**Guidance for Implementing Partners:**

**Completing Activity Progress Reports**

This guidance will help your organisation to complete Activity Progress Reports for submission to MFAT.

Before starting a Report for a specific Activity, discuss with your MFAT Activity Manager – to ensure that reporting is fit for purpose for your Activity, such as:

* the key questions from this general guidance that are most useful to focus on
* what kinds of evidence and level of detail are required for the Report, and
* how your organisation and MFAT intend to use the Report.

**Complete your Activity Progress Report using the guiding questions starting on page 3.**

* **For each Section,** the **blue text** prompts you on key questions to consider.You may not need to address all of the questions in blue, or be able to complete all parts of all sections. If so, make a brief note why (e.g. not applicable, insufficient information available).
* **Standards for reports:** All partner reports should be concise, supported by evidence, and signed as true and correct by someone in your organisation who has the authority to do so. *Note*: submitting a report from the email account of an authorised office is an acceptable alternative to a physical signature expect for financial reports, which require a scanned hard copy.

**What are Activity Progress Reports?**

Activity Progress Reportscapture an Implementing Partners’s assessment of performance and results for the previous 12 months of Activity implementation.

They are informed by quality criteria for development including:

* OECD DAC international evaluation [criteria](https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm) (used by donors and partners to assess the value and effectiveness of interventions), and
* MFAT’s development principles under the International Cooperation for Effective Sustainable Development ([ICESD](https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/Policy/Policy-Statement-New-Zealands-International-Cooperation-for-Effective-Sustainable-Development-ICESD.pdf)) agreement.

The Reports provide candid, evidence-based asessments of the progress of an Actvity, including challenges and lessons learned.

**Why do we need them?**

Activity Progress Reports support good Activity management to improve development impact. They provide a clear focus for your organisation and your MFAT Activity Manager to review progress, discuss opportunities for adaptation or actions for improvement.

**When do Activity Progress Reports need to be completed?**

Reports need to be completed at least once a year. Some Activities may require more frequent reporting. The reporting requirements and deadlines are outlined in the Activity contract. Activities being adaptively managed in response to complexities or uncertainties generally require a more regular or detailed report to support decision-making.

**What information are Actvity Progress Reports based on?**

Activity Progress Reports should be based on good quality evidence.

Good evidence is easier to collect when there is a good Monitoring, Evaluation, Research & Learning (MERL) framework in place for an Activity. A MERL framework describes the intended outcomes of an Activity, how progress will be monitored and evaluated, and what evidence is needed to do this. It was developed and agreed during the Activity Design or inception phase.

If you have questions or concerns about the Activity MERL framework, discuss this with your MFAT Activity Manager. They can seek additional help from MFAT’s Insights, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisers.

Activity Progress Report: [Activity Name]

# Summary

### Activity information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity Title |  |
| Goal |  |
| Intended outcomes |  |

### Contract or grant information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Start and end dates |  |
| Total Actvity Budget |  |
| Asessment period for this report |  |

### Progress report preparation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Prepared by |  |
| Others involved or consulted |  |
| Date of report |  |

# Executive Summary

**Complete this section last - to provide a short summary of this overall Activity Progress Report.**

**Guidance on length: 1-2 pages.**

**Key questions to consider:**

1. **Overall, what are the most important achievements (or difference made) during this reporting period? Optional: If you have a success story to share, please attach in the Appendix. Add relevant photos if available.**
2. **What key challenges have been addressed? Include any changes made to the Activity scope, timeframe, or budget.**
3. **Have there been any specific lessons learned?**
4. **What actions have been implemented based on the recommendations from the previous progress report? (not applicable if this is the first year of Activity reporting).**
5. **What (if any) actions are planned or underway to address issues or risks - including issues relevant to transition/ exit - highlighted in this report?**

# Review of Progress to Date

1. **Activity context, risks and opportunities:** Is the Activity still doing the right things?

**Review the Activity risk register to update any risks that may affect relevance or results.**

**Guidance on length: 1-2 pages.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Key questions to consider:**   1. **Has the context of the Activity changed? For example:**    * What are the implications of COVID-19 for ongoing implementation of this Activity?    * Are there new risks or opportunities that impact the Activity’s relevance or ability to achieve outcomes?    * How well does the Activity currently align with other interventions happening in the same country/region that MFAT, NZ agencies or other development partners are undertaking? Are there any new government policies that effect the activity?    * Do you have concerns that the Activity may not be the best use of resources?    * Are there groups that have become marginalised/emerge as being important as a result of these changes in context of the Activity?    * Is the Activity contributing to further marginalisation of these groups as an unintended consequence? 2. **How do any changes in the context affect the relevance of planned outputs and outcomes for this Activity? For example:**    * Is the intervention logic (or Results) diagram still relevant? If not, what changes are needed?    * Is the Activity design still appropriate? If applicable, are the planned outputs still relevant for achieving short and medium term outcomes? |

1. **Effectiveness: How well is the Activity achieving the intended inclusive/resilient/sustained development outcomes?**

**Use the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL or Results) framework for this Activity to assess progress against the intended outputs and outcomes.**

**Annotate the Results Table with any data collected and explain any variance (see example attached in Appendix A).**

**Guidance on length: 1-2 pages.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Key questions to consider:**   1. **How well are the Activity outputs being delivered towards planned outcomes? For example:**    * What evidence is there to show Activity progress in delivering outputs. Consider (if appropriate) the quality, relevance, and timeliness of outputs and whether the Activity is reaching the intended beneficiaries[[1]](#footnote-1).    * Are the outputs contributing towards achieving the outcomes expected by the end of the Activity’s funding period? How do we know this? (Consider progress in this assessment period, as well as progress to date since the start of the Activity).    * What difference is this Activity making, if any? What is working well and why? What is not working so well, for whom, why, and what should be done?    * Are there any unintended consequences (positive or negative)? If negative, how are these being addressed? 2. **How well is the Activity progressing towards inclusive development, that is development that is equitable and ‘leaves no one behind’? For example:**    * Taking a human rights-based approach to address inequality created across all dimensions of social identity.    * Promoting gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and child and youth well-being.    * Understanding and responding to the causes and incidence of poverty and exclusion.    * Supporting partners, key stakeholders and participants to ensure benefits are equitably shared.    * Enabling groups potentially impacted by an activity to meaningfully engage in the development process: from the design stage through to the final evaluation. 3. **How well is the Activity promoting resilience, that is development that can withstand shocks and that protects the environment, ecology and resource base? For example:**    * Identifying and mitigating negative impacts on the environment and reducing drivers of climate change.    * Promoting sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.    * Assessing vulnerability and increasing resilience to natural disasters and external shocks, including macroeconomic stability and productive sectors.    * Assessing how our cooperation could reduce or increase drivers of conflict. 4. **How well is the Activity contributing to progress that is lasting and owned by partner countries in the long term? For example:**    * Is there strong partner ownership and on-going dialogue with partner government/organisations and stakeholders?    * Is the Activity strengthening institutions’ governance, transparency and accountability to citizens, and/or working with actors and institutions that are critical to success? Does the Activity support the role, capacity and capability of responsible agencies and use country systems where possible and effective?    * Is there evidence that the benefits of the Activity are likely to continue [including institutional capacities]?    * Are there adequate systems in place to address or mitigate risks of any unintended consequences of the Activity (Example: Economic empowerment of women can lead to elevated levels of domestic violence)?    * (Where applicable) Is there an adequate exit or transition strategy?    * What are the key challenges to ensuring the benefits will continue beyond MFAT support? What is being done to address these challenges? |

1. **How well are we managing this Activity?**

**Attach an annotated version of the original workplan and budget to report actual against planned expenditure. Please explain any variances (see Appendix B).**

* **Where expenditure is less than forecast,** provide an updated expenditure forecast which confirms whether savings to date are permanent or temporary and describe the impact on timing of completion of the contract.
* **Where expenditure is more than forecast,** provide details of why, impact on the total cost of the outputs and impact on the contract.

**(If applicable) Include recommendations or actions from previous Activity Progress Reports. Note in the table below what progress has been made against those since the previous Activity Progress Report.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Recommendation/action**  **(date of Report)** | **Progress / actions taken** |
|  |  |

**Guidance on length: 1 page.**

**Key questions to consider:**

**a. How well are the following aspects of this Activity being managed? For example:**

* + Maintaining mutual accountable relationships with MFAT, partner government, participants and other stakeholders, coordination with other partners, contributions by partners and sub-contractors.
  + Addressing changing context, risks or challenges, including any changes made to scope, timeframe, or budget?
  + Learning on progress and challenges to inform decision-making and accountability, including reporting quality and timeliness of outputs and outcomes against the Activity MERL (Results) framework.

**b. Is the Activity being delivered cost effectively with the least waste of time and effort? For example:**

* + What is the level of actual spend compared to budget forecast? How well is the Activity progressing against its budget?
  + Were funds spent against results achieved during the assessment period reasonable and good value for money?
  + Is the Activity’s budget and skills resourcing still appropriate for the intended outcomes? Does the implementing partner (or contractor) have the right skills/capabilities? Has the Activity been coordinated with government/other donors/partners to maximise results?

**c. Do relevant safeguards continue to be applied?**

* + Do any safeguarding assessments need to be refreshed?

1. **Lessons learned / Future opportunities**

**Reflect on any lessons learned through the Activity that may affect relevance or results.**

**Guidance on length: Half a page**.

**Key questions to consider:**

1. **Have there been specific lessons learned through this Activity, including lessons about implementing or managing an Activity in this sector or area? Lessons learned can be positive and negative.**
2. **(If not already covered in the previous sections) Are there opportunities or ideas for enhancing the Activity’s performance in the future?**

# Authorisation

I declare that the information contained in this report is true and correct and confirm:

* MFAT Funds were received and used only for the agreed purpose(s); and
* All conditions attached to MFAT’s Funding have been met; and
* MFAT Funds have been fully utilised for the intended purpose, OR
* There are unspent Funds and I understand that MFAT may deduct this amount from the next tranche payment of Funds OR a cheque is attached returning these Funds to MFAT.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| *Full Name (in block capitals)* |  | *Title / Position (e.g. CEO)* |
|  |  |  |
| *Signature* |  | *Date* |

# Appendices

(Delete those not relevant)

This report includes the following appendices:

* Appendix A: Progress against MERL(Results) Framework (table)
* Updated Activity MERL (Results) Framework
* Appendix B: Progress Against Agreed Workplan and Budget (table)
* Costed workplan for subsequent period
* Updated risk management matrix

# Appendix A: Progress against Results Framework

This table shows progress of the Activity against the intended outputs and outcomes agreed in the Results Framework.

Note: For planned and actual indicators and targets, please provide numbers by gender (e.g. males and females) separately if possible.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *From agreed Results Measurement Table in the Activity Design Document* | | | | *Data up to and including this reporting period* | |
| Results | Planned indicators | Planned targets | Planned data sources | Actual measurement against targets and data sources | Variance explanation |
| Long-term outcome |  |  |  |  |  |
| Medium-term outcome |  |  |  |  |  |
| Short-term outcome |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| etc |  |  |  |  |  |

# Appendix B: Progress against the Agreed Workplan and Budget

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Output** | **Planned Expenditure** | **Actual Expenditure** | **Variance** | **Reason for Variance** |
|
|
| **Output 0. Non-output specific costs / Management costs** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 1. Description** |  |  |  |  |
| 1.1 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 1.3 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 1.4 Description |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 2. Description** |  |  |  |  |
| 2.1 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 2.2 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 2.4 Description |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 3. Description** |  |  |  |  |
| 3.1 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 3.3 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 3.4 Description |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 4. Description** |  |  |  |  |
| 4.1 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 4.2 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 4.3 Description |  |  |  |  |
| 4.4 Description |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTALS** |  |  |  |  |

1. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)