



BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS



Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs)

New Projects Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Workshop

Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus



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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



**UK International
Development**

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Welcome!



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General housekeeping



Please keep yourself muted during the presentation.



If you have any questions, please use the “raise hand” feature (you can find this by clicking on the “Participants” button at the bottom of your screen) and we will invite you to unmute and ask your question. Otherwise please feel free to write in “chat”.



We have some specific guidelines later on for how we plan to use Miro for the interactive exercises.



Camera up to you – but recommended for group work!

Session Agenda



UK TIME	TASK	DESCRIPTION
9 am	Intro to MEL	Presentation on Zoom, then group work on Miro (groups will be allocated into Zoom breakout rooms)
10:15 am	15-minute break	Short break (either stay on the call or leave the meeting and come back)
10:30 am	Evidence for Reporting	Presentation on Zoom, then group work on Miro (groups will be allocated into Zoom breakout rooms)
11:30 am	Finish	

Introductions



1 Minute Introductions

- Introduce yourself
- Describe your project
- What is your favourite animal and why?



Introduction to Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



What is MEL and why do we do it?



WHAT

Monitoring: Regularly collecting data on project resources, activities, and results to track progress using the project logframe and indicators.

Evaluation: Periodic review of project activities and outcomes to guide management and create learning that can be used both in the current project and future ones.

WHY

Learning: Reflecting on and sharing information to fill gaps and identify effective strategies for positive impact on people and biodiversity.

(Accountability): Ensure that projects transparently report their progress and outcomes to donors, partners, and communities to maximise positive change for every pound spent.

Role of MEL across the lifecycle



During Project Design

- Have the interventions been tested before?
- What lessons have been learnt from previous evaluations?
- Are the project assumptions valid?
- How can we design our project to maximise learning?



During project delivery

- Is the intervention being delivered as planned?
- Do monitoring data reveal trends in the delivery, uptake and outcome of the project?
- How can the interventions be adapted to optimise outcome delivery?



At the end of your project

- Did the project deliver the outcome anticipated?
- How effective were each of the outputs in contributing to the outcome?
- What role did contextual factors play in mediating the achievement of the outcome?

MEL requirements in BCFs



LEGEND: ● D+: Darwin Plus ● DI: Darwin Initiative ● IWTCF: Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund		Darwin Plus		IWTCF	Darwin Initiative		DI Main	DI Extra
		Local	People & Skills	Evidence	Innovation	C&C	IWTCF Main D+ Main	IWTCF Extra D+ Strategic
Application Requirements	Simplified logframe (Section 2.3)			●		●		
	Full logframe (Section 2.3)			●	●		●	●
	Narrative Pathway to Change (Sections 2.1 & 2.2)			●	●	●	●	●
	Graphical 1 Page Theory of Change (Section 2.2)				●			●
Project Requirements (Section 3)	Half Year Report on 31st October			●	●	●	●	●
	Annual Report on 30th April			●	●	●	●	●
	Final Report after project completes (dates vary)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Selected independent monitoring reviews, mid term reviews and closed project evaluations (commissioned by Fund Managers)			●	●	●	●	●
	Independent final evaluation (commissioned by the project)							●

Key MEL terms



Impact: Higher level objective your project is **contributing** to – the Impact is beyond the scope of your project and will not be achieved within the lifetime of your project so you are not asked to measure your contribution towards this.

Outcome: The end state that **you** are trying to **achieve within the lifetime** of your project (and are accountable for). **Only one per project.**

Outputs: Observable, measurable change and tangible products/services delivered by project. Maximum of 5.

Indicator: How you measure change/quality at the Output and Outcome level. Should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound.

Means of verification (MoV): How you evidence achievement of Indicators.

Logframe – what is it?



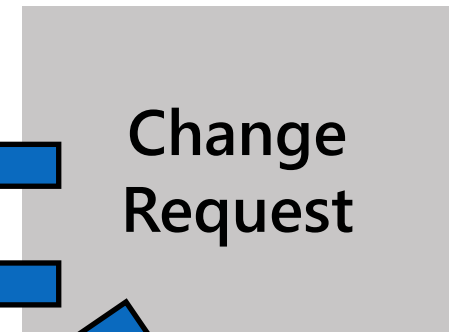
Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact ↑			
Outcome ↑	Signs or measurements that show whether a project is achieving what it set out to do	Where the information to support indicators is found	A factor (outside the control of the project) that must hold true
Output ↑			
Activity			

Logframe – how to use it



During implementation

- Enter data into your logframe
- Reflect on progress of your project
 - Successes
 - Challenges
- Adapt targets – the numbers
- Adapt indicators – the text
- Adapt impact/outcome/output statements
- Share progress in Annual Reports



Theory of Change or ToC



What is it?

A Theory of Change is a visual or narrative explanation of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.

Key Elements:

- Outlines the steps and activities needed to achieve project outcomes and impact
- Identifies assumptions and risks
- Shows the links between activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact

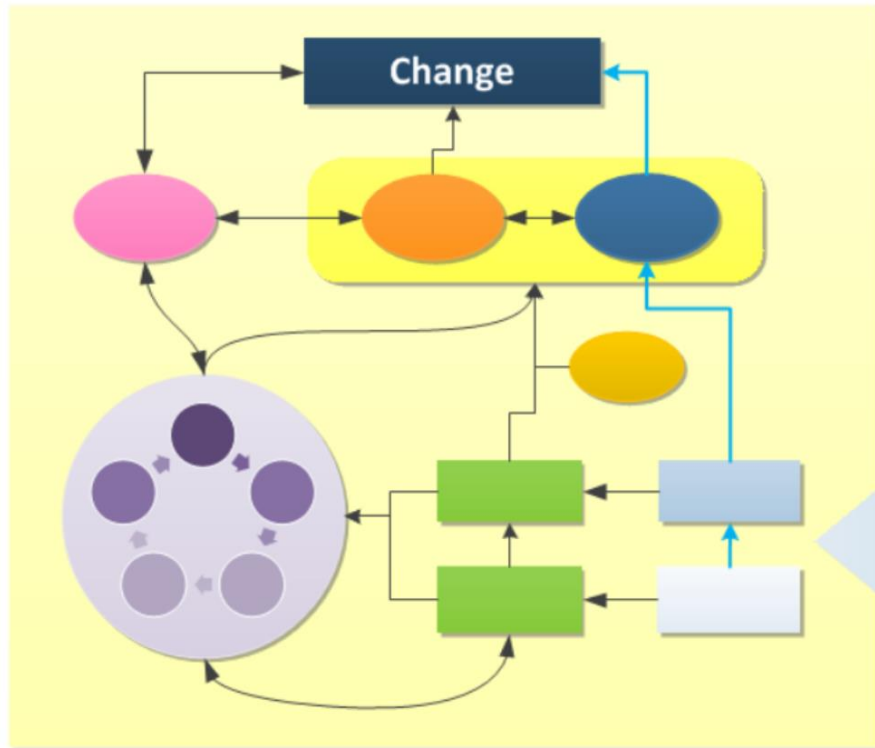
Why Use It?

- Clarifies project logic for your team and stakeholders
- Helps identify gaps, risks, and opportunities
- Supports planning, monitoring, and evaluation

ToC vs Logframe

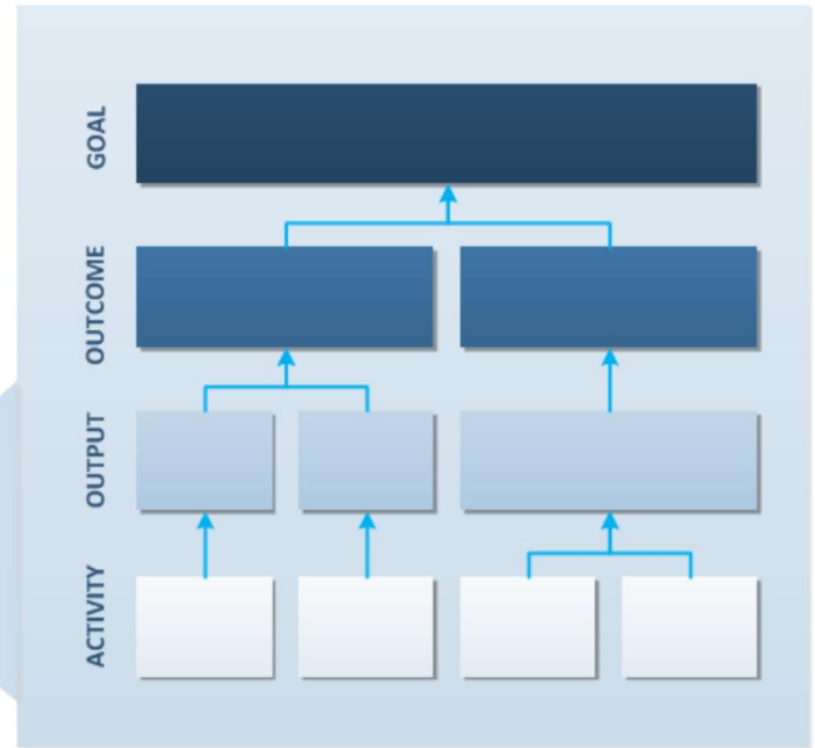
Theory of Change

Shows the big picture with all possible pathways – messy and complex



Logical Framework

Shows just the pathway that your program deals with – neat and tidy



Why plan your MEL?



Purpose of MEL Planning

- Guides MEL implementation
 - Standardisation
 - Coordination
- Preserves institutional memory



Benefits

- Improves project effectiveness through structured learning
- Strengthens accountability to stakeholders and funders
- Helps identify data gaps early (e.g., missing baselines)

What happens without a MEL plan?



Risks of Not Planning

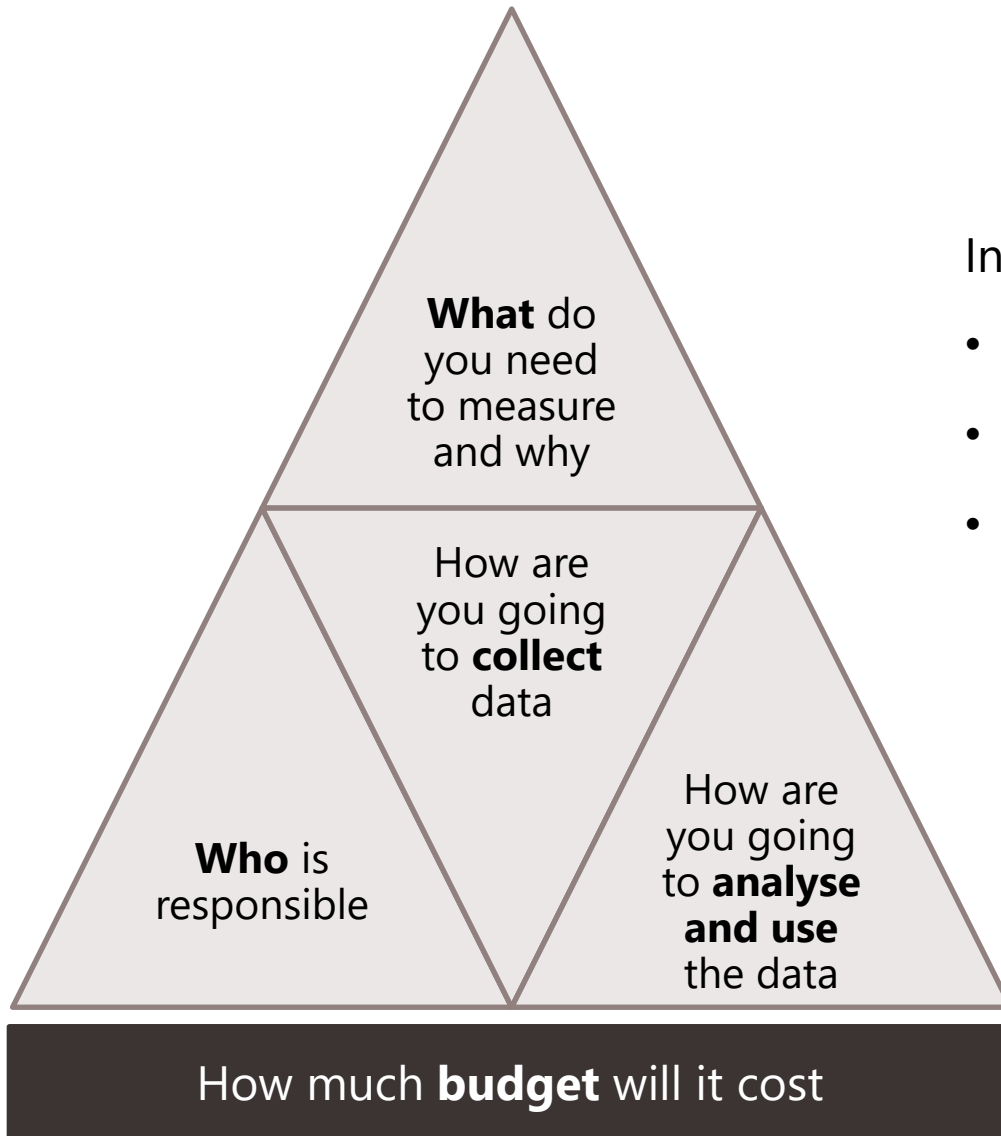
- Unclear or inconsistent data collection
- Missed opportunities to demonstrate impact
- Difficulty reporting against logframe indicators

Common Pitfalls

- MEL as an afterthought rather than a design tool
- Over-reliance on anecdotal evidence
- Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities



What do you need to plan in MEL



In each step it is important to capture

- What is decided
- When it was decided, and
- Who was part of the decision

What does a MEL plan look like?



Objective	Indicator	Source	Responsibility	Timing	Frequency

	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
Outcome								
Outputs								

What does a MEL plan look like?



Monitoring Workflow	Rationale	Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Measure	Methodology	Frequency	Tools	Responsibility
Impact	The 130,000ha of WSP Forest are managed sustainably, supporting biodiversity and the livelihoods of 6,630 people, acting as a model for sustainable forest management in Cambodia								
Outcome	By March 2019, the strengthening of relationships between WSPWS key stakeholders (Government and local communities), enables the Sanctuary to harbour a stable population of five critically endangered bird species and increases human wellbeing in four surrounding villages.	0.1 Increased food security in four target villages (5,052 people), with a reduction in the percentage of households with sufficient food for less than five months of the year from 38% of households to 25% By end of Yr3.	38% of households have sufficient food for less than five months of the year	25% of households have sufficient food for less than five months of the year	0.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal undertaken 2018 compared with 2014 (pre) and 2016 (start of project) baselines.	1. Conduct baselines 2. PRA 2018	Annual	1. Baselines 2. PRA	Livelihoods Programme Manager
		0.2 Stable populations of five Critically Endangered species within WSPWS by end of Y3.			0.2 BirdLife biodiversity team led species census results compared with 2016 baseline.		Annual	1. Species census 2016 baseline 2. Species census 2018	Biodiversity Senior Project Officer
Ouput 1	Local consultation structures established at village and district level, equitably representing the views of constituents	1.a Seven Village Forums established with equal representation of women and men (50% women, 50% men).	0 Village Forums	7 Village Forums, equal gender representation	1.a.1 Meetings are held regularly and attendance list shows equitable participation of women and men, evidenced by equal sex ratio of women : men attending meetings 1.a.2 Dialogue in village meetings show enhanced understanding of management planning process over the three year project implementation period, evidenced by meeting minutes and participatory learning assessment survey at end of Yr3	1. Quarterly consultation meetings with Village Forums 2. Endorsement at Commune level 3. Protocol for beneficiaries counting into database	Six-monthly	1. Beneficiaries database 2. Attendance lists 3. Meeting minutes 4. Village Forums establishment certificates 5. Gender representation strategy 6. Participatory Learning Assessment Survey	Livelihoods Project Officer
		1.b WSPWS Stakeholder Forum established and working effectively.	0 Stakeholders Forum	1 Stakeholders Forum, regular consultations, requests included in the zoning plan	1.b.1 List of attendees at stakeholder meetings includes representatives from all relevant interest groups including representatives from village forums. 1.b.2 Requests from village forum representatives on traditional-use are collected and presented to Provincial level authorities. These requests and the rice field maps are included in the WSPWS zonation process, evidenced by forum minutes and zoning plan.	1. Quarterly meetings with Stakeholders Forum 2. Endorsement at Commune level 3. Collection of Village Forums representatives requests	Six-monthly	1. Beneficiaries database 2. Attendance lists 3. Meeting minutes 4. Stakeholders Forum establishment certificate 5. Report on Village Forums representatives requests for the zoning plan	Livelihoods Project Officer

Group Activity



- We are going to assign you to small groups using the breakout feature in Zoom
- The activity itself is on the interactive whiteboard Miro – Keep Zoom open so you can talk to your group, but navigate to the specific space on Miro for your group. There should be a “frame” with the same number your breakout room number! (you should see other members of your group via their with cursors – no need to share screens)
- Andy (“Biodiversity Challenge Funds”), Alex, Rachel, Victoria, and Esme will be moving between groups to help you with the exercises **but please don’t wait for us to begin** – if you have any questions or need help at any point, please just press the “call host” feature and someone will join your room as soon as possible!

Group Activity



- Prepare a MEL plan
 - To test the discipline of structuring the MEL plan and really testing the measurability of a project.
 - To allow you to then take this experience and apply to your own project.
 - Apply to your own project as soon as possible.

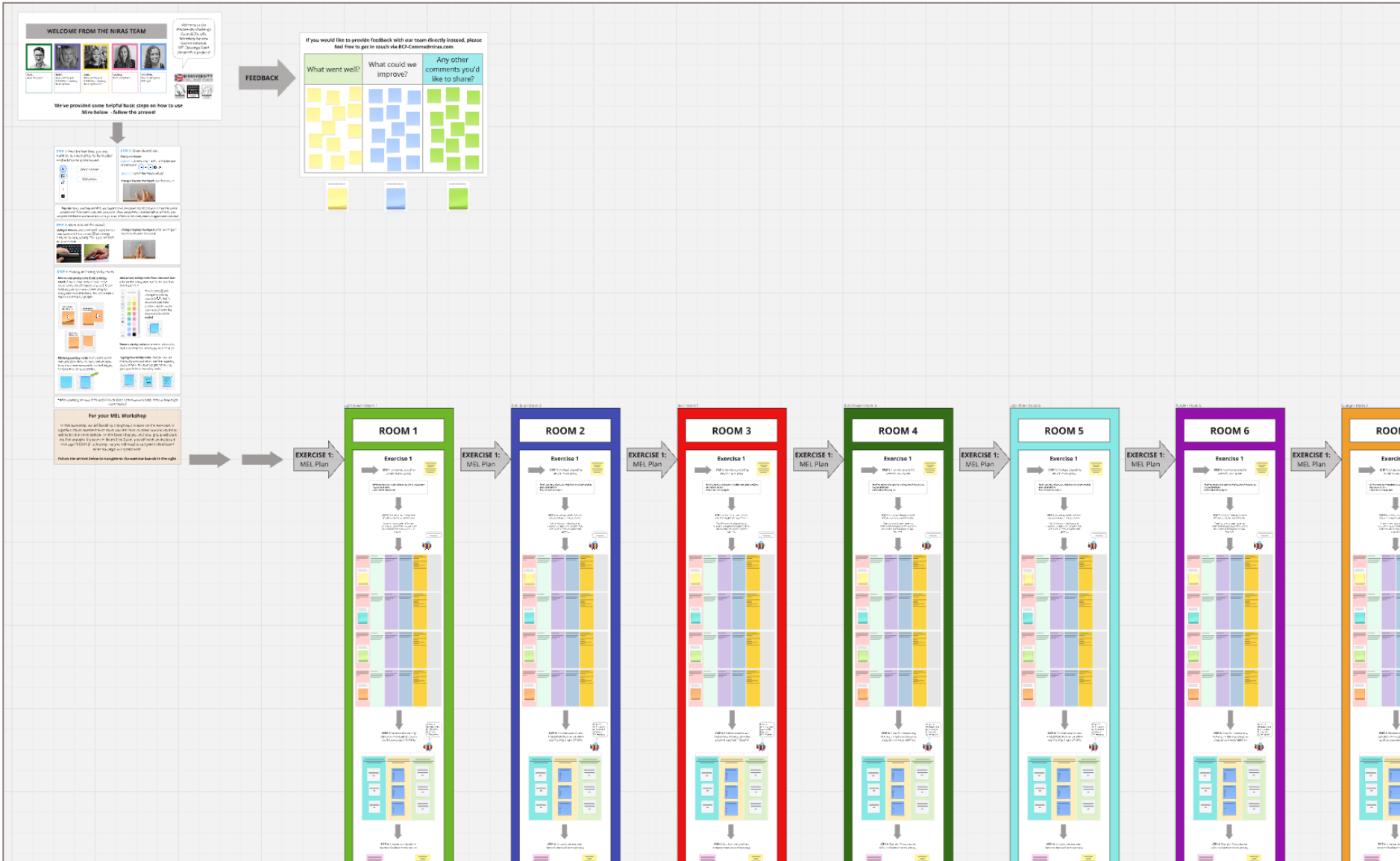
N.B. – your MEL Plan isn't something we need you to submit to us (the logframe is the key tool we need you to report against regularly) but this MEL plan will help ensure you use your logframe most effectively!

Group Activity



- In your breakout rooms but working on Miro
 - Develop a simple MEL plan using the template provided for one or two projects
 - You should aim to complete 3 or 4 lines during this session (1 or 2 per project). Each line should be an indicator (either Outcome or Output).
 - Use the template and sticky notes to guide your thinking and work through some indicator examples
 - Also consider whether any indicators could be improved or made more SMART

What Miro will look like



Template from Miro



To add a sticky note to the exercise, click and drag it from the stack below.

Click & drag to add sticky note:



INDICATOR:

Select a project Output or Outcome indicators and copy and paste it onto a sticky note.

RATIONALE:

(How does this link to the Outcome or Outputs?)

BASELINE / TARGET:

(If not yet established, outline when / how)

METHODOLOGY / FREQUENCY / DATA SOURCE:

(Who monitors progress / collects the data?
How will the data be recorded?
What type of data is it?)

BUDGET:

Template from Miro

INDICATOR	IS IT SMART?	IMPROVED INDICATOR
<p>Share examples of your current indicators using the sticky notes below</p> <p>Indicator 1:</p> <p>Indicator 2:</p> <p>Indicator 3:</p>	<p>Put a Y or N against each of the below for this indicator in its current form</p> <p>Indicator 1 test</p> <p>S: M: A: R: T:</p> <p>Indicator 2 test</p> <p>S: M: A: R: T:</p> <p>Indicator 3 test</p> <p>S: M: A: R: T:</p>	<p>If there is room for improvement, suggest new indicator wording here</p> <p>Improved indicator 1:</p> <p>Improved indicator 2:</p> <p>Improved indicator 3:</p>

Feedback from the session



- How did you find the process?
- Has anyone done something similar for their projects before?
- Did you identify any opportunities to make indicators SMARTer in the process?

Time for a short break!



- We'll be taking a 15-minute break now
- The next presentation will start at 10:30 am UK time
- Please have a copy of your project's logframe ready for the next presentation

Evidence for Reporting



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Defining Evidence



What is Evidence?

- In simple terms: Information that supports a claim.

Two key purposes across the BCFs:

- i. to justify the approach, you plan to implement; and
- ii. to demonstrate that changes have occurred as a result of the project.

Common Principles



There are two common principles that should be followed to ensure that you are generating high quality data and evidence in your project:

- (i) **Reliability**: data is considered reliable if it can be reproduced in a consistent way.
- (ii) **Validity**: data is considered valid if it is relevant to the questions being asked of it.



Capturing 'Good' Evidence



What is good evidence?

- Collected to inform a clear and explicit theory of change (or pathway to change)
- Assembles locally relevant information
- Captures complicated, real-world associations
- Is logically consistent and is applicable across the project results chain.
- Considers assumptions and reduces uncertainty, while informing management of risk
- Provides a platform for agile project management

How to use Evidence



Using evidence to demonstrate progress:

- Scheduling regular meetings with the project team to discuss progress
- Review the logframe on a regular basis
- Reporting against most updated logframe
- Report clearly and concisely
- Ensure evidence is appropriate and capable of measuring progress
- Provide evidence to demonstrate where claims come from (i.e. don't write general statements)
- Ensure evidence submitted is clearly labelled, ideally cross-referenced

Reporting Scoring Criteria (i)



What will reviewers be looking for in your Annual Report?

Score	Description	Achievement of Outputs/Outcome
1	Likely to be completely achieved	Based on the information provided in this report, the Outputs/Outcome will be completely achieved by project end. This could be because this project is late-stage, and project achievements are well on the way to completion (or completed) or, for early-stage projects, the project is progressing well, with indicator targets being met or exceeded and project assumptions holding true.
2	Likely to be largely achieved	There is good progress towards Outcome and Output completion (particularly the most important), however there remains some uncertainty about whether or not the project will achieve its stated Outcome and Outputs.
3	Likely to be partly achieved	Only partial achievement of the Outcome is likely and/or achievement of some Outputs.
4	Only likely to be achieved to a very limited extent	Outcome unlikely to be achieved but a few Outputs likely to be achieved.
5	Unlikely to be achieved	There has been limited to no progress towards completing the Outputs or Outcome so there is significant uncertainty or limited likelihood these will be achieved by the end of the project.
X	Too early to judge	It is impossible to say whether there has been any progress towards the final achievement of Outputs or Outcome. This score should not be used unless at least one of the following criteria are met: Project is postponed because of conflict; external constraints; recruitment delays.

Reporting Scoring Criteria (ii)



Score	Description	Comment on Reporting Quality and Evidence Provision
1	Good	The report is well-written and is clear throughout. There is good provision of evidence (i.e. not too much or too little) to substantiate claims made, including achievement of indicators. Evidence is clearly sign-posted where relevant.
2	Acceptable	The report is complete and evidence is provided to support claims made, but there is room for improvement. Please provide specific feedback comments for the project on how reporting and provision of evidence could be improved,
3	Poor	There are some gaps in the project reporting and/or it is poorly written and confusing or hard to understand in places. The provision of evidence is poor (i.e. there isn't enough evidence provided to substantiate the claims made in reporting and/or evidence is not clearly labelled / cross referenced which makes it hard to navigate – particularly where there are a lot of annexes).
X	Unacceptable	There are significant issues with project reporting and evidence provision which makes it challenging to complete the report review.

Reporting project progress (i)



3. Project progress

This section (3.1- 3.5) is the main narrative report on project progress in the last year, and should be a flowing paragraphed presentation written in a formal style. Sub-sections reflect the progress against the project's logframe. We do not require a summary at the start, just clear reporting under 3.1 to 3.5. Please ensure that you clearly refer to evidence to support the narrative.

Annex 1 requires you to provide a **condensed version** of this narrative against the logframe Impact, Outcome and Outputs. In this section and in Annex 1 please report against the Outcome and Output indicators in the latest approved version of the logframe. Please also include your full current project logframe in Annex 2. If there have been minor changes to the logframe please indicate where these are, and please note that, as described above, major changes to the logframe must be submitted for approval via the formal Change Request process in a separate email..

Within your reporting you will be asked to report progress towards:

- Activities
- Outputs
- Outcome
- Impact
- Monitoring of assumptions

Reporting project progress (ii)



Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Insert agreed project Impact statement	(Report on any contribution towards positive impact on biodiversity or positive changes in the conditions of human communities associated with biodiversity e.g. steps towards sustainable use or equitable sharing of costs or benefits)	
Outcome (Insert agreed project Outcome statement)		
Outcome indicator 0.1	(Report progress against indicators, and reference where evidence is provided e.g. Evidence provided in section 3.1 of report and Annex X). This should be a condensed summary of your reporting in section 3.3 of the report)	(Highlight key actions relevant to this indicator planned for next period)
Outcome indicator 0.2, Etc. Insert additional rows depending on how many indicators you have		
Output 1 (Insert agreed Outputs with indicators relevant to that Outputs in lines below).		
Output indicator 1.1 (Insert original Output level indicators)	(Report progress against indicators, and reference where evidence is provided e.g. Evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and Annex Y). This should be a condensed summary of your reporting in section 3.2 of the report)	
Output indicator 1.2, Etc. Insert additional rows depending on how many indicators you have		(Highlight key actions relevant to this indicator planned for next period)
Output 2. (Insert agreed Output)		
Output indicator 2.1.		
Output indicator 2.2. Etc.		
Output 3. Etc.		

Standard Indicators



Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2	People	Men	20	10		30	60
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2	People	Women	30	5		35	60
E.g. DI-B01	E.g. Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	0.3	Number	New	1	0		1	2
E.g. DI-B01	E.g. Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	0.3	Number	Improved	1	1		2	3

Group Activity



Identify and review what good evidence looks like for your project.

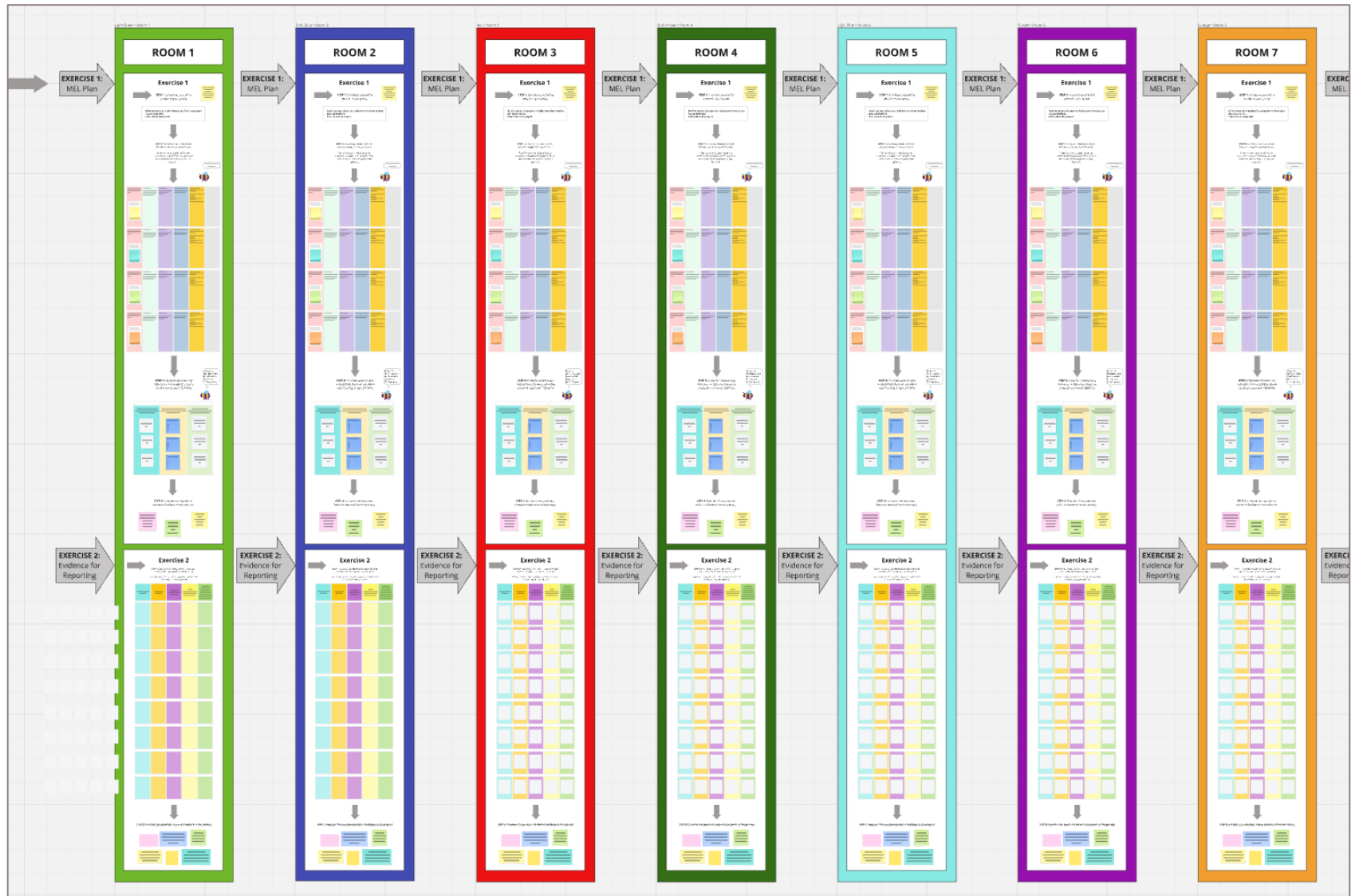
- To demonstrate if the MoVs you have identified are capable of measuring progress
- To think about what good evidence is for your project
- To consider and apply good practice of evidence collection at the start of your project

Group Activity



- In your breakout rooms but working on Miro
 - Select an indicator and corresponding MoV from your logframe
 - Consider if the MoV is appropriate to evidence a change/ progress
 - Review the assumptions and consider if you are collecting evidence to support this assumption

What Miro looks like



Example



Indicator (you choose)	MoV (you choose)	Does this evidence your indicator?	What assumptions do you have which relate to this?	Are you collecting evidence to support this assumption? Any suggested improvements
Three trainings delivered to conservation practitioners to increase capacity in skill X by end of Year 1.	Attendance certificates	It confirms attendance but not improved capacity	i.e. attending training leads to improved capacity	No. Improve MoV to better capture increased capacity

Feedback from the session



- How did you find the process?
- Were the MoVs you identified examples of strong evidence?
- Did you find the MoV was not appropriate or capable of measuring progress?
- If you identified a weakness in the MoV included, how could you strengthen?

Wrap-up



- Thank you!
- Any final questions?
- We will upload slides to all three fund websites after the event
- At the top of the Miro board you will note we have a space for feedback – please grab a sticky note or two and let us know:
 - What went well?
 - What could be improved?
 - Any other comments you'd like to share
- And if anything else comes to mind after the session, please don't hesitate to get in touch!