MAALTAABA PEASANT WOMEN FARMERS COOPERATIVE (MAALTAABA)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION MANUAL

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Content   Page

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) have become a key priority for many initiatives or organizations towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recently, there have been several advancements made in tracking results and assessing impacts of development initiatives including participatory monitoring, results-based measurement approaches to measure progress and program impact adequately and effectively.

1.1: Background of Maaltaaba

Maaltaaba Peasant Women Farmers' Cooperative (Maaltaaba) is an association established in January 2015 by all women peasant farmers to improve their productivity and household incomes through sustainable (organic) agriculture, environmental conservation practices and proper agri-business and marketing to overcome discrimination, abuse, and marginalization. The association is comprised of more than 10 groups with averagely 30 members per group and a total membership of 1,250 women with most of them being widows and single mothers who have no formal education or are school drop-outs and suffered discrimination, marginalization and poverty over the years. Maaltaaba serves her members in communities within the Talensi, Nabdam, and Bongo Districts of the Upper East Region.

Maaltaaba partners with communities and organizations to improve the quality of life of its members and communities through a range of core programming areas including Sustainable Agriculture, Climate Change and Livelihoods; Women's Rights and Dignity; and Access to financial services. Maaltaaba acknowledges that by enhancing the board members, staff and volunteers' capacities in project monitoring and evaluation, present programming in each of these major areas may be reinforced.

1.2: Purpose of the Monitoring and Evaluation Manual

Maaltaaba aims to improve program by incorporating a monitoring and evaluation component to accomplish programming goals more effectively. Enhancing Maaltaaba's capacity to create efficient M&E systems will improve program management and design, and guarantee that new projects incorporate strong monitoring and evaluation to effectively manage results.

This manual focuses on presenting a mechanism which helps in tracking and reporting performance against activity milestones, output, outcome, and impact indicators. It also aims at harmonizing the key lessons from the implementation processes, impact assessment and program reviews to inform evidence-based program design and implementation. It is primarily built on the participatory approach of monitoring and evaluation while focusing on the results achieved including the intermediate and long-term outcomes and the impact. The manual further serves as a guide to improve understanding of monitoring and evaluation in general and increase competency in key aspects of practicing monitoring and evaluation in the field.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Manual has the following objectives:
   a. To institutionalize monitoring and evaluation within Maaltaaba.

b. To guide the Board, Staff and Volunteers in monitoring and evaluating projects, and in reporting and communicating on the outputs and outcomes
c. To facilitate harmonized reporting, in a way that meets the requirements of the different funding partners, and donors while being in compliance with the Maaltaaba needs.

The Manual specifically introduces the fundamental concepts and components of monitoring and evaluation and basic components of an effective M&E system. It further offers guidance for the adaption of each component to local programming contexts and provides key considerations for the development of appropriate M&E tools within the primary sectors in which Maaltaaba works. Ultimately, the manual is intended to contribute to the learning environment within Maaltaaba by describing the ways in which a comprehensive M&E system can be consistently used to inform problem analysis, program design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of evaluation findings.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION - MAALTAABA

2.1 WHY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are critical components of any successful project or program implementation. They provide essential feedback and evidence-based information that can guide decision-making, improve performance, and enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of projects. Without an effective monitoring and evaluation, determining whether the expected results are being achieved as planned, what corrective measures may be needed to ensure expected results are delivered, and whether initiatives are making positive contributions towards overall goal, would be challenging. The need to account for and understand the realization of expected results as well as the providing a fact base to inform corrective decision-making drives monitoring and evaluation. They provide opportunities to validate projects and programs' logic, its activities, and their implementation and to make needed modifications. As management tools, monitoring and evaluation is very key in supporting Maaltaaba in its commitment to accountability for results, resources, and organizational learning. Monitoring should answer key questions including the following:

a. Expected Results: Are the expected outputs being achieved efficiently as planned?
b. Risks and challenges: What issues, including risks and challenges are being faced or forecasted need to be considered to ensure results are realized?
c. Decisions: What are the decisions that need to be made regarding changes to planned work in subsequent stages?
d. Relevance: Will the expected, and outputs, produced continue to be relevant for achieving anticipated outcomes? Are the remaining predicted outcomes relevant and effective for the achievement the overall goals and impacts?
e. Learnings: Are there any learnings? What are they?

Monitoring Criteria

For effective results-based monitoring and to ensure evaluability, indicators should be formulated using SMART criteria (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound):

a. Specific: The indicator is sufficiently clear as to what is being measured and specific enough to measure progress towards a result.

b. Measurable: The indicator is a reliable measure and is objectively verifiable. Qualitative measures should ideally be translated into some numeric form.

c. Attainable: The indicator can be realistically met.

d. Relevant: The indicator captures what is being measured (i.e. it is relevant to the activity/result).

e. Time-bound: The indicator is expected to be achieved within a defined period.

2.2 PLANNING FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation provide required information for effective and real-time decision making. To ensure the success of this, monitoring and evaluation needs to be well planned and thus, the planning must start together with the project or program design.

Monitoring gives managers real-time information on how programs or projects are being implemented whereas evaluation offers more thorough analyses. The process of monitoring may generate questions which evaluation will address. Evaluation also relies on a significant portion of the data generated from monitoring. Hence, in planning for monitoring, evaluation must be taken into consideration.

2.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework is an important tool that helps to operationalize the implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation activities of projects and programs. It explains how the program is supposed to work by laying out the components of the project or program and the order or the steps needed to achieve the desired results. It is important to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for every project or program which will guide how outputs, outcomes and results should be monitored and evaluated. When developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, it is important to incorporate all relevant stakeholders who not only understand the Project or program but also can contribute to its implementation. At the end of the planning stage, it is imperative to have a clear monitoring and evaluation framework, agreed among the key stakeholders carry out monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation framework should clarify the following:

- What is to be monitored and evaluated and the activities needed to carry out the monitoring and evaluation.
- Persons responsible: Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the activities.
- Timeline: When planned monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out.

- Methods or approaches: How monitoring and evaluation are carried out.
- Resources: What resources are required and where they are committed
- Risks and assumptions: Anticipated risks and assumptions in carrying out planned monitoring and evaluation activities should be considered.

Key components of the monitoring and evaluation framework:

1. The narrative component: This describes how assigned monitoring and evaluation, and the accountabilities would be carried out. Narrative component needs to reflect plans that may be in place to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities, and an estimation of the resources (financial, human, and material resource) required for implementation.
2. Results framework: The Results Framework is a diagram of the cause-and-effect logic for achieving a development objective over a defined period. It uses causal logic, (that is if lower-level results are achieved, then the next higher-level result can be achieved, if the critical assumptions hold; and should be prepared in the planning stage as described.
3. Planning matrix. The planning matrix is a strategic template developed to guide specific monitoring and evaluation actions. It provides details and consolidates the information required for monitoring and evaluation for easy reference. The planning matrix for monitoring could be used at the project or program level to determine the monitoring needs. Monitoring and Evaluation framework is key in projects and programs and therefore planning matrix should also be developed during the planning stages.

The monitoring and evaluation framework at the project level should flow from that of the program level and may well contain more detailed information on tasks that apply specifically to respective project The program-level monitoring and evaluation framework on the other hand builds upon the project-level frameworks. Throughout the course of the project and program cycles, monitoring and evaluation activities should be seen as an essential part of program and project management. Hence, they should be evaluated and updated on a regular basis, ideally once a year.

2.4 RESOURCES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness and quality of monitoring and evaluation largely depends on the timely availability and adequacy of resources. It is essential to provide sufficient funds and personnel during the planning phase. Hence, there is the need to include all financial and human resources required carrying out monitoring and evaluation throughout the project or program cycle at the planning stage.

Financial resources should be realistically estimated during the planning stage. Resources for the respective monitoring and evaluation functions should be clearly separated with a budget line each thereby reducing the possibility of running out of resources for evaluation which is mostly carried out at the end of the project or program implementation or outside the implementation cycle. Maaltaaba's financial mechanisms for securing financial resources for monitoring and evaluation is from donors through project funds or grants. There is therefore the need to consider the resources needed for monitoring and evaluation during grant applications.

Human resources are a driving force for effective monitoring and evaluation which includes dedicated staff and skilled personnel. Due to Maaltaaba's staff strength, the organization has skilled staff entrusted with monitoring and would need some technical expertise in the area to perform some high-level monitoring and evaluation functions. Maaltaaba also engages the services of consultants to provide expertise in some key monitoring and evaluation functions. Consultants should have Terms of Reference clearly outlining their roles and responsibilities.

2.5 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Effective stakeholder engagement is very key in achieving set objectives for monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholder participation throughout monitoring and evaluation stages ensures ownership, results, and sustainability of the results. Stakeholder participation must be institutionalized to ensure continued participation. It is necessary to incorporate specific measures into project and program management procedures to ensure stakeholders continued and effective participation.

Stakeholders of Maaltaaba include the Board Members, Traditional Authorities within the at the regional level, district, and communities of operation – Chiefs, Women Leaders and Landlords; Institutions – MOFA, District Assemblies and CSOs – Trax Ghana, Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana, NURU Ghana, Partners and Donors; and Beneficiary groups – Single Mothers, Teenage Mothers, Widows and Persons Living with Disabilities.

2.6 HOW MAALTAABA ENGAGES STAKEHOLDERS

Board members are engaged through board meetings. The Board meets at least once a year to review annual progress of results and the organization, agree on any changes as required, and set new annual targets.

Annual Reviews - Key stakeholders (including Partners, institutions, Traditional Authorities, beneficiary groups, etc.) contributing significantly to projects or programs are engaged through annual review meeting to review the outcomes of the project or program and provide feedback for subsequent planning. Annual review meetings promote partnerships bringing together all projects contributing to key outcomes. It ensures synergy and reinforces a common strategy towards results and monitoring the achievement of outcomes.

Project Design: Key stakeholders are engaged during project design stage in setting the vision and the prioritization project results to be realized. They share the best ideas on how the results would continue to remain relevant to them. They are involved in identifying the information or feedback that is needed during implementation, which determines the parameters for monitoring and evaluation.

Reports: Stakeholders are further engaged through project reports at various levels including written reports and verbal reports (presentation).

Site visits – Stakeholders are involved in gathering key information needed during implementation. Depending on the level of monitoring and the outcome being monitored, they either take part in the data collection or provide information as respondents.

3.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION CONTEXT

3.1 POLICY AND OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

As a growing organization, Maaltaaba aims for results that are locally owned, defined and achieved through a broad stakeholders' engagement and accountable; and hence requires a robust, continuous, and effective monitoring system through effective policies, tools, processes.

Maaltaaba is responsible for monitoring its contribution towards projects and programs expected outcomes by ensuring that outputs being generated are contributing towards expected outcomes. Each project therefore should produce the expected outputs in an efficient manner in line with its strategic plan and respective annual workplan. Monitoring the proper use of resources at all levels is crucial at all levels.

Programs and projects decisions should be based on facts and evidence, hence, the need to capture lessons learned systematically for knowledge and improving future projects or programs.

The key reference for monitoring is the project and programs monitoring and evaluation framework. The results frameworks should clearly indicate what is to be monitored. The results frameworks should indicate the selected zonal/area, district, and regional results towards which the project or program is contributing, including outcomes and their associated outputs. The results frameworks should also give indicators, baseline and targets for each outcome and output.

3.2 LEVELS OF MONITORING

The project is the entity that uses inputs and resources and converts them to activities, outputs leading to outcomes and impacts. MAALTAABA shall carry out monitoring at the following levels:

a. ACTIVITY LEVEL
   Monitoring at the activity level focuses on the process in which key activities are delivered. This includes tracking the activity delivery processes, adherence to standards, the progress of activities leading to the delivery of outputs. The Project Manager is responsible for monitoring key activities and required provide support to Staff to ensure activities are well delivered in accordance with the project design leading to the generation of expected outputs.

b. OUTPUT LEVEL
   The immediate results from the implementation of the planned set of relevant and effective activities will be tracked at this level. It also involves tracking the proper use of

resources allocated for those activities. The monitoring and Evaluation Focal Point will be responsible for monitoring at this level.

c. OUTCOME LEVEL

Projects outputs are always connected directly to an outcome. The outcomes are realized through the generation of outputs through various activities. In some instances, an output may be connected to more than one outcome. Monitoring at a given outcome level requires a clear understanding of all outputs contributing to the outcome and how the sub-outcomes (*if any*) are connected to other levels of outcomes.

d. PROGRAM LEVEL

MAALTAABA shall carry out program level monitoring when a program fund supports several projects and outcomes. Program-level monitoring would entail oversight of all component projects; monitoring for each outcome that is being supported by the program funds; and Accountability of the program for donor, contribution to broader program results, and achieving the corporate outcomes in the Strategic Plan. The primary responsibility at the program level rests with the program manager.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION: MONITORING APPROACH AND TOOLS

A range of approaches and tools may be applied in carrying out monitoring at various levels (activity, outputs, outcome, and program levels). Project and program managers and M&E Focal person must determine the right mix of approaches and tools for conducting monitoring at each level in achieving the planned objective of the monitoring exercise.

a. **Document Review**

This entails obtaining and analysing documentation from projects that provides information on progress. Documents include field reports, M&E framework, Annual Work Plans, Progress and quarterly reports, Annual Project Report. Tools to be employed in document reviews include checklist, data extraction templates and data analysis templates.

b. **Site Visits**

Site visits are essential for conducting monitoring at all levels at MAALTAABA. This entails obtaining direct feedback from partners and beneficiaries to assess progress, results or problems of project through in-persons or face to face interaction mostly at the project site including spot checks. Beneficiaries or participants are engaged through interviews, Key informant interviews, questionnaire administration, Focus groups, Community Meetings, Rankings, Visual/audio stimuli, Ranking Scales, Critical event/incident Analysis, Participant observation and Self-drawings. Tools to be employed include questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion Guides, pictures, movies, tapes, stories, role plays, photographs, used to illustrate problems, issues, events (past or future events).

Site visits should be well planned to achieve optimum relevance and use. Therefore, the following should therefore be considered in planning for site visits.

a. **The purpose of the visit.** Site visits mostly serve the purpose of validation and therefore validates results reported by the projects and programs. It is imperative that the purpose of each site visit is defined and known to all participants.

b. **Timing.** Site visit can be scheduled during any time of the year depending on the project or program requirements. It could be focused on outcomes validation if it's done in the first half of the year, right after the annual review. The site visit, if conducted later in the year, ought to offer up-to-date details on the development of the annual and outcome review procedures. Site visit reports should be action-oriented and brief, submitted within a week of return to the Project or Program Manager or Executive Director *(depending on who is carrying out activity)* for consideration and any required action.

c. **Participants.** Site visits are joint monitoring efforts of several stakeholders working on projects targeting an outcome or result. However, depending on the type and purpose of the visit *(e.g., process or activity monitoring to observe and provide capacity support to staff)*, it could be carried out by an individual including the M&E Focal Person, the Project Manager. Joint visits also support ownership of the results. A team of staff and stakeholders may make visits to projects that are contributing to one particular outcome. Mostly the joint visits provide an efficient way to obtain a comprehensive overview of progress. It is important to focus on what specific issues are to be addressed and to ensure that relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries would be available, involved and participate as required when planning for such visits.

d. **Field Engagements**. Various engagements (being dialogue or consultations) on the field should focus on ascertaining credible information on progress being made towards the attainment of results (outputs and outcomes), their quality and sustainability. Site visits should not be used for lengthy discussions on detailed implementation issues. Such issues, if raised during site visits, may be noted for discussion with relevant stakeholders who are in the best position to address them.

e. **Findings**. Findings from the site visit should be forwarded to appropriate staff (Project/program Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Focal Person, Executive Director) and stakeholders for effective action within a week of after the visit.

c. Annual Reviews

The Annual Review is a key monitoring approach at the entire MAALTAABA level with participation of all key stakeholders. It focuses on the built up of activities from the project level through to the outcome and program level during the year. The annual review facilitates a dialogue among MAALTAABA and stakeholders to assess progress towards results (outputs and outcomes) and used as a forum for building a stronger mutual understanding and consensus among stakeholders on the issues directly relevant to achieving the planned results and for making key high-level decisions. Annual reviews are ideally held towards the end of the year, and the discussions are meant to guide and approve plans for the following year. To get the most out of annual reviews, careful planning is necessary. The following should therefore be taken into consideration when planning for an annual review.

The annual review should be conducted based on objective monitoring data and analyses prepared by all connected projects (from Annual Progress Report) and finalized after consultations with key stakeholders.

The annual review should be carried out in an inclusive and practical manner. The participants should be key stakeholders who have influence at the various levels of participation in the projects or programs. The success of Annual Reviews mostly depends on how well the stakeholders have been involved leading to the annual review. This includes how well they are informed on the issues to be discussed. Many of the topics that will be covered at the annual review should ideally have already been covered, for instance, during routine monitoring activities like field trips or earlier talks on the APRs at the project or outcome level. It is recommended that a focused approach is employed for the annual review to ensure that key outcomes and issues are addressed.

3.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MONITORING

Monitoring of results occurs at different implementation levels as described above. Some monitoring responsibilities at the activity or output level can be assigned to specific functionaries, monitoring responsibilities at the outcome or program level require collective efforts. The success of monitoring among other factors depends clear roles and responsibilities. The table below indicates the roles and responsibilities which is associated at each level of monitoring and how they apply to Maaltaaba projects and programs.

Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities for Monitoring

Actors	Level(s)	Roles & Responsibilities	Timings and Approach
Project manager Oversee the overall implementation of Malltaaba's projects and monitor progress with key partners and donors. Assess the overall performance the projects in relation to progress towards attainment of results.	Activity level Output level Outcome level	To provide clear basis for decision making and guide development initiatives Ensure active and results-based monitoring. Ensure quality and the appropriate use of monitoring evidence and lessons learned. Resolve key bottlenecks to implementation in order to improve the chances of achieving results (outcomes) Link results with resources and ensure accountability in the use of resources. Use project and outcome level	This occurs at the following timelines: Initial planning stages Through active participation in the development and approval of M&E framework Participate in joint monitoring. Prior to annual reviews. This is through review of outcome reviews and Annual Project Reports to determine the strategic contribution being made by program towards results; Making decisions on strategic changes needed in program results and resources. Finalizing evidence-based contribution of project as a whole

		monitoring data and feed it into program discussions	to annual review Participate in annual reviews
Project Staff Main responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of Maaltaaba project activities to ensure outputs are produced and while contributing to the project performance.	Activity level Output level	Take the required actions towards achieving output targets. Ensure project is well suited in the broader context (regional and national) Ensure efficient use of resources. Ensure effective stakeholder collaboration. Ensure project interface with beneficiaries.	This occurs at the following timelines: Initial planning stages: It involves developing and consenting to a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide the project in an inclusive manner. Throughout the program cycle by performing project-related monitoring tasks. Before the annual project reviews: This involves establishing progress towards the achievement of outputs and contribution related outcomes; rate and efficiency of resource use; issues that require decisions at the annual reviews; and inputs to program reviews and annual reviews in the Annual Project Reports. Organizing project annual reviews.
Stakeholders /Partners /Donors	Output level Outcome level	Ensure locally owned results-based monitoring and evaluation. Support in establishing a clear basis for decision making and guide future initiatives. Ensure evidence from monitoring and evaluation; and lessons learned are used in a quality and appropriate manner. Support in the resolution of key bottlenecks to implementation to enhance the achievement of results	At initial planning stages Participation in development and approval of project monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Participating in joint monitoring. Annual reviews: Participating in reviewing progress, issues, and trends in the achievement of results given in documents for the annual review.

4.1. Evaluation overview.

This section presents an overview of Maaltaaba evaluation function to assist managers, staff and stakeholders make strategic decisions regarding evaluations. The section describes the importance of evaluation for Maaltaaba and the use of evaluative information, the standards for carrying out evaluation, common evaluation types, key roles and responsibilities in evaluation, and evaluation requirements.

Evaluation is essential to Maaltaaba's efforts to advance development locally. Evaluation enables managers to make evidence-based decisions and strategically plan, through the generation of evidence. Adequate financial and human resources, a thorough grasp of evaluation, and a culture that values learning, inquiry, results-oriented thinking, and evidence-based decision-making are key for the efficient conduct and application of evaluation. Evaluations, when used effectively, enhance the realization of the overall goal of projects and programs.

4.2 WHY EVALUATION

Supports improvement of projects and programs. Evaluation tries to find out if a project or program worked or did not work, what accounted for the findings and how it could be done differently for better results. Project and program managers as well as other decision makers utilize evaluations to make key improvements to implementation strategies hence, evaluations need to provide specific information on how improvements could be made.

Increases knowledge to enable generalization and broader application. It helps in focusing on what can be learned from the evaluation and the application of knowledge in other areas. The primary interest is in knowledge development for local use and for generalization to other contexts hence, evaluations apply a systematic approach to ensure a higher level of validity and reliability of the information being produced. It is therefore important for Maaltaaba together with stakeholders, decide participants and their level of participation in the process, that is analyzing findings and lessons, developing a management response to an evaluation, disseminating knowledge, and the level of involvement, including being informed, consulted, actively involved, equal stakeholders.

Accountability: This considers what Maaltaaba planned to do, are they the right things and are they being carried in the right way? The focus is on evaluating an initiative's quality and merit, worth, and value. Maaltaaba is accountable for providing evidence that connects its contributions to the attainment of broader goals. The use of evaluation should be determined at the initial planning stage as it informs the timing of the evaluation, its framework as well as the nature and level of stakeholder participation.

4.3. ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL USE OF EVALUATIONS

Evaluation generally has multiple uses and are generally not exclusive of one another. All through the evaluation process, there is the need to revisit and redefine the identified use where necessary in consultation with stakeholders.

Table 2: Areas of assessment

Area of assessment	Description	Questions
What information is needed?	The specific information needed about a particular outcome or result are clearly outlined.	• Relevance of intended outputs or outcomes and validity of the results framework and results map. • Status of an outcome and factors affecting it. • Status of project implementation. • Cost of an initiative relative to the observed benefits • Lessons learned
Who will use the information?	The intended users of evaluation are those individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the evaluation results and can make decisions or act based on the evaluation results.	• The Maaltaaba Board • Project managers, staff and others involved in design and implementation. • Donors and other funders • Stakeholders and Partners • Beneficiaries • General public
How will the information be used?	In what manner will the information be used including all process and stages.	• Design or validate a development strategy. • Used for mid-course corrections. • Improve project or program design and implementation. • Ensure accountability. • Make decisions on funding. • Increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits and challenges of projects and programs as well as its intended benefits.

4.4 TYPES OF EVALUATION

Projects and programs shall have results frameworks that detail how intended results will be arrived at, at both the output and outcome levels. Evaluations in Maaltaaba shall be carried out to adequately cover this wide range of Maaltaaba initiatives to assess their worth and merit; and support the organization's learning efforts and accountability.

Matlaaba shall carry out an independent evaluation for all its projects and programs and should be clearly agreed on at the planning stage in the project cycle. Maaltaaba shall not conduct these evaluations themselves, but rather commission external evaluation consultants independent from project or program and is not part of subsequent decision-making processes regarding the subject of an evaluation. The evaluations are intended to provide all-inclusive information about Maaltaaba's performance at the project, program, or organizational level, with a view to supporting sound management of Maaltaaba initiatives and strategic direction.

a. Outcome Evaluation

Maaltaaba shall assess its contributions towards the progress made on the achievement of outcomes. Generally, the outcomes are defined in the project or program results frameworks. Outcome evaluations explicitly recognizes the role of stakeholders and partners in the attainment of outcomes. They provide critical information for the purpose of enhancing development effectiveness and assisting decision and policy making beyond a particular project or initiative. Outcome evaluations shall be undertaken to: Provide evidence to support accountability of project and programs; provide evidence of Maaltaaba's contribution to outcomes; guides performance improvement within the projects and programs by identifying current areas of strengths, weaknesses, and gaps, regarding impediments to the outcome, midcourse adjustments, lessons learned for the next programming cycle.

b. Project Evaluation

A project evaluation assesses the performance of a project in achieving its intended results. Managing for results requires, as a good knowledge of projects, their effectiveness, internal and external factors affecting effectiveness, their added value, and their contribution to higher level outcomes. Hence, project evaluation yields useful information on project implementation arrangements and the achievement of outputs. It is at this level that direct cause and attribution can be addressed given the close causal linkage between the initiatives and the outputs. Maaltaaba shall commission evaluations of their respective projects as needed and agreed on at the planning stage. Project evaluation primarily seeks to make improvements, to continue or upscale an initiative, to assess replicability in other settings, or to consider alternatives.

c. Thematic Evaluations

Maaltaaba may choose to commission thematic evaluations to assess its performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to development results and might focus on one or several cross-cutting themes that have significance beyond a particular project or initiative.

To ensure the relevance and effective use of evaluation information, evaluations should be made available in a timely manner so that decision makers can make decisions informed by evaluative evidence.

4.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EVALUATION

As successful evaluation requires the involvement of all stakeholders, it entails close communication and coordination with all involved in various stages and aspects of program and program management. At the individual project and program level, the primary responsibility for planning for monitoring and evaluation and implementation rests with the project and program staff. The monitoring and Evaluation Focal Person, project and program staff, partners, stakeholders, and evaluators all play different roles in the evaluation process.

Table 3: Roles and Responsibilities in Evaluation

Who: Actors and Accountability	What: Roles and Responsibilities	Timing
Project Manager	• Participate and involve relevant stakeholders in developing an evaluation plan. • Ensure evaluability of Maaltaaba initiatives results area. • Facilitate and ensure the preparation and implementation of relevant management responses. • Facilitate and ensure knowledge sharing and use of project and program evaluative information in programming.	• Planning. • Planning and monitoring. • Post-evaluation and follow-up
Stakeholders and Partners	• Actively participate in the development of the evaluation plan for Maaltaaba.	Planning implementation and follow-ups.

4.6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria help focus evaluation objectives by defining the standards against which the initiatives will be assessed. Maaltaaba evaluations shall generally apply the following evaluation criteria to help focus evaluation objectives: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of development efforts.

Relevance: This focuses on the extent to which an initiative and its intended outputs or outcomes are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. Relevance also takes into consideration the extent to which the initiative is responsive to Maaltaaba strategic priorities. It also incorporates the concept of responsiveness—that is, the extent to which Maaltaaba responds to changing and emerging development priorities and needs in a responsive manner. Evaluations should therefore investigate the degree to which the planning, design, and execution of initiatives take into consideration the local environment when utilizing the relevance criterion.

Efficiency: This takes into consideration the delivery of project in a timely and cost-effective manner. It measures how economically inputs (such as funds, expertise, and time) are converted to results. When an initiative uses resources appropriately and economically to achieve the intended results, it is considered efficient. Hence, efficiency is important in ensuring that resources have been used optimally. The application of the criteria differs with any change in the core purpose and nature of the project and outcome evaluation.

Effectiveness: This assesses the extent to which the intervention achieves its objectives; and the supportive factors and obstacles encountered during the implementation. It also measures the extent to which an initiative's intended results (outputs or outcomes) have been achieved. It also involves an assessment of cause and effect of various changes or results. Assessing effectiveness in outcome evaluations will more likely examine Maaltaaba contributions toward intended outcomes. Assessing effectiveness primarily involves measuring change in the observed output or outcome; attribution of observed changes or progress toward changes to the initiative; and judging the value of the change (positive or negative).

Impact: Impact is concerned with what happened as a result of the initiative. It measures changes in human development and people's well-being that are brought about by the development initiatives, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Evaluating impact generates useful information for decision making and supports accountability for delivering results.

Sustainability: This mainly focuses on lasting benefits after the intervention is completed. It measures the extent to which benefits of initiatives continue after external development assistance has come to an end. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating the extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional and other conditions are present and, based on that assessment, making projections about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the development results in the future.

Combining the most often used criteria will help to guarantee that the review addresses the initiative's most important aspects. All factors, however, are not relevant, or not relevant in the same way, to every evaluation. In certain instances, it could be necessary to apply other criteria. Consider the kind of evaluation and the information's contributions to the goal in relation to the expense when choosing which criteria to apply.

4.7 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation designs are frameworks or plans that outline the methods and procedures for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and impact of programs, projects, policies, or interventions. Different types of evaluation designs are used based on the specific goals of the evaluation and the available resources. The selection of evaluation methods should be based on their ability to generate rigorous, empirically based data that meets the evaluation criteria and addresses the evaluation questions. An evaluation matrix indicating the questions and sub-questions that the evaluation will answer for each criteria should be clearly included in the evaluation report. This should specify the data that will be collected and the methods to be used to collect that data for each question.

4.8. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Maaltaaba evaluations shall draw on data generated through monitoring during the project or program implementation cycle. Performance indicators are a simple and reliable means to document changes in project and program outputs and outcomes. Performance indicators are useful however, they do not explain what factors contributed to the progress. Hence, to give meanings to data from performance indicators, evaluations should apply a mix of multiple data collection methods and sources. The key factors in determining the data to be collected and the data collection method include: the required evidence to respond to the evaluation questions; the analytical procedures that will be employed to translate the data into significant conclusions that address the assessment inquiries; and conclusions about what data may realistically be gathered under time and resource constraints determines the data to be collected and the method of data collection. Data collection methods applied in evaluations in for both project and outcome evaluations includes:

a. *Document review*

This includes reviewing existing documentation for quantitative and descriptive information about the project, its outputs, and outcomes, such as documentation include reports, project documents (Annual Reports, Performance Indicators, and other evidence.

b. Expert Reviews

This is conducted by team of external experts who provide input on technical issues covered by the evaluation through review sessions such as peer review. They provide greater depth and verify or substantiate information and results in a particular result area.

c. Questionnaire

This includes obtaining information on a wide range of topics from a diverse stakeholder about Maaltaaba projects and programs.

d. Key informants

These are interviews that are carried out with people who have a wealth of experience in a particular area. These interviews are often one-on-one, qualitative and in-depth, with a wide range of stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge about the initiative operations and context.

e. Interviews

This involves the use of predetermined questions to obtain in-depth information about a person's impressions or experiences, or to learn more about their answers to questionnaires or surveys.

f. Group interviews

This involves the interviewing a small group usually 6 to 8 people together to explore in-depth opinions, or judgements about a development initiative or policy, as well as information about their behaviours, understanding and perceptions of an initiative or to collect information around tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from an initiative.

g. Site visit

This involves the use of detailed observation form to record accurate information on-site about how a project operates including its activities, processes, discussions, social interactions and observable results.

5.0 GENDER

Maaltaaba evaluations shall be guided by the principles of gender equality and social inclusion and the rights-based approach. Hence, evaluations shall assess the extent to which initiatives have adequately addressed the issues of social and gender inclusion, equality and empowerment. Gender mainstreaming is an approach for integrating gender-related concerns and experiences in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres with the aim of ensuring women and men benefit equally. Maaltaaba evaluations should assess the extent to which it projects and programs have taken into account mainstreaming a gender perspective in the design, implementation and outcome of the initiative.

6.0 USE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The extent of usage of monitoring and evaluation information determines the worth of the monitoring and evaluation. It strengthens the basis for effective results management, enhances organizational learning and knowledge generation.

Monitoring and evaluation provide information and facts which become knowledge that promotes learning. Maaltaaba shall apply learning from monitoring and evaluation to improve the overall performance and quality of results of ongoing and future projects and programs. The knowledge generated from monitoring and evaluation helps in the development of strategic frameworks. Findings and lessons from monitoring and evaluation can be used for building partnerships. Project and program staff, consultants and stakeholders need to effectively apply information from monitoring and evaluation in their daily work for accountability, improvements in performance, decision making and learning. Learning must therefore be incorporated into the projects and programs to enhance the effectiveness of Maaltaaba in achieving it broader goals.

8.0 REPORTING

Reporting involves organizing and presenting data in a structured format to convey information, trends, and insights to stakeholders. This reporting process follows the stage of analyzing information. Maaltaaba shall report to different stakeholders in different ways.

Table 4: Reporting

Target Group	Stage of Project Cycle	Format
Maaltaaba Board	Monitoring analysis	Written report
	Evaluation	Written report
Management Team	Monitoring	Written report.
	Evaluation	Written report
Staff	Monitoring	Written report
	Evaluation	Written report
Beneficiaries	Interim but only at significant points, and evaluation	Verbal presentation
Donors	Monitoring – Mainly interim.	Written report.
	Evaluation	Written report.
Public	Evaluation	Website, seminars, blogs, Journal articles and conferences.

Effective reporting and visualization would go a long way to empower decision-makers by providing clear, actionable insights derived from complex datasets, ultimately supporting strategic planning and organizational growth.

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Mollydean Zong Buntuya
Board chair

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