID Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) initiative. As part of the project, SAREL developed indicators to monitor collaboration and learning between RISE IPs, including the number of collaborative initiatives implemented and the number of functioning CLA platforms (SAREL Project 2018).

Collaboration can be measured as part of project- or activity-level process, performance, or impact evaluations to understand how collaboration was implemented and how efficient or effective it was. Collaboration can be included in evaluation questions if collaboration was part of the activity theory of change or results framework. Collaboration can be assessed to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the approach to collaboration, efficiencies or cost savings resulting from collaboration, and how collaboration contributed to observed results. For example, a mid-term, project-

wide performance evaluation of the CHAIN project included two evaluation questions related to collaboration that were answered using qualitative methods:

- How have the coordination and collaboration approaches developed under CHAIN contributed to the achievement of activity-level and project-level results? How could these approaches be refined/improved in future projects?
- How have the different CHAIN collaboration hypotheses been borne out in implementation and what type of evolution is visible in the CHAIN collaboration ecosystem over time?

USAID/Rwanda shared that the mid-term evaluation prompted changes in their collaboration monitoring, including setting targets for collaboration and collecting data on collaboration indicators through an online survey with IPs.

Evaluations may want to measure multi-faceted collaboration indicators or metrics to assess the quality of collaborations and how that influences their effectiveness or efficiency.

Through the literature review, we identified collaboration measures that have been developed and used to assess the level and quality of inter-organizational collaboration. Typically, these measures assess partners’ perception of how a collaboration is functioning. While these types of measures can indicate the perceived quality of collaboration, such as leadership and communication quality, they rely on partners’ subjective self-reporting. Measures may also assess the extent of collaboration, which is based on partners’ self-reported outputs of collaboration, such as where they have committed resources to a common goal or have co-implemented activities (Greenwald and Zukoski 2018). While these indicators have been used for project evaluations, few have been used in international development contexts.

In table 3, we outline several collaboration indicators that we think can be applied or tested for MSN activities implemented in low- and middle-income countries. Only the inter-organizational collaboration measure was adapted for use by and tested with international humanitarian organizations. While these indicators are likely most appropriate for evaluations, they may also be used as monitoring indicators on a quarterly or annual basis.

Table 3. Collaboration Measures for Monitoring and Evaluation

Measure	Description	Method	When/Why to Use	Resources
Extent of collaboration	Assesses 21 items using Likert scale questions across 5 domains related to collaboration implementation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. activity 2. communication 3. information 4. resources 5. policy/advocacy 	Structured survey of partners	Focuses on collaboration and organization actions rather than member perceptions or satisfaction.	Greenwald and Zukoski 2018
Levels of collaboration	Participants rate their collaboration with other partners on a scale from zero to five: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no interaction at all 2. networking 3. cooperation 	Structured survey of partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rapid measure to rate the level of collaboration. ● Useful to assess the level of collaboration 	Frey et al. 2006

Measure	Description	Method	When/Why to Use	Resources
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. coordination 5. coalition 6. collaboration 		between several partners.	
Inter-organizational collaboration	<p>Assesses 33 items using Likert scale questions across 8 domains to assess factors that may affect collaboration and collaboration performance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. collaborative performance 2. mutual trust 3. reciprocal commitment 4. compatibility 5. resource complementarity 6. relationship management capability 7. temporal orientation 8. interdependency 	Structured survey of partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detailed measure to assess collaboration performance and influencing factors. ● Developed for and tested with international humanitarian organizations. 	Moshtari 2016
Collaboration factors inventory	44 questions that assesses 22 factors related to how well a collaborative process is working.	Structured survey of partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detailed measure to assess a range of factors that affect collaboration. ● Free online survey tool exists that summarizes the score for each factor. 	Amherst H. Wilder Foundation 2021
Collaboration success	<p>Assess 3 items of collaboration success:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. satisfaction with cooperation 2. perceived learning effects 3. perceived implementation capacity 	Structured survey of partners	Rapid measure to assess success of collaboration at a high level.	Schmid, Knierim, and Knuth 2016
Collaboration Evaluation and Improvement Framework	Five phase, mixed method approach to evaluating organizational collaboration.	Mixed methods data collection	Comprehensive evaluation approach that can be applied over the life of the project.	Woodland and Hutton 2012

Conclusion

Collaboration is imperative to achieve the short-, medium-, and long-term goals of MSN activities. Measuring and monitoring collaboration is a way to help strengthen the implementation and effectiveness of collaboration as part of a broader CLA strategy.

Measurement and monitoring efforts should align with the goals of collaboration. The five types of collaboration identified in this document can be utilized to inform adaptive management, but this guidance is intended to be used flexibly to improve collaboration at any stage. The type and goals of the collaboration will influence which parts of this guidance are most important or relevant. The type and goals of collaboration should also influence the types of reporting or indicators on collaboration that are used to ensure that they can inform adaptive management.

By engaging in, measuring, and monitoring focused, intentional collaboration, partners utilizing this guidance can strengthen their multi-sectoral nutrition work and more effectively achieve their intended outcomes. Measuring and monitoring collaboration also serves to hold partners accountable throughout the collaboration process. Beyond supporting collaboration implementation and accountability, measuring and monitoring collaboration can contribute to broader learning about the types of collaboration that are needed to most effectively and efficiently achieve multi-sectoral nutrition outcomes.

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