



IDEAL Mid-Term Evaluation: Findings

Evaluation Period: Oct. 1, 2018 – Mar. 31, 2021

By Nancy Mock



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IDEAL

ABOUT IDEAL

IDEAL is an activity funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) that works to support the United States Government's goal of improving food and nutrition security among the world's most vulnerable households and communities. IDEAL addresses knowledge and capacity gaps expressed by the food and nutrition security implementing community to support them in the design and implementation of effective emergency and non-emergency food security activities.

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DISCLAIMER

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CONTACT INFORMATION

IDEAL Activity
c/o Save the Children
899 North Capitol Street NE, Suite #900
Washington, DC 20002
www.fsnnetwork.org
info@fsnnetwork.org

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Abbreviations

AA	Associate Award
AAR	After-action review
AOR	Agreement Officer’s Representative
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CCP	Johns Hopkins Center for Communications Programs
CFA	Content Focus Area
CLA	Collaborating, learning and adapting
CoP	Community of Practice
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DFSA	Development Food Security Activity
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
FFP	USAID’s Office of Food for Peace
FGD	Focus group discussion
FSTT	Food Security Technical Team
HDP	Humanitarian, Development, Peace
HQ	Headquarters
HuMEL	Humanitarian Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
IDEAL	Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IO	International organization
IP	Implementing partner
KI	Key informant
KII	Key informant interview
KM	Knowledge management
KYC	Know your client
LOA	Life of Award
LOE	Level of Effort
LWA	Leader with Associate Award
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRM	Natural resource management
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OGG	Operationalizing Global Guidance
OSTP	Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Program
P2P	Peer-to-peer
PAC	Program Advisory Committee
PAL	Pre-Award Letter
PCS	Program Cycle Support Associate Award
PIA	Program Implementation Award
PREP	Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal
R&I	Refine and Implement

RFA	Request for Applications
RFS	USAID’s Bureau for Resilience and Food Security
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
SBC	Social and Behavioral Change
SGP	Small Grants Program
SLKS	Strategic learning and knowledge sharing
SMT	Senior Management Team
SLCD	Strategic Learning and Capacity Development
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TAP	Technical Advisory Panels
TOC	Theory of Change
TOPS	Technical and Operational Performance Support
USAID	United States Agency for International Aid
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program

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Brief Summary and Background

For many years, the legacy Office of Food for Peace (FFP) funded mechanisms to improve the capacity of implementing partners (IPs) to design and implement quality food security programs. The Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning activity (referred to in this report as "IDEAL" or "the Activity") is the most recent of these initiatives.

IDEAL is a Leader with Associate (LWA) Award led by Save the Children. Consortium members include Mercy Corps, TANGO International (TANGO), and The Kaizen Company (Kaizen). Acute Incite was brought in as a subcontractor to support work in adaptive management/collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) starting in Y3. Other resource institutions include Johns Hopkins Center for Communications Programs (CCP), ICF, Tufts University, and Tulane University. The IDEAL award amount is 30 million USD over the five-year life of award (LOA), while the Associate Awards (AAs) had an initial ceiling of 65 million USD, which was recently revised to 104 million USD. These AAs may continue up to five years after the end date of the IDEAL prime award. IDEAL was a successor to The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program (also an LWA cooperative agreement). After the transition between TOPS and IDEAL, five AAs from the TOPS LWA continue today. Three new AAs have been developed under the IDEAL LWA, and three more are currently in process. This constellation of separate activities is the IDEAL immediate "ecosystem" managed by Save the Children.

TOPS was judged as a relevant, effective, and efficient program. It had a lean staffing structure but provided technical and operational support to improve the quality of primarily FFP's resilience/development-focused food security activities. TOPS contributed to major improvements in FFP guidance documents and IP capabilities in technical areas such as nutrition, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), agriculture/natural resource management (NRM), and commodity management. In addition, TOPS was instrumental in influencing Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA) (formerly Development Food Security Activity [DFSA]) design approaches. For example, TOPS promoted the Theory of Change (TOC) and Refine and Implement (R&I) approaches to activity design, strengthened monitoring and evaluation, and emphasized social and behavioral change (SBC) strategies.

IDEAL was designed to pivot from the more sectoral and development activity-focused capacity support provided through TOPS to a broader approach described as Content Focus Areas (CFAs) in the IDEAL request for applications (RFA). These CFAs included:

- Strengthening the quality and impact of emergency programming
- Data collection and analysis for improved program design and impact
- Adaptive management and application of learning
- Integrated activity design and implementation
- Sustainability and planning for exit
- Social and behavior change
- Equity, empowerment, social cohesion and social accountability

Areas of overlap between TOPS and IDEAL include monitoring and evaluation/data collection and use as well as social and behavioral change.

Similarly to TOPS, IDEAL's pathways to food security activity improvement included a small grants program (SGP), stakeholder consultations, peer-to-peer (P2P) learning, and capacity strengthening initiatives. IDEAL's structure included a Program Advisory Committee (PAC), Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) initially organized around CFAs, the SGP team, regional advisors, and several functional groups:

- Strategic Learning and Capacity Development (SLCD)
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
- Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) – organized in 2021
- Communications and Knowledge Management

- Management and Operations
- Food Security Technical Team (FSTT)

IDEAL's major activities include training/mentoring/tools development, knowledge sharing events/P2P learning activities, stakeholder consultations, awarding and managing small grants, building/nurturing communities of practice (CoPs), monitoring and evaluation, and technical work around the CFAs.

As discussed in more detail below, IDEAL experienced several contextual and internal challenges during the first two-and-a-half years of its implementation. Because of these exceptional challenges, IDEAL had only spent one-third of its budget by the activity mid-term and had not achieved many of its initial targets.

In response to this landscape, IDEAL has adapted a great deal since its inception. This mid-term evaluation (MTE) focuses on understanding how IDEAL is now relevant, effective, and adaptive, especially considering its recent structure and function. The MTE is primarily a learning evaluation, focusing on what is working now, not working, and the implications for the final two years of programming.

This report includes the following sections: an overview of the scope and methodology of the evaluation, topline findings, findings specific to the evaluation questions, and recommendations for the way forward.

Data collection and analysis for this mid-term evaluation took place between May and August, 2021. The draft report was submitted in September and finalized in December of 2021.

Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation, presented in the Evaluation Scope of Work (see Annex 1), is to take stock of the IDEAL activities implemented to date and compare to its original intent, with an emphasis on recent adjustments (including the comprehensive Theory of Change (TOC) developed in Year 2 as well as its "pivot and propel" work related to the COVID-19 pandemic). The mid-term evaluation aims to:

- Inform activity leadership on effective efforts to date to improve food security programming, which IDEAL can continue to catalyze; and
- Provide recommendations for the IDEAL team structure and programming to better meet the needs of the food security implementing community.

This mid-term evaluation has four broad objectives, listed below. Each objective has suggested lines of research that guided the MTE.

RELEVANCE

Assess the degree to which IDEAL's functional and organizational design enables it to meet its goal and purposes. Specifically:

- Are IDEAL's strategic direction and programming around the initial CFAs relevant and appropriate to meet BHA and IP needs in Year 4 and Year 5?
- Has IDEAL sufficiently adapted to COVID-19 and other contextual changes to date? What further adaptations are required to ensure the Activity remains relevant to BHA and IP stakeholders?

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Assess if IDEAL is being implemented effectively and efficiently. Identify barriers the Activity encountered and assess if the Activity adapted appropriately. Specifically:

- Is IDEAL being implemented according to its Theory of Change? What is working and what is not working?
- Are IDEAL's internal processes and ways of working effective and efficient in achieving their desired outputs and outcomes?
- The merger of FFP and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) into the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the operating

environment for IDEAL and its stakeholders in significant ways. How effective were IDEAL's pivot and adaptation to these factors?

- What changes can strengthen and enhance IDEAL's performance through the remaining LOA?
- To what extent has IDEAL successfully achieved its stated objectives/outcomes and met its reporting targets?
- To what extent are IDEAL's Theory of Change and reporting indicators in the most recent M&E plan appropriate? Is the internal monitoring system sufficient to capture and report on progress towards the Theory of Change and indicators?
- Is IDEAL's current size and structure appropriate to meet the continuing IP and BHA needs and to achieve its purposes and goal? The structure includes the functional teams within IDEAL and the working relationships with its Associate Awards, consortium members, Program Advisory Committee, and Technical Advisory Panels.

EXIT STRATEGY PREPAREDNESS

Assess IDEAL's current preparedness for an exit. Specifically:

- How has the sustainability plan been put into practice? What are the necessary changes to best prepare the Activity for successful exit?
- Have IDEAL IP stakeholders begun to establish their own capacity to do capacity strengthening?

Evaluation Methodology

The MTE was a multi-method developmental evaluation style activity. It was also iterative and involved document review, analysis of secondary data, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and group interviews and polls. A description of the evidence base can be found in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Evidence Utilized for MTE

Evidence sources	Relevance	Effectiveness/Efficiency	Sustainability
KIIs	X	X	X
FGDs/GDs		X	
CRM	X	X	X
Website analytics	X	X	X
Administrative data		X	
Event evaluations	X	X	
USAID policy and procurement documents	X	X	
PAC meeting notes and agendas	X	X	
TAP meeting notes and agendas	X	X	
Activity output reports and products	X	X	
Functional group meeting notes	X	X	
TOPS final evaluation	X		X
Activity quarterly and annual reports		X	
M&E Plans		X	
COVID-19 event series reports, meeting recordings and evaluations	X	X	
Consultant reports	X		

Table 2: Key Informant Distribution According to Type of Stakeholder (n=60 completed interviews)

Type of Organization Represented	Number of Interviews Represented
IPs (not IDEAL consortium members)	10
Field-based IP staff	9
BHA Agreement Officer's Representatives (AORs) and senior staff, USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) staff	8
IDEAL staff	23
IDEAL senior backstop executives	4
PAC members	17
IDEAL consultants	3
Associate Awards (Save the Children and BHA staff overseeing AAs)	10

Documents reviewed include activity documents, consultant reports, the final evaluation of TOPS, activity meeting notes, IDEAL outputs (including tools, reports, and recordings), and USAID policy and procurement documents. Secondary data includes website usage analytics, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, SGP tracking database, and activity administrative data.

Key informants (KIs) were selected to reflect the various stakeholders of IDEAL (see Table 2). Group interviews included IDEAL functional teams, the PAC, the TAPs, All Staff meetings, IDEAL Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings, and BHA check-ins. Sixty KIs were interviewed in sessions ranging from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. Several KIs were interviewed multiple times for clarifications and consultations. The KIs were semi-structured. All informants were asked to identify IDEAL's successful activities that have made an impact on the quality of food security programming or show great promise to do so. They also were asked to identify weaknesses or barriers to achieving IDEAL's mission. In-depth probing into aspects of IDEAL's structure and function were asked of appropriate informants. Table 3 shows the basic structure of the qualitative KIs. Questioning varied, however, depending on the knowledge and experience of individual informants. For example, many informants had extensive knowledge of IDEAL and its predecessor (TOPS), even though they may hold a position external to IDEAL. In that case, they may have been interviewed about the range of IDEAL components. Another example is that many of the IP staff, though currently in HQ positions, had recently held field project management posts. In that case, they were asked specific questions relative to the field needs and relevance of IDEAL work to food security staff in the field.

Table 3: Basic Structure of the Qualitative KIs

Component	KI PAC	KI TAPS	KI All Staff	Ki BHA	KI IPs
PAC	x		x	x	x
TAPS	x	x	x	x	
SGP	x		x	x	x
KSM/CoP	x		x	x	x
IDEAL regional roles	x		x	x	x
Stakeholder engagement	x		x	x	x
Capacity strengthening	x		x	x	x
TOC	x		x	x	x

The evaluation activity manager was Lloyd Banwart, and Nancy Mock led the MTE. An IDEAL MTE Steering Committee consisted of Karen Romano, Luisa Angelsmith, Gitau Mbure, Lloyd Banwart, Laura Zillmer, and Dasha Kosmyrina. The evaluator met weekly during June, July, and August with the Steering Committee to

present new findings and discuss implications for IDEAL strategy and any MTE adaptations needed. These regular meetings also made available rolling findings of the MTE for Year 4 work planning purposes.

Limitations of the evaluation: Primary data for this evaluation were not collected using probability sampling methods. However, this evaluation used multiple sources of evidence to triangulate findings. Where discrepancies between data sources occurred, follow-up interviews were conducted to expand the sample of KIs.

A second limitation was that a single interviewer, the evaluator conducted all KIIs. The decision to use a single interviewer not identified as IDEAL staff or a staff of one of its consortium members was made to decrease respondent bias and to better ensure confidentiality of the interviews.

Analysis: This multiple method qualitative evaluation analyzed the information in an iterative way. The evaluator triangulated findings among the data sources and reported findings each week to the MTE Steering Committee. Based on input from the MTE Steering Committee, additional analysis and data collection led to the iteration of key findings until saturation was achieved; that is, no additional change in findings was achieved through new information. In the presentation of findings below, these key findings resulted from saturation. Where applicable, quantitative evidence from IDEAL's monitoring systems is presented to illustrate findings.

Findings

Topline Findings

IDEAL EXPERIENCED A DIFFICULT BIRTH IN AN EXTREMELY DISRUPTED CONTEXT

IDEAL experienced a difficult birth in a very disrupted context. First, IDEAL was a radical departure from its predecessor program, TOPS. While the design of the IDEAL RFA included similar pathways to change, the dramatic shift away from sectoral approaches to program improvement was a dramatic shift in the vision for this new activity. This shift in emphasis was challenging for IDEAL and many of its stakeholders.

The LWA ecosystem was managed differently by Save the Children in IDEAL, unlike in TOPS, causing undue burden on IDEAL senior staff. The development of the AAs was largely undertaken by IDEAL senior staff. Because of the high ceiling of the AAs, this led to a drain on IDEAL staff as they struggled to manage the development of the AAs. In addition, key senior staff migrated to AAs, leaving gaps in technical expertise on the IDEAL team.

The context in which IDEAL finds itself has changed profoundly since the start of the Activity. COVID-19 was a global disruptor that started to impact programming in early 2020. The scale and scope of impacts to food security programs required immediate and adaptive support from IDEAL.

USAID's recent reorganization was another profound change in IDEAL's environment and one that is continuing to evolve. Perhaps the most profound change within USAID is the merger of FFP with OFDA into the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), which officially occurred in June 2020, though the process of the merger began before IDEAL's launch at the very end of 2018. These two organizations within USAID each had large program portfolios and strong cultures. The merger process continues to this day. While FFP included both emergency and non-emergency food security activities, OFDA was primarily focused on emergency response and non-food components of emergency relief, having a very small resource allocation to disaster risk reduction (DRR). The dynamics of this merger resulted in more ambiguity in Activity management within BHA.

The expansion of IDEAL's stakeholders to include emergency program implementers, other sectoral actors within BHA, and local organizations has added to the diversity of stakeholder interests and needs. While

integrating these stakeholders is important for achieving high-impact and sustainable improvements in food security, this diversity also presents great challenges to IDEAL programming.

Internal changes in IDEAL leadership and senior staff also affected the trajectory of the Activity. IDEAL did not have a stable senior leadership team until October 2020. IDEAL's inaugural Activity Director (Save the Children) stepped down in February 2020 after BHA and Save the Children senior staff concluded that she had not succeeded in reaching a common understanding with BHA of the vision of the Activity. Other senior staff departures affected the Activity's progress. IDEAL's Strategic Learning and Capacity Development Advisor (The Kaizen Company) also departed early on, again a problem of fit with the Activity's needs. IDEAL's Deputy Director (Save the Children) moved to support the Program Cycle Support (PCS) AA, as did one of its senior technical leads (Save the Children). Notably, only one of the five key personnel listed in the Save the Children IDEAL proposal is still in place today (see Annex 4).

As a result, IDEAL could not reach a common vision with BHA for IDEAL during the critical first year of the Activity. Opportunities were missed. For example, IDEAL could not build on the successes of its predecessor project, and a systematic IP needs assessment did not happen. This was very unfortunate for IDEAL's forward progress, and while largely resolved after the appointment of the new Save the Children Activity Director in late April 2020, many important foundational activities (such as the CFA baseline capacity assessment) did not occur. The TOPS Summative Evaluation (2019) concluded that delegation and trust were among the three most prominent reasons TOPS was successful. IDEAL was unable to attain BHA trust during its early days resulting in missed opportunities to operationalize a vision and strategy.

STRENGTHS OF IDEAL

Team spirit and activity leadership: Virtually all KIIs mentioned the new leadership of IDEAL as a great improvement of the Activity. Staff felt that the new Activity Director had largely repaired and built a more productive relationship with BHA, especially at the AOR level and with direct BHA stakeholders (those overseeing specific aspects of the Activity). She was judged to have strong leadership qualities and an inclusive and highly adaptive leadership style. She created an environment for collaborative engagement.

Continuity of organizations and some staff from TOPS: Save the Children, Mercy Corps, and TANGO were all consortium partners in The TOPS Program. Several staff members also transitioned from TOPS to IDEAL. This was viewed to have facilitated organizational learning between the two activities.

Monitoring/evaluation/data collection and use workstream: This workstream was mentioned by nearly all stakeholders as one the most successful in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Reasons for this include the seamless transition from TOPS to IDEAL of organizations and technical leadership, excellent engagement with BHA counterparts, the clear linkage between the workstream and food security activity staff responsibilities, and a professionally run workstream. Notably, to be discussed later, this team is also the leanest team given its mandate.

Knowledge management and communications workstream: This workstream also transitioned seamlessly from TOPS. The team is highly productive, technically experienced/trained, and has an excellent esprit de corps. The linkage of IDEAL to AAs through the joint use of the KM/Communications team staff and FSN Network website are viewed as strengths that facilitate better leveraging of AAs in service of IDEAL's mandate. This team also is lean, given its workload.

COVID-19 pivot: Most stakeholders felt that IDEAL had done an exemplary job in pivoting quickly to focus resources on the pandemic crisis while demonstrating new (to the food security community) and existing approaches to adaptive management (scrum/sprint, scenario planning), collaboration (through virtual modalities), and capacity strengthening (application labs). IDEAL was given especially high marks for what was considered by many to be "best practice" in the design and implementation of virtual P2P learning events and meetings.

However, most IPs interviewed judged that IDEAL should have accelerated the speed of its efforts. The first publicly facing event, offered by the monitoring and evaluation workstream, occurred on April 1, 2020. This event was early enough to have an impact on monitoring and evaluation in the field, especially for introducing remote technologies and methods for monitoring during the pandemic. However, most events occurred in July 2020 or later. IPs indicated that the utility of IDEAL COVID-19 workstreams would have been greater if IDEAL had rolled out workstreams earlier. By July, IPs noted that they were bombarded by invitations to webinars and virtual events related to COVID-19 programming advice/tools.

Strong understanding of and connectivity to RFSAs and to nexus topics: IDEAL consortium partner organizations and staff brought much of the capacity and experience of the legacy TOPS Program. Senior consortium staff had a wealth of food security design and evaluation experience.

Stakeholder Consultation: All sources of evidence converged on the significance of the stakeholder consultation that was conducted in April of 2021. This consultation engaged BHA and IPs on issues related to the RFSAs RFA design and solicitation process. All stakeholders concluded that BHA and IP engagement was critical at this particular time of USAID organizational changes and when the context for humanitarian and development projects is changing so dramatically.

BHA voiced strong support for the value of stakeholder consultations and provided numerous examples of how BHA policies and guidance had been informed by these activities. IPs, though, expressed some skepticism about the impact of stakeholder consultations. This underlines the importance of tracking and disseminating changes to BHA guidance policy and management resulting from stakeholder engagement.

Knowledge sharing events: Executive and technical staff of IPs appreciated knowledge sharing events where P2P exchange involved expertise beyond BHA and its stakeholder IP staff to include technical experts with global experience. Great appreciation was expressed to include the wider network of expertise and experience in learning events. The Nepal Resilience Learning Event was cited as an example. Many respondents had high hopes for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional knowledge sharing event that was canceled due to COVID-19.

Through the COVID-19 virtual events, IDEAL was able to better reach and activate local partners than was the predecessor TOPS. The careful design and implementation of these learning events led to high levels of participation of local staff and organizations. This has enabled IDEAL to progress on the localization agenda.

CRM: This data system tracks the engagement of individual stakeholders in IDEAL's externally facing activities (consultations, learning events, CoPs, webinars). The CRM now consists of a substantial database tracking individual stakeholder contacts. It provides a valuable resource for assessing IDEAL's stakeholder engagement, though its full potential is yet to be realized. The evaluator, however, was able to analyze engagement patterns among stakeholders. The expansion of more frequent analysis of this database can generate useful performance monitoring indicators. The data system currently tracks only IDEAL externally facing events, not including AAs and internal IDEAL activities.

Technical assistance for program design and refinement: Stakeholders unanimously appreciated the support that IDEAL provided to develop TOCs, undertake R&I activities, and design monitoring and evaluation strategies.

PROMISING DIRECTIONS

Recent staffing and technical leadership improvements: While the effects of the changes are yet to be translated into food security capacity improvement outcomes, recent recruitments related to CFAs (sustainability, integration, social cohesion, social accountability, social and behavioral change), and small grants management, were viewed by most relevant KIs as important improvements.

Developing adaptive management capacity strengthening tools: The demand for improved capacity in scenario planning from IPs and resulting IDEAL activities led to the development (ongoing) of an online course aimed at IP field staff. IPs expressed great appreciation for the support to develop scenario planning expertise and expressed the need for the growth of products and services that strengthen adaptive management.

Nascent but well-appreciated emergency program improvement workstream. KIs overwhelmingly judged the emerging workstreams through the Emergency Practitioners’ Forum (EP Forum) and the Humanitarian Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (HuMEL) group as important first steps towards improving emergency programs. Informants identified programming in conflict contexts/protracted crises, nexus issues, and monitoring and evaluation as critical issues for improving program results.

Leveraging AAs: The immediate Activity ecosystem of IDEAL and its affiliated AAs provides a large pool of resources that have as a goal to improve food security programming. IDEAL and Save the Children have begun to strategically leverage these resources by hiring a senior staff member whose job is to manage AAs. Joint programming between IDEAL and AAs is beginning to be more common.

Emergence of functional CoPs: During the past year, IDEAL has established four CoPs that are beginning to gain traction. The strategic learning and knowledge sharing (SLKS) CoP is the most mature, focusing on field-based RFSA/backbone learning advisors. While small and targeted, it has developed an engagement platform for learning advisors of RFSA’s and backbone projects. All KIs felt that mechanisms to engage project staff interest groups were important work for IDEAL and that CoPs/interest groups developed by the Activity to date were helpful. However, KIs warned that CoPs should be organic and functional as they have been to date. They warned to avoid the proliferation of mechanisms that are not relevant to the stakeholder communities.

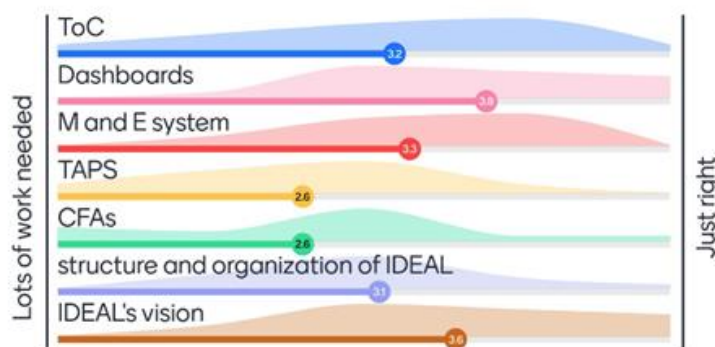
Revision and support of the FSN Network website: The FSN Network website is a legacy tool developed by TOPS. Its revision and continuation are critical to IDEAL’s knowledge management approach, though continued improvements will be required to ensure that FSNNetwork.org can facilitate field programming capacity improvements in a dynamic context.

AREAS OF CONTINUING CHALLENGE FOR IDEAL

Absence of a clear vision and logic: During the early days of the MTE, the evaluator conducted a group poll querying the fit for purpose of various components of IDEAL. The poll reflected staff concern that work still needed to be done to make IDEAL fulfill its mandate. Figure 1 summarizes the findings from the group poll.

Figure 1: Results of a group poll done via Mentimeter at an IDEAL all staff meeting

Please rate fit for purpose of the following for achieving project success?



KIIs with staff and key stakeholders revealed that the vision and logic framework linking IDEAL activities to its mission were not yet sufficiently focused and clear. Staff felt that they were quite busy but “not sure to what end,” which reflected a general feeling that the Activity was still overly process-oriented (as opposed to outcome-oriented). Supporting evidence included the low level of engaged stakeholders (see below).

IDEAL’s consortium structure did not work as expected: Kaizen was not able to effectively lead the capacity strengthening component of the Activity to the satisfaction of IDEAL and BHA. Though Kaizen devoted significant effort to the development of a capacity assessment tool, insufficient engagement with key stakeholders resulted in a tool that was not judged useful. A mature capacity strengthening strategy for the content focus areas was not developed. Mercy Corps has not yet delivered the senior food security leadership that it is capable of providing and that is needed to ensure that substantive food security programming improvement strategies are developed by IDEAL.

Several of IDEAL’s activity components need to be strengthened: These include the PAC, the SGP, the organization of work to achieve gains in CFAs, and staffing configurations.

Monitoring and evaluation is the strongest workstream but needs more resources: Though monitoring and evaluation has been a strength, IDEAL needs greater emphasis on this workstream to support adaptive management and ensure that IDEAL works effectively towards its mandate to improve food security programming.

Increase prioritization of emergency programs: While IDEAL has made progress in reaching the emergency food security community, greater focus of resources on this stakeholder group is needed.

Integration is insufficiently incorporated into IDEAL’s conceptual/logic framework: BHA and other stakeholders consistently identified integrated activity design and implementation as one of the highest priority CFAs, citing its importance for graduating vulnerable populations from poverty and for protecting them from transitory food insecurity due to shocks and stresses; however, IDEAL has not yet articulated a strategy for strengthening this capacity among its stakeholders.

Below, a more detailed analysis of these findings is presented following the flow of the original evaluation questions.

Findings to the Evaluation Questions

RELEVANCE: ASSESS THE DEGREE TO WHICH IDEAL’S FUNCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN ENABLES IT TO MEET ITS GOAL AND PURPOSES

Specifically: Are IDEAL’s strategic direction and programming around the initial CFAs relevant and appropriate to meet BHA and IP needs in Year 4 and Year 5?

The CFAs did not provide a logical framework for organizing IDEAL’s work. They are a mix of programming types (emergencies), management strategies (integration, adaptive management, data/evidence/ learning), and program thematic areas (SBC, empowerment of youth, women and marginalized groups, building social cohesion and social accountability, sustainability). These CFAs reflected BHA’s priorities for results over the course of the Activity. The creation of the TAP structure was an attempt by IDEAL to systematically address the CFAs, though this was not successful for a variety of reasons, in large part the absence of a logic framework. BHA did not require a TOC as part of the Activity proposal, and the logical framework provided was high level, providing little guidance for the structure and organization of the Activity.

Another issue repeatedly mentioned by many stakeholders was that IDEAL never clearly defined what implementer-led meant in practical terms. Early misalignment between the inaugural Activity Director and BHA staff resulted in a lack of meaningful engagement and the creation of a mutually endorsed vision for IDEAL. A TOC for IDEAL was finally developed in the later part of 2020, but its organization focused heavily

on mechanisms for learning and adaptation without clear pathways to the intended results (improved food security programming).

Operating in the absence of a clear vision of tangible intended results, IDEAL established TAPs that grouped and regrouped over time the CFAs prioritized by BHA. This approach failed to achieve results because:

- a) The scope of themes in the CFAs were very broad;
- b) TAPs were composed of consortium member staff who self-selected (not necessarily with the right level of expertise related to the CFA)—they excluded the broader array of expertise in the IP community, and they had very little level of effort (LOE) devoted to the workstream around the CFA;
- c) TAPs did not have sufficiently strong and dedicated leadership with adequate LOE devoted to the CFA work;
- d) TAPs did not go through a strategic planning process connecting the content focus area to results, a problem definition related to the content focus areas, and a plan as to how the larger IDEAL activity components would be mobilized in service of the identified results.

One exception was the Data collection and analysis for improved program design and impact TAP, an aberration for several reasons. First, this was one area of work that moved relatively seamlessly from TOPS to IDEAL, maintaining continuity of TANGO leadership, staff, and excellent rapport between project staff and BHA counterparts. The Data TAP also had clear program counterparts (both at BHA and among IPs) in food security activities and was, therefore, more easily engaged with their target stakeholder groups.

The identification of thematic and Activity priorities in the RFA was important and relevant but covered a broad spectrum of concerns that were not operationally defined, prioritized, and inserted into a logic framework connecting them with project resources and activities (though attempts were made). For example, emergency programs represent the majority of BHA food security programming. Improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of this activity type is a high priority for BHA. However, IDEAL did not identify capacities that needed to be improved and a strategy to move forward. Rather, IDEAL went back and forth about whether emergency programming should have its own TAP or be integrated into the other TAPs, missing the point that emergency program needs/gaps needed to be identified, strategies developed to meet these needs, and activity resources devoted to implementing the strategies.

In its work approach, IDEAL did not sufficiently elevate the improvement of the two types of food security activities in its logic framework. Emergency programs and RFSA are the two types of activities that must be improved on the pathway to reaching IDEAL's goal. Improving the design and management of these two types of activities and better integrating them (with each other and other sectors/projects) to adaptively manage in a shifting landscape is a more concrete approach. In contrast to TOPS and prior BHA-funded IP food security capacity strengthening projects, IDEAL was charged with elevating emergency programs in its work. This was due both to the preponderance of BHA food security resources being spent on these activities (approximately 75%) and the fact that most of these activities were taking place in multi-year protracted crises that present special challenges to activity design and adaptive management.

IDEAL has not yet given emergency programs the high level of focus and investment that is needed. This is reflected in staffing, activities, and participation data. Staffing expertise will be discussed below. Few IDEAL activities directly targeted emergency program themes or staff. Activity data monitoring external participation in IDEAL events reflect much greater participation of RFSA stakeholders. Additionally, emergency program field practitioners and HQ backstop staff felt that important topics, such as the nexus/resilience, programming in protracted crises/conflict, and third party monitoring, were not yet receiving sufficient prominence in IDEAL's work plan. While Save the Children recruited a Deputy Director with considerable emergency program experience, IDEAL has tried unsuccessfully to recruit a senior emergency specialist to complement its team.

A substantive CFA, integrated activity design and implementation, is of great importance because no single activity will result in high impact and sustainable change. However, up until now, IDEAL does not have a coherent definition of integration and a plan for strengthening integration. Integration is needed across sectors, activities, interventions, programs, and organizations. USAID is highlighting humanitarian, development, peace (HDP) coherence across the triple nexus. IDEAL should more practically address this concern. An important opportunity for IDEAL, given its COVID-19 pivot, is strategic integration of emergency and non-emergency food security activities (integrating crisis modifiers, layering emergency/non-emergency food security activities, and appropriately sequencing humanitarian and developmental assistance). This is particularly important because of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations and the fact that this work is in the manageable interests of BHA. Numerous sources of evidence reflect increased food insecurity among RFSAs and other program participants and targeted populations benefiting from resilience investments. There is an immediate need to prevent further stress on these populations benefiting from resilience investments by USAID.

While adaptive management was a purpose-level component of the TOC and is a critical requirement of improved food security programming, pathways to improvement were never clearly identified. This includes the lack of key competencies needed to adaptively manage, such as having real-time and relevant information about the context and program processes; scenario and contingency planning; agile agreement/contracting arrangements; and ability to flexibly surge/mobilize relevant expertise/experience.

Also important for IDEAL, but not fully implemented, is the know your client (KYC) approach. Efforts to better understand client stakeholders and their needs are fragmented. While the CRM contains useful information about those who attend IDEAL events, a broader roster of the population of clients or client organizations that IDEAL is trying to reach is not a part of that database. This is especially problematic among practitioners of emergency programs. IDEAL could use the “population” of intended stakeholders to target communications and better monitor engagement and change over time.

Improvements IDEAL made to address Activity weaknesses include the recruitment of senior and experienced leadership in the areas of SBC, Social Cohesion/Social Accountability, Integration and Sustainability, Adaptive Management, Small Grants management, and PAC management.

Has IDEAL sufficiently adapted to COVID-19 and other contextual changes to date? What further adaptations are required to ensure the Activity remains relevant to BHA and IP stakeholders?

IDEAL faced enormous contextual challenges, as discussed above. Due to improved engagement between Save the Children and BHA, IDEAL was able to quickly pivot to provide support to IPs who were struggling with the new field realities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. IDEAL developed and implemented a strategic approach of sequenced activities identified through a process of consultations, webinars, tools development/dissemination, establishment of knowledge sharing workstreams, and mentored capacity strengthening strategies. Particularly in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), this integrated and strategic approach bore results. The MEL workstream sustained the highest level of engagement of the five COVID-19 learning streams (as reflected by CRM data, KIIs, and as yet anecdotal information about impacts—the first three events had participation levels of 569, 239, and 167 participants, respectively). IDEAL developed a logical and sequenced approach, through its P2P learning events and applications labs, resulting in tangible impacts on monitoring and targeting activities in the field. The M&E workstream is used to illustrate a well-articulated approach to IP engagement and follow-up with a set of sequenced activities that lead to tangible changes in specific areas of program practice.

IDEAL exerted successful leadership to support IPs in a meaningful way by:

1. Early engagement with stakeholders to identify priority needs,
2. Following through with defined workstreams, especially P2P learning activities, development of guidance/tools for data collection and use, and hands-on support through its application lab, and

3. Leveraging IDEAL's Operationalization of Global Guidance (OGG) workstream to access expertise outside the BHA immediate stakeholder community.

This experience illustrated how IDEAL could structure its work to support adaptive management in the field. However, IP stakeholders felt they would have benefited more concretely if IDEAL had responded more rapidly to COVID-19. For example, the monitoring and evaluation workstream was the first to launch events (April 1, 2020), and its interventions were recognized by IP KIs and participant evaluation data to have helped them adapt MEL approaches in response to the pandemic. Other workstreams launched in May and June. The OGG consultation occurred in July due to delays in approval. IP stakeholders felt that by late spring, they were overwhelmed by webinars and events related to coping with COVID-19.

The second contextual change, the merging of former FFP and OFDA and other USAID reorganizations, however, was an enormous contextual change not adequately taken into account by IDEAL or BHA. The various reorganizations are among the most significant in USAID history. This context presented several challenges and opportunities for IDEAL.

All stakeholder groups lament the impact of the merger on bureaucratic processes and the resulting timeliness and relevance of procurement processes. Approval processes are opaque and protracted (three times longer than before the merger according to several BHA informants), confusion exists about the legal use of different funding streams for project activities, and BHA colleagues are under great stress (BHA has approximately 50% staff vacancy).

IDEAL has not responded sufficiently to these challenges. Both the majority of BHA staff interviews and IP KIs indicated that stakeholder engagement should be prioritized as a part of IDEAL's agenda to become helpers in building new connective tissue between a rapidly evolving BHA (and USAID) and the IP community. KIs also felt that mainstreaming stakeholder engagement should be IDEAL's strategy as opposed to relying on one-off stakeholder consultations. IDEAL's engagement with InterAction, whose mandate includes policy-level engagement with BHA, was also identified as a priority.

These two major contextual changes also offer opportunities for IDEAL to accelerate and scale its impact. COVID-19 will result in more than two billion dollars' worth of additional supplemental funding to be managed and released by BHA. IDEAL may be able to assist BHA and IPs to improve the impact and sustainability of outcomes from the use of these funds, in part based upon IDEAL's desk review and evaluation of first and second rounds of COVID-19 supplemental funding. The merger offers potential openings to enhance an important BHA priority, integration of activity design and implementation. IDEAL can leverage a greater impact of activities by bringing together food assistance and other emergency program sectors. Most immediately, IDEAL can facilitate improved layering of emergency response into longer-term development of resilience capacities.

A final "contextual change" relates to the great interest and increased proliferation of AAs. The repercussions for IDEAL work are noted above. Many informants also felt that much of the technical work migrated out of IDEAL to the AAs, questioning IDEAL's continued compelling role in supporting food security program improvement. On the other hand, strengthened linkages between and among the IDEAL AAs were felt to be an enormous opportunity for improved food security program impact.

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY: ASSESS IF IDEAL IS BEING IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY. IDENTIFY BARRIERS THE ACTIVITY ENCOUNTERED AND ASSESS IF THE ACTIVITY ADAPTED APPROPRIATELY.

Specifically: Is IDEAL being implemented according to its Theory of Change? What is working and what is not working?

IDEAL's TOC was not yet one year old when the evaluation was conducted. IDEAL activities are consistent with the TOC, which is broad and process-oriented, providing scope for a proliferation of activities and forums. This is exactly what has occurred. IDEAL's charge to be implementer-led (many implementers with

differing agendas) and its three broad purposes do not provide a framework for prioritizing activities towards high impact improvements of Activity quality. In fact, the TOC easily accommodates all activities conducted by IDEAL regardless of their potential impact.

The three implied intermediate outcomes include improved design and management of RFSAs, emergency programs, and integration of these activities to adaptively manage their programming landscape. However, the pathways to achieve these outcomes are not explicitly mapped out in the TOC. A systematic assessment of stakeholder capacity gaps and priorities related to the CFAs did not occur.

Though the initial project design included an assessment (Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Program—OSTP) to be led by Kaizen, this did not happen, and an alternative assessment was not developed. A systematic assessment of IP practice, gaps, and priorities is needed to guide IDEAL's agenda. Identifying and prioritizing strategic pathways to change is critical to focusing IDEAL's agenda and thus ensuring sustained progress towards its mandate.

On the other hand, IDEAL is very active, with many activities (79 externally facing events or CoP meetings since the start of IDEAL recorded in the CRM database), all of which fit within its current TOC. The problem, though, is the focus on prioritizing key improvements in food security programming and then using its pathways of capacity strengthening, P2P learning, stakeholder engagement, and small grants to achieve these.

IDEAL's inputs include tools/training, knowledge sharing events, small grants, knowledge management platforms, regional coordination activities, and the establishment/maintenance of peer-to-peer learning forums (CoPs). To this should be added leveraging Associates Awards. Leveraging AAs is particularly important given the magnitude of resources flowing through the AAs.

To date, IDEAL's most visible activities, in terms of reach, are knowledge sharing events. These registered the greatest number of stakeholders and are mentioned most widely by informants as recognizable contributions to learning for program improvement. However, these are resource-intensive activities and have limited tangible impact on program quality.

In terms of activities that will have or have potential impact on program improvement, IPs at the HQ level and a number of BHA staff identified the stakeholder consultation that took place in April as particularly useful, especially in this dynamic context of change. Some informants referred to the merger as the "elephant in the room." The merger was cited by KIIs as a setback for the field relevance of the procurement process and content of food security activities. Because of this, the stakeholder consultation in April surfaced many of the concerns of IPs, and BHA staff also felt that the consultation was useful for revising guidance and procurement. Stakeholder engagement also was viewed to be particularly important to facilitate adaptive management and integration.

Both IP HQ and field staff also mentioned skills gaps related to a number of program design and implementation competencies. Scenario planning, targeting, TOC development, conducting R&I phases of activities, developing Learning Agendas/Learning Plans, and MEL competencies were among those most often cited. In terms of best practice identification and sharing, HDP nexus/programming in protracted crises (including how to improve social cohesion, social accountability) is a high priority among all stakeholders. RFSAs HQ and field staff also cited sustainability model approaches to be important. But importantly, priority competencies cited varied by both respondent and context, again begging the need for a systematic needs assessment by IDEAL.

Cited competency needs currently are being addressed by IDEAL to varying degrees. IDEAL has prioritized scenario planning. In December 2020, IDEAL conducted a popular webinar on scenario planning and launched the development of the online course and a capacity support strategy. TOC capacity strengthening has largely migrated to the PCS AA, though a gap remains in capturing and analyzing lessons learned and best practices across activities (meta-review). The TOC office hours activity was popular among

IPs, particularly in the appropriate time of the procurement cycle. Office hours reach a small number of participants and have both scalability and sustainability issues. As part of the COVID-19 workstream, the targeting application lab was conducted; however, to date, data on the impact of this workstream is lacking. Improved capacity to undertake meaningful R&I remains an area of felt need among IPs. IDEAL has teamed up with PCS to support regional culmination workshops and will conduct a joint stakeholder consultation next year. Again, however, concrete impact data on R&I competencies is not available.

The MEL team’s workstream stresses capacity strengthening work. This includes support to R&I culmination activities and the COVID-19 MEL workstream that builds capacities in targeting and remote monitoring and qualitative data collection. Qualitative data collection is being developed into an online course and will include other mentoring support. Course evaluations for these activities were very positive though concrete impact data is not yet available.

Other IDEAL interventions were judged to have high potential, but have not been implemented well, such as the SGP. The SGP was identified to be of great interest among IPs outside the consortium. Thus, it has a very high potential for increasing IP engagement and learning around the CFAs. IP KIIs and the overwhelming IP response to the calls for application (the last round was an exception) are evidence of the potential importance placed on this component by IPs. Table 4 shows that through four distinct grant rounds, 351 grant applications were submitted.

IPs were enthusiastic about the small grants despite what was reported to be an agonizing grant management process for IPs, IDEAL staff, and BHA. To date, IDEAL has made 24 awards. Table 4 illustrates that the time between submission of grants and grant awards was variable but lengthy in most cases. The first round of Micro Grants proceeded most rapidly, typically requiring five to seven months between submission of proposals and award signatures. Round two of the Micro Grants and the Program Implementation Award (PIA) proposal review and award process typically lasted in excess of one year (after proposal submission). If the RFA approval process is included, these grant cycles are at or over 1.5 years.

Table 4: IDEAL Small Grants

RFA	# of months for RFA approval (date IDEAL sent to BHA and approval received)	Date RFA Released	Date RFA Closed	Number of Applications	Number of Grants Awarded	Date First Proposal in Round Funded (BHA Approval Received)	Date of Last Proposal in Round Funded (BHA Approval Received)	Time to signature for first award approved (from approval)	Time to signature for last award awarded (from approval)	Average Number of Issues Letters
Micro Grant (Rd 1)	1.5 months	7/2/2019	8/30/2019	101	13	12/18/2019	2/28/2020	1.5 months	1 month	3
Micro Grant (Rd 2)		7/2/2019	11/1/2019	97		8/13/2020	2/9/2021			3
Program Improvement Award (Rd 1)	1.5 months	9/23/2019	10/25/2019	34	7	8/14/2020	3/23/2021	1 month	1.5 months	2
Program Improvement Award (Rd 2)		9/23/2019	12/13/2019	54		8/14/2020	2/9/2021			2
Applied Research Award	6 months	8/17/2020	10/16/2020	57	3	3/10/2021	6/2/2021	2.5 months	2.5 months	2
Qualitative M&E Program Improvement Award	4 months	1/25/2021	3/5/2021	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

The excellent grant tracking system set up by IDEAL's small grant manager tracks the process of grant management, illustrating well the bottlenecks in the process. For example, for the PIAs, the average lengths of time were as follows: screening the concept notes took 31.5 days; scoring 15.5 days; writing invitation letters to submit full proposals, 7.5 days; full application development 34.5 days; application screening, 7.5 days; internal technical review 32 days; development of IDEAL issues letter 27 days; response to the issues letter 35.5 days; issues letter response review, 40 days; award package preparation, 10 days; USAID initial review, 32 days; USAID issue identification, 2.5 days; issue letter response 10 days; USAID final review 18.5 days; agreement preparation 37.5 days.

Also important to consider is that a large number of grant applications were not relevant to the call for proposals, so those requiring technical review could have been greatly reduced in number.

More recently, even the creation of Requests for Applications (RFAs) is time consuming. Completion of the RFA for the Applied Research Award and qualitative monitoring and evaluation PIA took 6 and 4 months, respectively. In addition, two additional grant rounds were anticipated in Year 3, though neither has or will be conducted.

There are many management challenges with the grant program that can be traced back to inadequate grant program design; insufficient staffing and shortcomings in the selection of application reviewers; differing perspectives between IDEAL and BHA on the expectations from the SGP; and lack of understanding of BHA's review and approval process by IDEAL SGP managers. The root causes of this problem are numerous. On Save the Children's side, the SGP did not receive the resource focus and leadership it needed (technical). BHA and IDEAL did not have a common understanding of the basic purpose of the SGP. While IDEAL viewed the SGP as a mechanism for IP engagement and capacity strengthening, USAID had high expectations for the direct impact of grant funded activities on food security programming and on the quality of grants, in part, because the SGP was identified in the grant agreement as an area of "substantial involvement." During the review process, IDEAL relied heavily on review committees drawing from internal IDEAL staff, often members of the TAPs. Those selected often did not have the expertise needed to review the grant application. As a result, grants applications were frequently forwarded to BHA with deficiencies in substance. As a consequence, BHA received grant applications from IDEAL that it judged to be of low quality or to be misaligned with BHA intent. This led to greater scrutiny and involvement of BHA in the review process resulting in a longer process.

The SGP vision was not developed, so the grant program structure was never clear. It was unclear why a mix of Micro Grants, PIAs, and the Applied Research Award were used and why they were sequenced in that order. Meaningful applied research might take more time than other types of grant activities, yet it was among the later grant rounds.

From recent after-action reviews (AARs) by BHA and IDEAL and KIIs, streamlining the SGP management is necessary. This includes earlier emphasis on reaching agreement with BHA about priority grant themes and focus; streamlining the solicitation process; upgrading the quality and speed of IDEAL application review (including especially screening) and reviewing the sequencing of activities so that the process does not encounter unnecessary bottlenecks.

In addition, the SGP also does not have a clear structure for post-award support to small grants. This is essential to ensure they achieve their "learning" objectives for the BHA food security programming community and so that dissemination and learning activities are rolled out in a meaningful way. Because of this, opportunities to improve the grant performance and dissemination of results may be jeopardized.

In recognition of these problems, Save the Children took a major step to improve its SGP management by hiring an Associate Director for SGP. Having this level of senior focus on the SGP should permit many of the shortcomings to be addressed if Save the Children also ensures that the Associate Director is adequately supported. Support staff will be required to monitor grant compliance; provide periodic and punctual check-ins to review grant quality and any required adaptations; and to prepare for production and

dissemination activities. Given the Associate Director's planned absence for the period of October 2021 to April 2022, Save the Children will need to ensure continued leadership of the SGP. Now that grant projects are beginning to close, it is particularly important to provide adequate support.

This MTE concludes that the SGP is an important component of IDEAL and it should continue to be supported. However, priority emphasis should be given to post-award support of grants already awarded or in existing proposal pipelines. Though curtailing new calls for applications is a missed opportunity for IDEAL, current constraints, including IDEAL's remaining LOA as well as senior staff family leave, suggest this to be the correct course of action.

Specifically, are IDEAL's internal processes and ways of working effective and efficient in achieving their desired outputs and outcomes?

All stakeholders share the concern that IDEAL must reach a better balance between process and results, where process is a means to results. The MTE planning matrix identified 27 different regular meetings held at various frequencies that staff attend. MTE observation, combined with review of notes and KIIs converged on the finding that the processes were not efficient nor guided by a clear understanding of how they were linked to results. Staff are appreciative of more recent and strong IDEAL leadership, however they did not feel that the legacy emphasis on process over results has yet been overcome. This has led to morale problems among IDEAL staff despite the supportive atmosphere created by current leadership. Nearly all stakeholders consulted (across stakeholder groups) identified the lack of a clear vision linking IDEAL activities to results as the major barrier to a successful Activity; as one IDEAL staff noted, "We are working hard but to what end?".

To what extent has IDEAL successfully achieved its stated objectives/outcomes and met its reporting targets?

Because of internal changes within IDEAL and dramatic changes in context, IDEAL's reporting targets have changed and many of the indicator targets were never established in the first place. For example, there are no targets for 13 of 27 indicators in the second annual results report. No data is available for six key indicators and only two indicators reported achieving or surpassing targets: the number of organizations participating in IDEAL events and the number trained (interpreted liberally) in content focus skill areas. However, in March of 2021, the performance monitoring plan underwent another revision, slimming down the indicators to 21 and focusing on self-reported Kirkpatrick Level 3 and 4 indicators (self-reported capacity improvement and reported use of IDEAL information tools, changes in connectivity among community members), which is an improvement in the M&E plan. However, indicators are still relatively general self-reported improvements. An instrument that collects concrete information on specific behavioral change, for example in the quality of programming in CFAs, IP capacities in the CFAs, actual changes in individual and organizational practices (targeting, monitoring and evaluation) is needed. However, this level of specificity requires a greater Activity focus on specific capacities to improve. Until IDEAL's program focus is sharpened, and because of program delays caused by contextual and internal factors, discussion of progress against targets may be premature.

To what extent are IDEAL's Theory of Change and reporting indicators in the most recent M&E plan appropriate? Is the internal monitoring system sufficient to capture and report on progress towards the Theory of Change and indicators?

As discussed earlier, the TOC may not be appropriate for reaching the Activity goal and purposes. The purposes and sub-purposes are heavily process-oriented (see Annex 5) challenging a performance measurement framework that logically traces improved food security activities. While the performance measurement framework appropriately adopted Kirkpatrick's Model for measuring organizational capacity change, the TOC does not identify which capacities should be prioritized to make the measurement framework useful beyond the basic levels of Kirkpatrick's scale focused on Levels 1 and 2 (appreciation of capacity strengthening events and self-reported changes in knowledge). Levels 3 and 4 (individual and

organizational changes) are only measured by general questions reflecting the respondents' self-assessment of any changes in individual or organizational behaviors influenced by participating in a specific IDEAL activity or activity stream. While appropriate to the TOC, it is difficult to know what changes in programming have actually occurred.

Another deficiency in the TOC that spills over to measurement and metrics is around the development of robust collaborative engagement, such as network metrics (how much and why IDEAL stakeholders interact, what types of joint activities they undertake, how much their networks grow), and engagement metrics capturing how workstreams lead to individual/organizational change (for example, the number and percent of participants who participate consistently in workstreams; the percent and number of participants in a workstream that actually improve targeting methods).

Sustained engagement of IDEAL stakeholders remains a challenge for IDEAL. An analysis of the CRM database shows that only nine individuals attended 10 or more of IDEAL's outward-facing events. Among these nine, four were USAID staff, eight were US-based, and only two were Strategic Learning Advisors of RFSAs. The majority of CRM activity attendees had only attended one of the 75 events (78%). The program affiliation for the majority of event attendees is unknown, due to incomplete event registration data. Participants predominantly attended COVID-related events. Thirty-six participants were affiliated with learning mechanisms/backbones. Sixty-seven percent of these attended only one event. Two hundred and seventy nine unique participants from RFSAs attended one or more of the 75 events. Of these, 42% attended only one event, 42% attended two to five events, and only 16% (44 participants) attended more than five events. Emergency practitioners were particularly under-represented. Only 95 attended any event, 61% of these attended only a single event.

The CRM is an excellent tool for monitoring external engagement. However, no similar system exists for measuring and monitoring IDEAL internal workings. Such a tool would probably flag problems such as the burden of meetings shouldered by staff members; PAC participation and gaps; staff satisfaction and challenges.

Is IDEAL's current size and structure appropriate to meet the continuing IP and BHA needs and to achieve its purposes and goal?

Structure includes the functional teams within IDEAL as well as the working relationships with its Associate Awards, consortium members, Program Advisory Committee, and Technical Advisory Panels.

The size and structure of IDEAL is not appropriate to achieving its intended results, though incremental progress has been made towards developing a results-oriented project. The central problem, as discussed above, is the lack of a clear vision guiding the TOC and the attendant activities and intermediate outcomes that lead to these results.

The day-to-day work of IDEAL is to be undertaken by functional teams and the TAPs. The functional teams include Knowledge Management/Communications, Strategic Learning and Capacity Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, CLA, Management and Operations, and the Food Security Technical Team. The TAPs include Integration and Sustainability, Social Cohesion and Social Accountability, Social Behavioral Change, Data, and Adaptive Management. The themes of the TAPs have been regrouped over the course of the IDEAL Activity. Stakeholders questioned the wisdom of grouping integration and sustainability in to one work group.

Because program content resides in the TAPs, which have not made much progress, the functional teams are often working largely in a vacuum. They are able to identify and design processes but without enough of the "to what end" content that is needed. The functional teams also were designed, staffed, and set up to improve important processes such as adaptive management, CLA, managing CoPs, capacity strengthening, and M&E. They have set up, with the exception of capacity strengthening, solid approaches and tools. A major limitation, however, is that until recently, most of the functional teams did not have

sufficient resident experience/expertise in food security programming, which made them dependent on TAPs for content. This is in part a result of the original design of the consortium where content and function were divided around organizational lines, Mercy Corps: food security and resilience; TANGO: monitoring and evaluation; Save the Children: overall management and coordination, and contribution to limited technical areas; Kaizen: capacity and organizational development, strategic learning, knowledge management and managing the FSN Network).

The consortium arrangement has a number of deficiencies. The roles and responsibilities of different consortium partners were not clear from the start, have changed over time, and still result in uneven distribution of work among the consortium members. Consortium member responsibilities shifted over time. For example, while in the proposal Kaizen had responsibility for knowledge management and the management of the FSN Network, these were shifted to Save the Children prior to startup, based on implementation experience under the TOPS Bridge award. Capacity strengthening was originally a role tasked to Kaizen but is now less clearly linked to a single institution (appropriately). But importantly, Kaizen has yet to demonstrate its ability to lead the capacity strengthening activities.

Until last year, consortium members did not have clear scopes of work written into their agreements. Rather, the sub-awards refer to the Save the Children proposal-based award document, which outlined roles in general terms. This has led to a dysfunctional consortium structure where Mercy Corps implicitly leads food security (an area of what should be cross-cutting competence), while other consortium members have leadership over functional areas of the Activity. This structure has not facilitated achievement of results because Mercy Corps is responsible for the lion's share of content development through the TAPs. Mercy Corps has not engaged its capable senior leadership sufficiently to lead and better rationalize substantive strategies to move along quality improvements in food security programming. Only the TANGO role, a legacy of The TOPS Program, is clear and its boundaries understood by Activity staff.

The staffing structure itself emphasizes process over content and LOE is fragmented or low in some technical areas (see Table 5). Of Save the Children's 11 full-time or close to full-time positions, only three relate substantially to program content areas though these are senior positions with many other duties. Save the Children only leads one CFA, SBC, with a 20% lead and 30% co-lead LOE. However, Save the Children is clearly in a position to lead the emergency program workstream, which also would be logical, given the Deputy Director's qualifications in the emergency programming area. Mercy Corps has six full-time and one 50% technical staff devoted to food security program-related work (two of these are new), it has an additional three advisors at the 25% level, and 12 staff supported at 10% or less. It is unclear how this LOE is distributed to support food security substantive work.

The delegation of roles to support the CFAs is fragmented. For example, about 70% LOE to support Integration and Sustainability, a key area of work, is split among four staff. TANGO and Kaizen have similar levels of LOE, though the workloads of these two organizations appear to be quite different. TANGO has only two full-time staff and two at 50% LOE, 1 at 30% and 1 at 20%, though it also includes small amounts of LOE for 10 staff that support CFAs. Given the importance of the monitoring and evaluation work to IDEAL, together with the important external support to the data and analysis CFA, the level of dedicated LOE is quite low. Kaizen is charged with developing the capacity strengthening plan for IDEAL with its four full-time staff even though the capacity strengthening aspects of work are also supported by Save the Children and Acute Incite, a temporary subcontractor. Acute Incite provides 2.5 full-time staff total, supporting the adaptive management workstream and contributing to capacity strengthening and CLA.

The relatively low levels across the team of food security expertise and senior-level staff with the ability to lead workstreams creates inefficiencies that have a negative effect on IDEAL's work, with staff spending disproportionate amounts of time trying to find their way forward on designing and executing work plan activities. This deficiency has especially affected the ability of IDEAL to successfully address capacity strengthening in the CFAs. Given Mercy Corps' large role in developing the substantive components of the Activity, lack of engagement of Mercy Corps senior leadership in the Activity also has contributed to the

limited progress in developing the CFAs. Also problematic has been the limited relevant capacity of Kaizen to lead in the important areas of capacity strengthening and strategic learning.

Another irregularity in staffing is the allocation of the regional positions to two different consortium members. Regional staff communicated and the MTE lead agrees that scopes of work and reporting structures differed and that advisors should be hired and report through the Save the Children agreement.

IDEAL has made strides to strengthen the food security expertise of the team and allocate increased LOE to TANGO. The recruitment of three senior specialists to lead CFA content areas are examples. Two new TANGO positions were approved prior to the MTE. Through hiring of a Deputy Director, Save the Children has a more substantive involvement in emergency programming, though this position has a very broad mandate.

Table 5: Level of Effort

LOE Description*	Save the Children	Mercy Corps	TANGO	Kaizen	Acute Incite	Total
Total LOE (%)	1,415	880(+35)	425	405	250(+25)	3,375 (33.75 full-time)
Total number of staff listed	19 # less than 20%(3)	20 (8)	16 (10)	5 (0)	4 (0)	64 21
Full-time staff	11	7 (2 new)	2	4	0	24
Staff LOE with food security technical/ program focus	450	880	425	100	0	1,855
# Full-time staff with food security program experience	4 (all but 1 with substantial administrative responsibilities—Karen Romano, Jenny Haddle, Suzanne Ammari, Beatrice Scheuermann)	7	2	1	0	14

*These LOE levels are accurate as of the end of July 2021

IDEAL has not yet leveraged the expertise/experience of its resource partners. The IDEAL university-based resource partners might have been particularly helpful in supporting analyses related to the CFAs, bringing emerging evidence from scientific literature to knowledge sharing events, adding an additional perspective on the PAC and assisting with the design and implementation of the SGP. Particularly in the case of Tufts University, its on-going work on sustainability should be leveraged by IDEAL.

The Program Advisory Committee is an important component of IDEAL in the sense that it provides a consistent venue for engagement among BHA, IPs, and IDEAL. In the words of some KIs, “this is where implementer-led” is supposed to be realized. Though implementer-led is a more mainstreamed consideration, the PAC is an important platform that regularly brings together BHA and implementers outside of the consortium. PAC members see the forum as one mechanism for inclusion of non-consortium members (in addition to the SGP). Although an early poll conducted by the MTE revealed that PAC members did not view PAC participation to be useful for their work, most believed (KIIs and MTE poll) that the PAC was important to the success of IDEAL. Many PAC members had a limited understanding of IDEAL though.

PAC members voiced many concerns about the structure and functioning of the PAC. The PAC has 27 “official” members and another 10 ad hoc members. Official members represent 12 organizations, only seven of which are outside the IDEAL consortium or USAID. These seven organizations are all large international NGOs (INGOs). The number of representatives from each organization varies. One NGO has

four representatives and only three have a single slot. Membership gaps include a wider range of INGOs, local IPs, InterAction, regional knowledge backbone organizations, and academics. Engagement of an important member, World Food Program (WFP), is weak.

Attendance of PAC quarterly meetings reflects low commitment to the PAC. Only 10 of 27 members missed one or less of the last five meetings. Meeting attendance fluctuated between 11 and 20 regular members, but the trend has been downward. This seems in part due to the perception by PAC members that the PAC is primarily a venue to share with IPs what IDEAL is doing as opposed to a consultative or advisory body.

IDEAL has taken steps to improve the functioning of the PAC by designating a PAC lead among IDEAL staff and increasingly engaging the PAC to provide more systematic input to IDEAL strategies. Most PAC KIs indicated that the PAC functionality had improved since April 2020 when they were more systematically engaged by IDEAL in its COVID-19 strategy development, including on the identification of priorities for the pivot and the learning streams. The May 2021 PAC that led to the decision by IDEAL to reject a PAC regional structure is another example.

While the PAC is an important mechanism for engagement and consultation, IDEAL could benefit from regular strategic support to its executive team. This type of strategic support can best be provided by a smaller and senior team more familiar with IDEAL workings. IDEAL can better leverage senior expertise among its consortium members and a small number of senior external advisors (no more than six total members). Their engagement might be linked to the pause and reflect mechanism of the Activity.

The Associate Awards comprise the bulk of financial resources among the components of the LWA ecosystem. The number of awards has proliferated, causing concern on the part of senior leadership at IDEAL and BHA about management inefficiencies, fragmentation of effort, and the loss of IDEAL's technical roles. Some have mentioned that AAs have sucked the substance from IDEAL. Given the global impact of COVID-19, the high ceiling for AAs, the diversity of funding sources available to address food insecurity and the desire of some USAID staff to control resources, the pressure to increase the number of AAs is likely to continue.

Harnessing AAs in service of IDEAL's goal is inherently challenging with the LWA structure, however, a worthwhile strategy for Save the Children due to the size of potential available resources. Save the Children did not adequately leverage these resources at the start of the Activity. In fact, IDEAL senior staff were overburdened with the development of the AAs. This situation has been partially rectified. The most important step was to hire a full-time and highly experienced (FFP, IP, and private sector) manager of AAs. The new manager developed a number of strategies to complement Save the Children's earlier efforts to increase overlap of staff on activities and to promote the use of a common knowledge management platform. A lesson learned is that development and management of AAs should have been adequately staffed from the start of the Activity.

Finally, the FSN Network knowledge management web platform provides continuity of institutional knowledge and cements connectivity among IDEAL and AAs. The website was modernized recently and has a moderate level of traffic though its users are U.S. centric and often one-time users. The moderate use of the site and KIs suggest that the website is still not serving up easily accessible information that answers the needs across its wide range of stakeholders. IDEAL's ability to continually upgrade and optimize the website has been constrained by not having on the KM/Communications team a dedicated website manager with high-level KM/website skills.

EXIT STRATEGY PREPAREDNESS: ASSESS IDEAL'S CURRENT PREPAREDNESS FOR EXIT

Specifically: How has the sustainability plan been put into practice? What changes are needed to best prepare the Activity for successful exit?

Borrowing from the TOPS Summative Evaluation (2019), sustainability can be assessed in four different ways:

1. All products and services continue without BHA funding
2. Certain aspects of IDEAL continue without BHA funding while others do not
3. Some outcomes of IDEAL can continue to replicate themselves
4. BHA makes a successor of IDEAL a core part of its business model and continues to fund it at some level

First and importantly, consistent with the TOPS Summative Evaluation conclusion, for the foreseeable future BHA will need to support mechanisms like IDEAL for continuing quality improvement of its programs. The need is much more acute because of the merger of FFP and OFDA, other USAID reorganizations, and the dramatically changing context of climate change, conflict, and COVID-19.

IDEAL has not yet made substantial progress towards sustainable change because of its slow start and lack of a clear vision and strategy for capacity strengthening and mainstreaming capacity strengthening into all IDEAL activities. This serious limitation should be addressed by IDEAL. While capacity strengthening is ostensibly part of the role of the SLCD team, their efforts focused more on adapting the OSTP capacity assessment methodology tool for food security activities rather than developing an IDEAL-wide, comprehensive, operationalized approach to capacity strengthening for the activity. The OSTP capacity-assessment tool application did not meet IDEAL or BHA expectations, perhaps because the tool was developed in isolation of a broader program capacity strengthening strategy. Some workstreams such as the M&E and Data workstreams have developed a way of working that engenders capacity strengthening. The example above from the COVID-19 workstream is a case in point.

On the other hand, IDEAL is now prioritizing the development of mechanisms that will improve sustainability of its efforts. For example: focusing on establishing demand-driven CoPs and emphasizing the requirements for effectiveness and sustainability of these communities; designing knowledge sharing events that increase interpersonal connectivity among affinity groups; prioritizing development of online courses; creating fellowships for IPs to upgrade their impact evaluation skills; emphasizing the shared commons of a FSN Network knowledge management system. Although none of these initiatives will result in self-sustaining mechanisms, they should move the needle towards the sustainability of IDEAL's products and services.

Finally, IDEAL's more recent focus on localization is an important step towards improving the relevance, impact, efficiency, and sustainability of IDEAL efforts. Localization was not among TOPS' or IDEAL's strategies as "implementer" was implicitly defined as international organizations and INGOs. IDEAL's inclusion of localization on its agenda is a good step; however, developing a strategy to promote localization is of urgent importance.

Strategies such as localization will be implemented more aggressively by IPs if required by BHA in solicitations. Given the Administrator's commitment to funding localization, IDEAL should leverage this opportunity by elevating localization on its agenda.

Sustainability will also be facilitated by greater progress to improve Activity results in the areas of social inclusion, social accountability, and integrated programs.

Have IDEAL IP stakeholders begun to establish their own capacity to do capacity strengthening?

IPs are using a variety of approaches to build their own capacity in priority IDEAL CFAs, though typically following BHA's lead. Many RFSAs now include a staff member devoted to strategic learning or CLA. RFAs are now increasingly identifying an SBC expert as key personnel; some are requiring gender/social inclusion personnel. Increasingly, IPs are conducting their own sustainability studies to identify what is sustained after a RFSAs ends. At this time, IDEAL is not keeping track of these changes in staffing and organization nor whether the changes are leading to improved sustainability of food security program outcomes.

Recommendations

IDEAL Should Consider:

REVISION OF THE VISION AND LOGIC OF IDEAL AS WELL AS A PRIORITIZED AGENDA

IDEAL and BHA should consider elaborating a results framework to identify and prioritize strategic pathways for improving RFSAs, emergency programs, and integration in the design and management of programs, with clear and prioritized outcomes and capacities.

- Stress the pathways through three intermediate outcomes: 1) improved RFSAs, 2) improved emergency programs, 3) improved integration of programs.
- Stress continued improvement of the relevance of BHA program guidance to field needs.
- Increase the emphasis on stakeholder engagement, including with a broader landscape of stakeholders.
- Stress the difference between design and implementation management activities (TOC, R&I, adaptive management, scenario planning, integration, M&E, learning agendas) and programmatic themes (sustainability, social cohesion, social accountability, SBC, the nexus).

REORGANIZING ITS THEMATIC AND FUNCTIONAL WORK ACTIVITIES AROUND THESE THREE INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

IDEAL cannot make even progress across the outcomes to build competencies in all of these areas. Instead, IDEAL should consider prioritizing them in terms of IP and BHA priorities, IDEAL's comparative advantage, and a recognition that CFAs also should address priority needs of emergency program implementers. At a minimum, however, IDEAL can conduct baseline assessments (as part of the intended capacity assessments) to determine how IPs in RFSAs and emergency programs are currently defining and addressing these issues, in order to prioritize more effective workstreams and create baseline measures for tracking change.

DISCONTINUE THE TAP STRUCTURE

The TAP structure should be abandoned in favor of workstreams around the key intermediate outcomes and the capacities required to reach these. This requires that the capacity assessments be undertaken immediately to guide relevant workstream development.

CONSIDER DELINKING CONTENT IN SOME OF THE CFAS AND REORGANIZING WORK TEAMS

Integration and sustainability are two very different content areas. Integration could be elevated as a content focus area and stressed as an intermediate outcome in IDEAL's logic diagram. Sustainability is a particularly important consideration for RFSAs. Sustainability will be improved by advances in social cohesion, social integration, integrated programming, localization, and a greater emphasis on capacity strengthening that includes the broader intended implementing partners. More analysis and learning on the nexus issues to improve integration of humanitarian, development, and conflict programming is a key need for improved integration.

FUND AND CONDUCT SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH AS PART OF IDEAL'S CORE ACTIVITIES

Due to the dramatically changing context of food security programming, analysis and research should be elevated on IDEAL's work plan. While the SGP cannot fully address this need, remaining funding from the SGP should be devoted to non-competitive research and analysis related to priority information gaps. IDEAL is well placed, given its resource partners, the constellation of AAs, and core expertise to conduct research and analyses that identify emerging best practices in the design and management of food security activities. For example, while PCS is field focused, IDEAL can conduct meta-reviews of program improvements related to PCS interventions. Sustainability is a high priority consideration for RFSAs. Now that there are numerous closed DFSA/RFSAs, this opens an important opportunity to analyze sustainability

factors. Another target of opportunity is to identify adaptive management promising practices. Certain hotspots of challenges to food security programming provide opportunities for IDEAL to facilitate collective learning. For example, social cohesion and social accountability have become high profile concerns in Ethiopia. Studies aimed at identifying HDP programming improvements also are a high priority. More work is also needed to understand and resolve the bureaucratic constraints to integration. An integration workstream might consider a broader consultation around thinking and best practices for integration. Indicators should be developed to monitor progress in integration.

INCREASE RESOURCES AND DEEPEN THE STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Adaptive management is central to improved programming and it logically subsumes many topics that will improve the *processes* of activity design and implementation. IDEAL should, in collaboration with IPs, analyze priority needs to improve adaptive management in the field, possibly through a series of stakeholder consultations. As discussed previously, a competency-based approach should prioritize and address key barriers to adaptive management. Meta-reviews of emerging promising practices in adaptive management should also be conducted. This area of work can especially leverage the resources of the PCS AA through closer collaboration and selected joint programming between IDEAL and PCS, for example, to develop meta-reviews of issues and lessons learned in applying TOC, R&I, learning agendas/plans, adaptive management, and novel approaches to monitoring, evaluation, analysis, and learning. IDEAL also should take better advantage of learnings for adaptive management around best practices in the annual Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal (PREP) process.

IDEAL has a strategic opportunity to prioritize and systematically build scenario planning capacity in the food security community. Scenario planning is a high demand area for emergency programs and RFSAs. Scenario planning capacity could be an important “tracer” of the effectiveness of IDEAL’s efforts to focus and integrate its interventions (training/mentoring, P2P, stakeholder consultations, SGP, and performance measures). Scenario planning capacity strengthening could be a model pilot for IDEAL. This model should be scalable (cascades, master mentors) and monitored closely.

HIGHLIGHT SUSTAINABILITY AS A PRIORITY FOCUS AREA

Sustainability is cross-cutting and has implications not only for *what* but *how* programming is done. Sustainability is a particularly acute concern for RFSAs. A stocktaking of how these activities have approached sustainability and studies of sustainability of outcomes for closed activities would provide an important evidence base for quality programming. The analysis should be part of and financed by core IDEAL support. Social cohesion and social accountability are key determinants of sustainability. For emergency programming, building social cohesion and accountability is both important and challenging but of great concern in the context of protracted crises where the bulk of emergency resources are spent. RFSAs are implemented in countries where lack of social cohesion and accountability are major constraints to sustainability. Solving these problems is context dependent, so promoting Mission-level events around these issues should be considered. Ethiopia is one good case in point. It is both a large Mission and the topical areas are particularly timely.

RE-ALLOCATE AND INCREASE STAFFING FOR THE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS FOR IMPROVED PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPACT WORKSTREAM

This area of work can leverage both externally facing and internally facing improvements in IDEAL performance. From an externally facing perspective, M&E is a critical tool for adaptive management. Externally facing needs include more supple M&E strategies and tools as well as more effective use of qualitative methods. IDEAL should build on its strengths and make sure it has an impact on the capacity of food security programs to gather and utilize data for decisions in near real-time. This is a precondition for adaptive management.

Internally facing needs include strengthened measurement of Kirkpatrick's Level 3 and 4 outcomes broken down by different categories of users (Activity leadership, learning advisors, M&E advisors, and according to type and intensity of exposure to IDEAL activities), and review of fit-for-purpose of the CRM system. Review the CRM, including content, software and user interface, and include consideration of internal activity monitoring. The CRM should then be updated and mainstreamed into IDEAL staff and AA routine use. This will require additional staff support.

In addition, the M&E workstream will increasingly need to assist IPs to better monitor and evaluate programs in urban settings, as COVID-19 recovery will address the needs of these populations in addition to its historical rural vulnerable populations.

DE-EMPHASIZE SBC AS AN AREA OF WORK FOR IDEAL

SBC is a critical determinant of the impact and sustainability of food security programs. This topic covers a wide range of consideration, and there are many centers of excellence engaged in research and tools development related to this topic. IDEAL has very little expertise to take a deep-dive into SBC. The baseline assessment of current status/capacities and the tool design currently under construction should be complemented by populating a resource section of the FSN Network for SBC. The SBC team can also consider engaging with leadership of food security activities to identify priority needs in this area.

PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AS A COMPONENT OF PROGRAM LOGIC

Stakeholder engagement is a broad and inclusive program concept that should be better articulated and strategically targeted by IDEAL. Improved stakeholder engagement, on the one hand, focuses on increased connectivity between IDEAL, BHA, IPs, and the broader relevant expert communities. This strategy should emphasize both formal and informal activities to improve BHA guidance/procurement processes and IP understanding of BHA's priorities and bureaucratic constraints. Stakeholder consultations, such as the one that occurred in April of 2021, should result in a roadmap of engagement activities that lead to better guidance and procurement processes as well as improved quality of applications and their review. An IDEAL staff member should be tasked with overseeing stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholder engagement will also be improved if IDEAL increases its work to "know your clients" (KYC). This can begin by developing a database of all current RFSAs and emergency programs together with contact information, location, organizations, including local partners with their contacts, and staff responsible for different programming areas together with their contact information. Similar information can be collected for BHA staff. Then the CRM information can be matched against the population IDEAL is trying to reach to better target activities and monitor engagement over time. Emphasis on emergency programs/staff is especially needed.

CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE PAC AS A KEY COMPONENT OF IDEAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The PAC's purpose should be expanded to hear the voices of BHA, IP, and community in support of an expanded view of stakeholders. For example, agendas might include an update from these groups of emerging issues that will have relevance to IDEAL work (this would require preparation before meetings). The PAC might include dedicated space on agendas for identifying critical topics for future stakeholder consultations. The conversation around localization should be continued as part of the PAC dialogue to both help define a localization agenda for IDEAL but also to identify and recruit important community voices to include in the PAC.

PAC activities should not be limited to the quarterly meetings. PAC interests in engagement beyond the meetings should be explored. The localization agenda is one area of potential work. However, other topics, such as integration and sustainability, may also be relevant to the PAC work agenda.

PAC membership should be expanded to include representation of regional backbones such as the Sahel Collaboration and Communication (SCC) Activity in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa backbone, as well as representatives that are closer to the ultimate clients of BHA. This might include direct representation by a sample of local organization leaders or tasking of PAC members to more systematically poll local organizations in preparation for PAC meetings and activities. The topic of improved local voice on the PAC should be included as a PAC agenda item.

The assignment of seats on the PAC should be revised. IPs should have one seat (they can assign an alternate) and the number of IPs represented should be increased. Recruit a high-level InterAction representative and strengthen engagement with WFP. Assign a seat on the PAC for each of the regional backbone organizations. Assign a seat to RFS and some legacy OFDA leads.

LEVERAGE STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR IDEAL

IDEAL's consortium members, particularly Mercy Corps, TANGO, and Save the Children have seasoned and senior advisors who could support IDEAL more effectively. These individuals bring a wealth of expertise and experience from BHA and other related programs. A strategic support team should be integrated into the pause and reflect sessions of IDEAL. The strategic support team should include one senior leadership representative each of the consortium partners (not IDEAL staff) with at most three experts external to IDEAL's consortium members (senior and devoted PAC members).

RE-VISIT THE CONSORTIUM STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

Organizational leadership in the areas of capacity strengthening and strategic learning should be reassessed and perhaps led by Save the Children, putting into question the continuing need for Kai zen's participation in the consortium. Recruitment of staff to assume leadership roles is a high priority. Given Mercy Corps' critical role in providing substantive expertise in food security, engagement of Mercy Corps senior staff is essential. This should include devotion of meaningful LOE by Mercy Corps from its leadership cadre.

Because some staff on other teams may be inwardly focused on process issues, especially among functional groups, staff reallocation from these areas to more external delivery-based roles should be considered. In addition, new staff members should be recruited to support innovations in M&E methods/approaches, CRM and CLA monitoring, and better definition and assessment of Kirkpatrick Levels 3 and 4 progress for more robust capacity strengthening monitoring.

A proper time allocation study should be conducted by IDEAL for all staff to guide the reallocation of staff and rationalization of a staffing structure.

UPGRADE SENIOR STAFF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN EMERGENCY PROGRAMS, RFSAS, AND INTEGRATION OF THESE ACTIVITIES

Designate a deputy for emergency programs (under Save the Children). Also, consider appointing a second deputy director for RFSAs and integration. These individuals would be tasked with leading these workstreams (not implementing them). Leadership will ensure accountability and improve coherence of activities around these workstreams.

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE MATURITY OF THE SMALL GRANT PROGRAM COMPONENT, FOCUSED ON POST-AWARD MANAGEMENT OF GRANTS

Given personnel shortages and continued challenges with the granting process, IDEAL should focus on post-award grant management, emphasizing the quality and utility of funded activities. In the absence of the Associate Director for SGP, Save the Children should ensure that post-award management of grants proceeds smoothly, especially because many of the grants will be closing during the later quarter of 2021. Support is needed for compliance monitoring, quality assurance, and review/modification of dissemination plans.

Based on the SGP AAR, BHA and IDEAL should develop a lessons learned document aimed at improving future grant-management programs.

CONTINUE TO LEVERAGE THE COVID-19 WORK AND CAPTURE LESSONS LEARNED

Through its COVID-19 workstreams and its AA spin-offs and desk review of COVID-19 supplemental programs, IDEAL has made major strides to improve food security programming in the COVID-19 context as well as to build model strategies for program improvement. Additional activities might include a meta-review of adaptive management approaches taken by RFSAs and emergency program IPs. Especially important is to analyze whether or not layering of humanitarian on development/resilience investments occurred. This work could include the identification of promising practices and barriers to layering. This is a particularly critical learning question for BHA and its stakeholders, given the dramatic economic impacts of the COVID-19 response. IDEAL also should conduct an evaluation of the impact on program quality of IDEAL's COVID-19 investments (model strategies).

CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT FSN NETWORK

Analyze web analytics to better understand use patterns. Conduct user surveys to better understand user needs according to different categories of users. Develop community and resource links corresponding to CFAs.

SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE FOCUS ON DEVELOPING AN ACTIVITY-WIDE CAPACITY STRENGTHENING STRATEGY

IDEAL can differentiate itself from predecessor projects by developing a comprehensive and operational plan for capacity strengthening across prioritized capacity gaps. Strategy development will require focused senior leadership with proven systems capacity strengthening competencies. The strategy should benefit from an initial assessment of priority capacities, a plan of action to mobilize IDEAL resources to strengthen these capacities, and a relevant MEL system to monitor change. This strategy should be fully operational early in Year 4 and it should be mainstreamed across IDEAL work. The performance measures should focus on measuring Kirkpatrick Level 3 and 4 change in specific terms linked to these priority capacities.

BHA Should Consider:

ANTICIPATING THE EXTENSION OF IDEAL AND THE SUCCESSOR BHA ACTIVITY.

For the many reasons cited in the MTE, IDEAL has only recently begun to develop momentum towards its mission of improving food security program quality, impact, and sustainability. As a pause and reflect on where the activity is, IDEAL could be granted a funded or unfunded extension so that it can realize its mission. Given the many changes at USAID, BHA also should begin to contemplate the successor program to IDEAL. Sustainably improving food security is increasingly challenged by the global context of risks and the changing USAID institution.

INTERNAL REVIEW OF BHA MANAGEMENT

An internal assessment of the BHA-related bureaucratic challenges that IDEAL has encountered, many of which have caused unreasonable delays in IDEAL activities, impeding adaptive management. IDEAL's ability to adaptively manage is an important determinant of its success.

CONTINUE AND INTENSIFY IDEAL ADVOCACY INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

Continuing and intensifying efforts to identify and engage appropriate BHA/USAID advocates and key stakeholders outside the USAID community to participate in IDEAL workstreams.

Redoubling its efforts to promote IDEAL's activities/work within USAID's Bureaus, Regional Offices, and Missions. These efforts would be best targeted to opportunities in the field to leverage IDEAL's impact.

Annex 1: Scope of Work for MTE

IDEAL Activity Mid-Term Evaluation

CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK

Hiring Organization: Save the Children US
Location: Washington, DC

Background & Context

IDEAL is an activity funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) that works to support the United States Government's goal of improving food and nutrition security among the world's most vulnerable households and communities. IDEAL addresses knowledge and capacity gaps expressed by the food and nutrition security implementing community to support them in the design and implementation of effective emergency and non-emergency food security activities.

IDEAL's three purposes (updated in conjunction with the IDEAL Theory of Change developed in Year 2 of programming and in midst of the COVID-19 pandemic) are:

- **Purpose 1:** Improved capacity for integrated activity design and implementation of essential elements of quality programming
- **Purpose 2:** Consistent application of adaptive management practices in food security programs
- **Purpose 3:** Improved coordination and collaboration (between IPs, BHA, and other stakeholders) around common goals

This Scope of Work (SoW) provides the framework for the mid-term evaluation consultant. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess *specific aspects* of the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability, and performance of the IDEAL activity. The evaluation will inform the readiness of IDEAL to execute on its overall purposes during the end of Year 3 and all of Years 4 and 5 of the award.

Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to take stock of the IDEAL activities implemented to-date and compare it to its original intent, with an emphasis on recent adjustments (including the comprehensive Theory of Change developed in Year 2) as well as its pivot and propel work related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The mid-term evaluation will:

- Inform activity leadership on effective efforts to date to improve food security programming which IDEAL can continue to catalyze; and
- Provide recommendations for the IDEAL team structure and programming to better meet the needs of the food security implementing community. Specifically, is the IDEAL activity currently structured and coordinating across its functional teams and stakeholders (staffing, Program Advisory Committee, and Technical Advisory Panels) to achieve its stated objectives?

The mid-term evaluation should be focused on strategic and participatory reflection on completed activities and the current Year 3 Work Plan to inform and improve the quality, reach, and breadth of IDEAL's programming through the Life of Award (LOA).

This mid-term evaluation has four broad objectives, listed below. Each objective has suggested lines of research, which the mid-term evaluation team should strive to address.

RELEVANCE

Assess the degree to which the IDEAL activity's functional and organizational design enables the activity to meet its goal and purposes. Specifically:

- Is IDEAL's strategic direction and programming around the seven core content areas relevant and appropriate to meet BHA and IP needs in Year 4 and Year 5?
- Has IDEAL sufficiently adapted to COVID-19 and other contextual changes in Year 1 and Year 2? What further adaptations are required to ensure the activity remains relevant to BHA and IP stakeholders?

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Assess if the IDEAL activity is being implemented effectively and efficiently. Identify barriers the activity encountered and assess if the activity adapted appropriately. Specifically:

- Is the IDEAL activity being implemented according to its Theory of Change? What is working and what is not working? Specifically, are IDEAL's internal processes and ways of working effective and efficient in achieving their desired outputs and outcomes?
- The merger of FFP and OFDA into BHA and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the operating environment for IDEAL and its stakeholders in significant ways. How effective was IDEAL's pivot and adaptation to these factors?
- What changes can be made to strengthen and enhance the IDEAL activity's performance through the LOA?
- To what extent has the IDEAL activity been successful in achieving its stated objectives/outcomes and meeting its reporting targets?
- To what extent are the IDEAL activity's Theory of Change and reporting indicators in the most recent M&E plan appropriate? Is the internal monitoring system sufficient to capture and report on progress towards the Theory of Change and indicators?

Is IDEAL's current size and structure appropriate to meet the continuing IP and BHA needs and to achieve its purposes and goal? Structure includes the functional teams within IDEAL as well as the working relationships with its Associate Awards, consortium members, Program Advisory Committee, and Technical Advisory Panels.

EXIT STRATEGY PREPAREDNESS

Assess the IDEAL activity's current preparedness for exit. Specifically:

- How has the sustainability plan been put into practice? What changes are needed to best prepare the activity for successful exit?
- Have IDEAL IP stakeholders begun to establish their own capacity to do capacity strengthening?

Evaluation Design and Methods

In addition to the external consultant(s), the mid-term evaluation team will include one (1) evaluation team member from each consortium member (Save the Children, The Kaizen Company, Mercy Corps, and TANGO International). BHA will have final approval on team composition. The IDEAL team will work with the evaluation lead (external consultant) to clearly define the scope and role of the evaluation team members during the evaluation's inception phase. Internal consortium mid-term evaluation team members will not have had greater than 50 percent of their time allocated to IDEAL (life of award to-date). The consortium evaluation team members will be able to navigate and coordinate needed interviews and data within each consortium partner while maintaining a level of objectivity (not having worked full time on IDEAL).

It is expected the consultant will first conduct a desk review and interview IDEAL leadership and consortium leads to inform the final methodology. The mid-term evaluation is expected to primarily utilize qualitative methods, although the use of secondary quantitative data may be helpful for some lines of inquiry. IDEAL will provide the evaluation team with full access to monitoring data and activity documentation. Detailed methodologies for the evaluation will be agreed between IDEAL, BHA, and the external consultant.

A detailed evaluation protocol will then be developed by the evaluators. The evaluators will work in conjunction with the IDEAL Senior Management Team (SMT) to identify appropriate consortium evaluation team members, and develop a scope of work for their individual contributions to the mid-term evaluation.

Sources of existing activity information include:

- Original activity proposal
- Year 1, 2, and 3 Work Plans
- Quarterly Reports to-date
- Year 1 and 2 Annual Results Reports
- IDEAL CRM data
- Activity TOC (in Miro)
- Activity/event/engagement evaluations
- Other internal and external documents as requested

Key information to inform budgeting for this SoW:

- IDEAL is made up of four consortium members
- IDEAL’s mandate includes providing support to BHA implementing partners
- IDEAL has between 25-30 full time staff across its four consortium members
- IDEAL has a close working partnership with 10-15 BHA staff
- The IDEAL Program Advisory Committee (PAC) has 22 members
- IDEAL held 37 events in the last reporting year (Year 2)
- Labor costs for the internal evaluation members (one from each of the four consortium members) should not be included in costs

Timeline, Activities, and Deliverables

<p>April 1 – May 1</p>	<p>Inception phase, including determining team composition and member roles, develop detailed work plan for entire period Begin desk review of activity documents and preliminary key informant interviews (KIIs) to inform the research protocol</p>	<p>Brief description of rationale and criteria used to establish team composition and roles Detailed mid-term evaluation research protocol</p>
<p>May 1 – July 1</p>	<p>Comprehensive desk review and data collection</p>	<p>Bi-weekly progress report (<2 pages) to IDEAL leadership, included as an annex in the final report Report on results of the desk review</p>
<p>July 1 – August 1</p>	<p>Analysis, interpretation, and report drafting</p>	<p>Presentation slide deck of preliminary results (to IDEAL)</p>

Annex 2: List of Key Informants Interviewed

Dalmar Ainasha
James Akai
Laura Alexander
Suzanne Amari
Luisa Angelsmith
Brian Bacon
Lloyd Banwart
Alex Bekunda
Cathy Bergman
Piers Boccock
Buck Bradshaw
Geraldine Brick
Tara Clerckin*
Hilary Cook
Kimberly Cook
Annette Fay
Bianca Flokstra
Karyn Fox
Tim Frankenberger
Eric Friesth
Mark Fritzler
Bradley Fusco
Karine Garnier
Gary Glass
Brian Hunter
Maggie James-Lucas
Kim Jurczyk
Andrew Kaiser
Mette Karlsen
Dasha Kosmynina
Lisa Kuennen-Asfaw

Justus Liku
Michael Manske
Salomon Matchoudo
Gitau Mbure
Jenny Morgan
Michael Mulford
Tim Ogborne
Melissa Opryszko
Darin Ottenhoff
Maja Persson
Olga Petryniak
Elizabeth Pearce
Andrea Procopio
Arif Rashid
Adam Reinhart
Karen Romano
Mara Russell
Barri Shorey*
Beatrice Scheuermann
Thomas Scialfa
Lawren Sinnema
Thomas Spangler
Anne Swindale
Laurie Starr
Camille Tacastacas
Kirsten Tanifum
Sara Titus
Kevin Weseni
Joan Whelan
Laura Zillmer

Annex 3: Focus Group Discussions/Group Discussions and Observations:

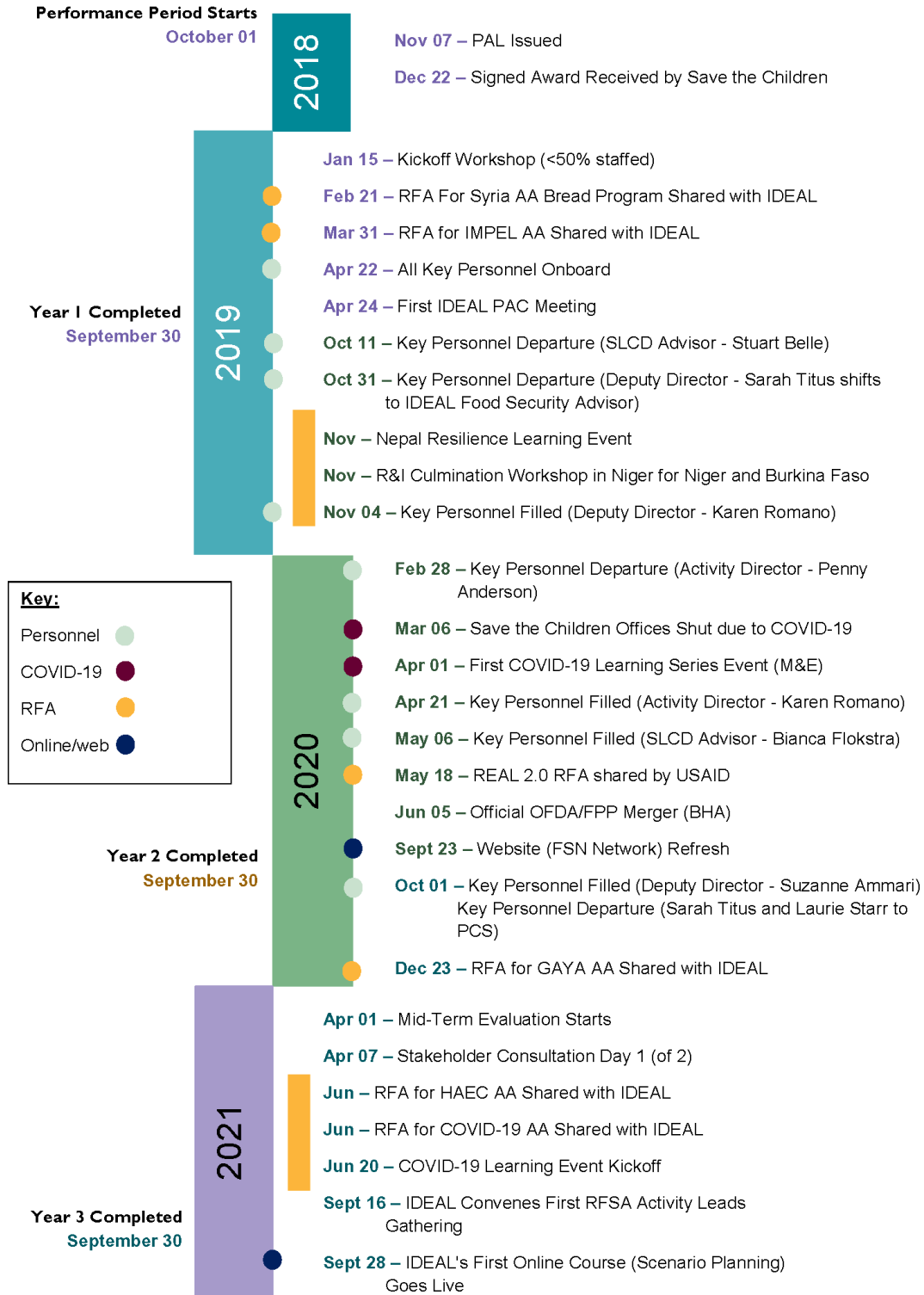
Bi-weekly IDEAL-BHA check-in
IDEAL All-staff meeting
SMT meeting
MTE steering committee meeting (weekly)
SCSA TAP
Data TAP
FSST team
PAC meeting in May 2021
Sustainability and Integration TAP
SBC TAP
SLCD functional team
SLCD-CLA cross team meeting
CLA functional team
MTE Steering Committee

Annex 4: IDEAL Timeline

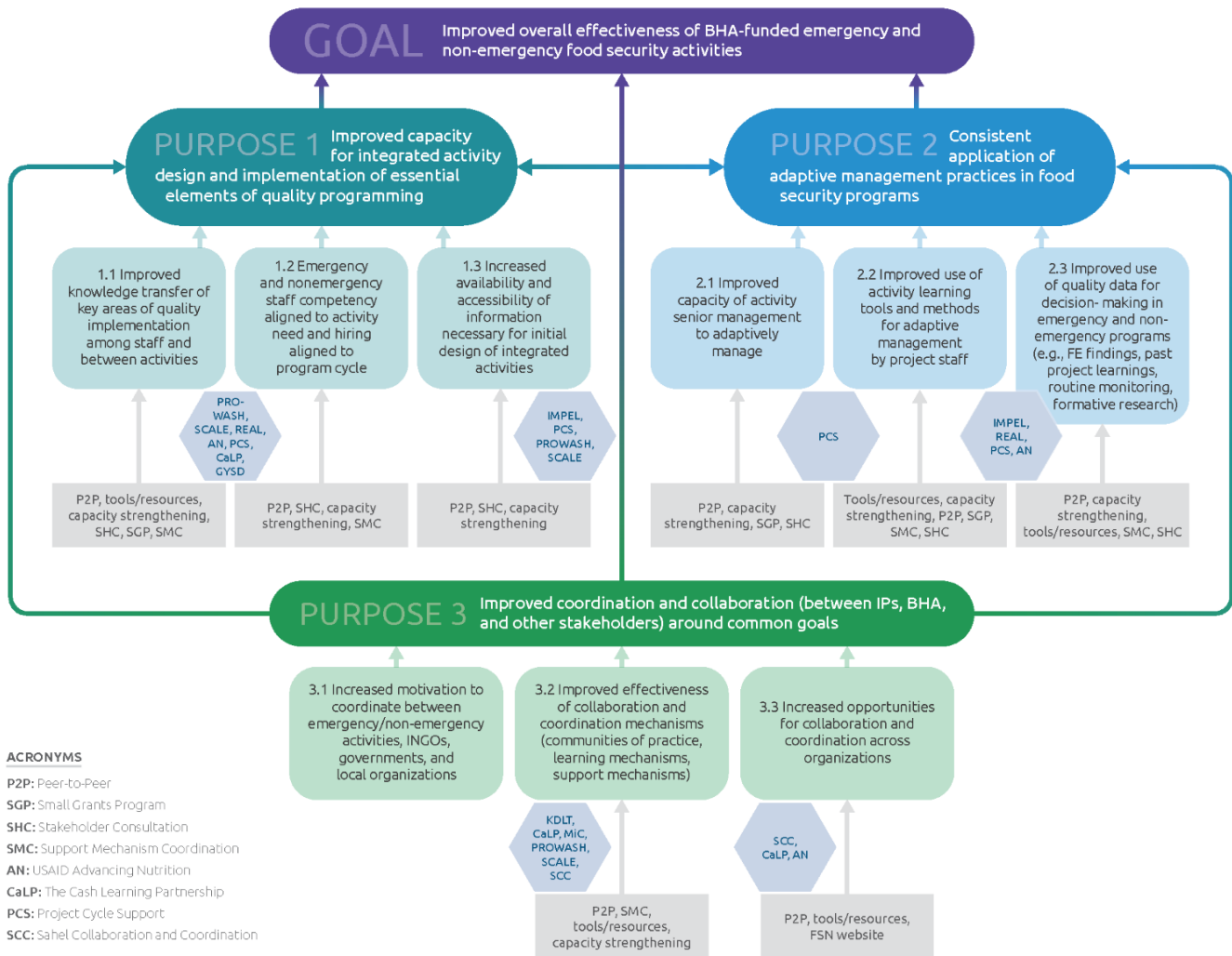
Findings

Topline Findings

IDEAL Timeline



Annex 5: IDEAL’s Theory of Change (Overview)



Annex 6: References

In addition to sources listed below, the evaluator reviewed IDEAL internal meeting notes, COVID-19 and other event recordings and materials on the FSN Network website.

Glenzer, K., Mubukanu, T., Struss, C. (2019). *Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program Summative Evaluation Final Report*.

Goeldner Byrne, K. (2020). *Literature Review: Adaptive Management in Humanitarian Settings*. Washington, DC: Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL).

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IDEAL. (2021a). Activity Concept Note: Emergency Practitioners' Forum.

IDEAL. (2021b). IDEAL Revised Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

IDEAL. (2021c). *Stakeholder Consultation: RFSA RFA Design and Process*. Washington, DC: Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL).

IDEAL. (2021d). Terms of Reference for Steering Committee for Emergency Practitioners' Forum.

Karlsen, M. (2020). Emergency Food Security Community of Practice and Knowledge Management Platform Analysis: Findings and Recommendations for IDEAL Engagement. Washington, DC: Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL).

Netzer, S. (2019). Assessment of Emergent Opportunities for IDEAL to Support Implementers of Food for funded Emergency Programs. Washington, DC: Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL).

Save the Children. (2018). Revised Technical Application, Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL), USAID FFP72DFFP18RFA00001.

USAID. (2019). Office of Food for Peace Food Assistance and Food Security Programmatic Learning Agenda.

Annex 7: Additional Tables and Figures

Table 6: Consortium roles and rationale (Revised Proposal, August 16, 2018)

Consortium Member	Rationale for Selection	IDEAL Roles and Responsibilities
Save the Children (Prime Applicant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful management and implementation of the <i>TOPS</i> Program • Currently implementing 13 FFP-funded emergency and development programs • Proven experience managing subawards to international and national organizations • 25 years of innovative programming in food security and nutrition • Extensive experience managing large, complex USAID projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead <i>IDEAL</i>'s strategic, financial, and operational planning and delivery • Apply adaptive management to ensure flexible, integrated program implementation • Manage systems for subgrants, smalls grants, and finances, performance monitoring, and reporting • Provide leadership and technical expertise in systems approaches, emergency, SBC, youth, and health/nutrition
The Kaizen Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years of experience in implementing its demand-driven model for CoPs • Its innovative and sustainable organizational development model that empowers organizations to build their own capacity • Expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship to address food security/conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and technical expertise for knowledge management, strategic learning, and capacity and organizational development activities including peer-to-peer learning and stakeholder consultations • Manage the FSN Network
Mercy Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing 130 food security projects in 29 countries, including 7 FFP-funded emergency and development programs • Expertise in adaptive management and resilience programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and technical expertise in integrated food security and resilience programming, adaptive management, gender, social cohesion/accountability • Support emergency focus area
TANGO International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized leader in resilience measurement, M&E, TOC design and training, project design, and risk and vulnerability assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and technical expertise in monitoring, evaluation, research, and resilience measurement • Build M&E capacity by training partners on using effective models and tools

Table 7: Partner Roles

Principal Partner	IDEAL Technical Leadership Scope
Save the Children (Prime)	IDEAL Activity Management, Small Grants, Systems Approaches, Emergency, Social and Behavior Change (SBC), Youth, Health/Nutrition
The Kaizen Company	Knowledge Management, Capacity Development, Communities of Practice, Sustainability and Exit Planning
Mercy Corps	Integrated Food Security/Resilience Program Design and Implementation, Adaptive Management, Gender, Social Cohesion/Accountability
TANGO International	Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Research, Resilience Measurement and Analysis

Table 8: Consortium Selection Rationale, and Roles and Responsibilities

Consortium Member	Rationale for Selection	IDEAL Roles and Responsibilities
Save the Children (Prime Applicant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful management and implementation of the <i>TOPS</i> Program • Currently implementing 13 FFP-funded emergency and development programs • Proven experience managing subawards to international and national organizations • 25 years of innovative programming in food security and nutrition • Extensive experience managing large, complex USAID projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead <i>IDEAL</i>'s strategic, financial, and operational planning and delivery • Apply adaptive management to ensure flexible, integrated program implementation • Manage systems for subgrants, small grants, and finances, performance monitoring, and reporting • Provide leadership and technical expertise in systems approaches, emergency, SBC, youth, and health/nutrition
The Kaizen Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years of experience in implementing its demand-driven model for CoPs • Its innovative and sustainable organizational development model that empowers organizations to build their own capacity • Expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship to address food security/conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and technical expertise for knowledge management, strategic learning, and capacity and organizational development activities including peer-to-peer learning and stakeholder consultations • Manage the FSN Network
Mercy Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing 130 food security projects in 29 countries, including 7 FFP-funded emergency and development programs • Expertise in adaptive management and resilience programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and technical expertise in integrated food security and resilience programming, adaptive management, gender, social cohesion/accountability • Support emergency focus area
TANGO International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized leader in resilience measurement, M&E, TOC design and training, project design, and risk and vulnerability assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and technical expertise in monitoring, evaluation, research, and resilience measurement • Build M&E capacity by training partners on using effective models and tools

Figure 2: Frequency of Participation in IDEAL Events (CRM database, events = 75, participants = 2,264)

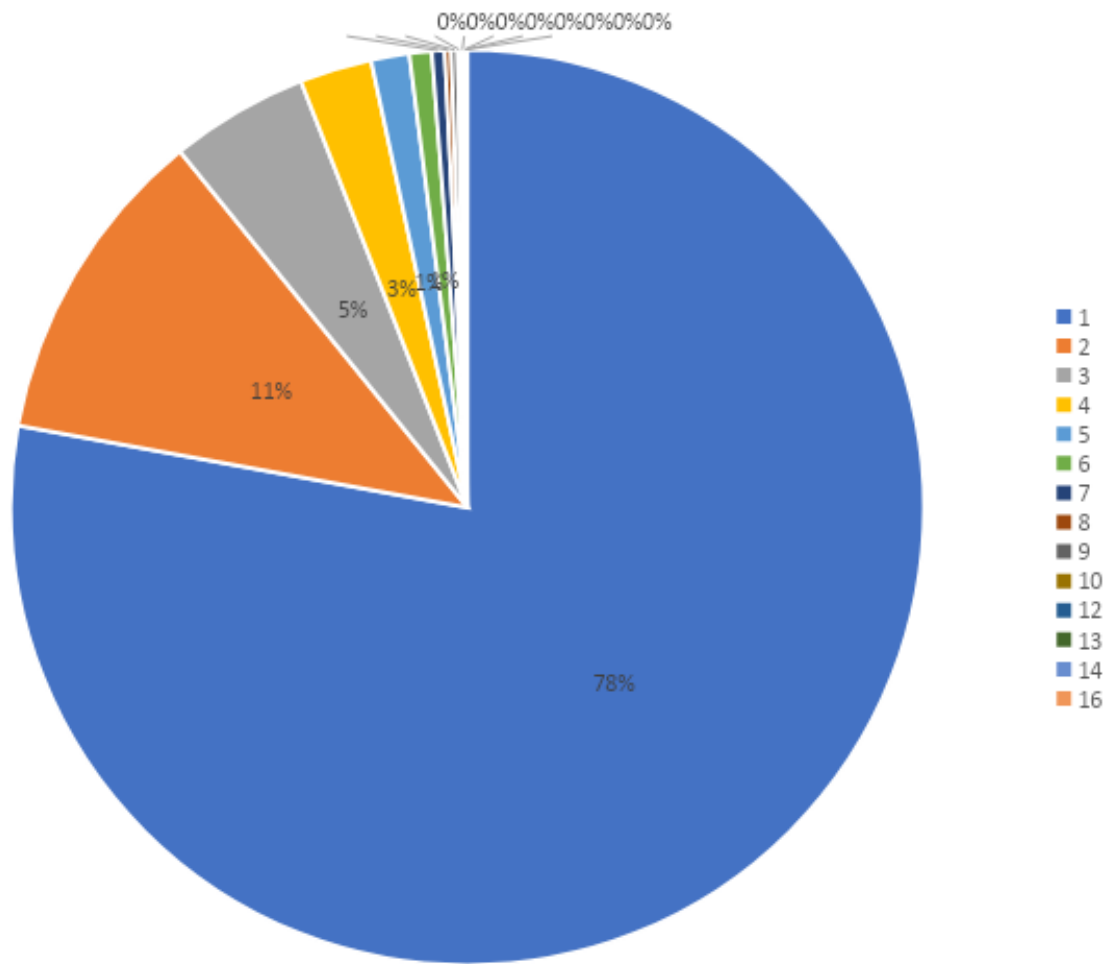


Table 9: MTE SWOT Summary

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -team spirit and recent leadership -COVID workstream -Virtual P2P learning methods -strong understanding of developmental projects -continuity of organizations and staff from TOPS -linkages with LEARN activity -monitoring and evaluation workstreams -comms/km capacity -recent improvements in staffing -recent improvements in technical leadership 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -process orientation, lack of focused strategy for change -fragmented and ill-defined roles among partners and between BHA and IDEAL (including sectoralizing food security in one partner's area of responsibility) -limited engagement of IDEAL with BHA (M and E is exception) -lack of foundational definitions-implementer-led, etc. -lack of consensus on IP target community -ill-defined decision structures between and within BHA and IDEAL -CFAs too numerous and don't match with organization workstreams and organizational team composition -CFAs may not match field priorities related to ToC, R and I -emergency programs not emphasized, culture of rfsa -ToC doesn't amplify the importance of BHA connectivity with IDEAL and IPs -IDEAL versus TOPS rather than building upon TOPS success -tension: global versus local focus of IDEAL -IDEAL doesn't have clear identity and appeal to IPs -insufficient senior food security expertise on staff
<p>-Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -COVID-19 Supplemental funding (2 billion) -FAO partnership -Interaction links -Major funding through annual cycles and supplementals (8 billion) -ELRHA (COVID stream) -merging of FFP and OFDA into BHA provides opportunities to integrate -IDEAL well placed to leverage the "Nexus", has expertise in integrated multi sectoral programming 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -USAID reorganization: sectoralizing resilience, poor integration of food security within BHA; stove piping of sectors in legacy OFDA projects -Constrained time frame of emergency programs -competitiveness of PVOs

Figure 3: Logic Model Direction

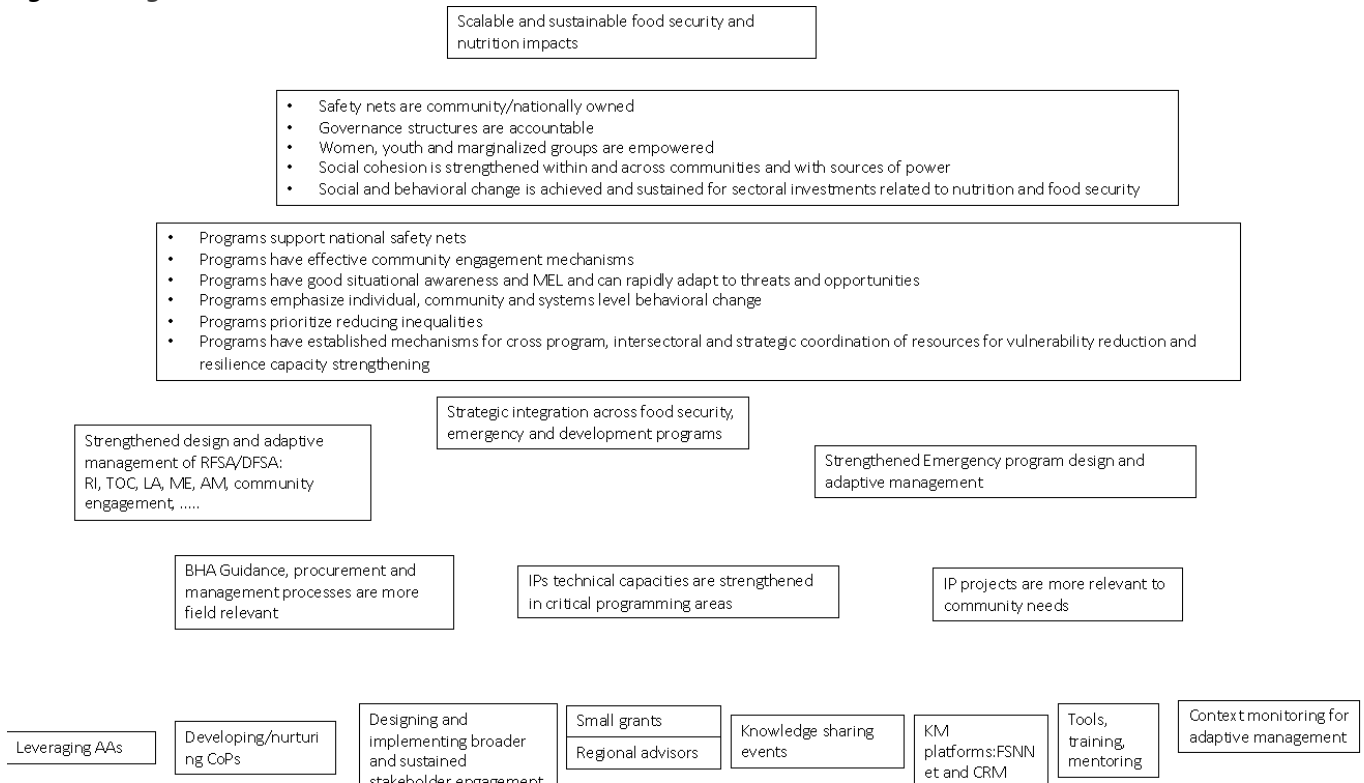


Table 10: IDEAL Revised Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, March 2021

Indicator #	Indicator	Y1 value	Y2 value	Y3 target	Y4 target	Y5 target	Target rationale
1	Percentage of IDEAL participants[A1] [A2] who cite improved capacity as a result of engagement with IDEAL	3 activities	11 activities	80%	80%	80%	*Unit has changed In Y2, around 80% of ex-post respondents[A3] [A4] indicated that the quality of their work had improved as a result of attending IDEAL events. As we broaden this the audience and increase the sample size of this respondents for this survey, we anticipate seeing a similarly high percentage of participants citing improved capacity.
2	Percentage of IDEAL participants who cite the application of adaptive management[A5] [A6] as a result of engagement with IDEAL	1 activity	12 activities	60%	60%	60%	*Unit has changed In our Y2 annual survey, 57% of respondents who engaged with IDEAL within Y2 noted improved use of adaptive management as a result of IDEAL engagement. We will aim to slightly increase improved use of adaptive management by IPs in Y3-Y5, but set this target lower than those of indicator P1 since fewer IDEAL activities focus explicitly on adaptive management than general improved capacity.
3	Percentage of IDEAL participants who coordinated or collaborated with another food security stakeholders as a result of engagement with IDEAL	2 activities	6 activities	50%	50%	60%	*Unit has changed In our Y2 annual survey, around 29% of respondents who engaged with IDEAL within Y2 noted improved linkages as a result of IDEAL engagement. We believe reported linkages were limited in Y2 due to lack of in-person interactions (and a low annual survey response rate that may not have captured the extent of improved coordination/collaboration amongst stakeholders). We will aim to improve coordination/collaboration between implementers in Y3-Y5, noting that this percentage will likely be lower in Y3 and Y4 than Y5 as interactions continue remotely.
4	Number of IDEAL events[A7] [A8] [A9] [A10]	11	31	35	25	25	We have counted 35 events per our Y3 work plan: Learning from COVID-19 Adaptations (A1), P2P event on supporting staff training in emergency programs (A4), event on case studies in knowledge managements (A6), Field Voices Webinar Series (A7), Virtual Grants Fair (A9), workshop on capturing and disseminating lessons learned from final reports (A11), stakeholder consultation(s) on essential capacities for program design and implementation (A16), P2P exchange with R&I RFSAs (A19), lessons learned events with IMPEL (A19), P2P event around fostering a culture of learning (B1), virtual capacity strengthening workshop(s) on priority topic (B1), workshop on scenario planning (B2), stakeholder consultations on adaptive management (B3), DQA (Extended PDM) (B17), Data for Decision-Making

Indicator #	Indicator	Y1 value	Y2 value	Y3 target	Y4 target	Y5 target	Target rationale
							<p>regional showcases (x4) (B20), M&E Systems Workshop (B22), Gender Assessments (x3) (B25), M&E emergency workshop (B28), Qualitative Guidance Roll-Out (B30), virtual exhibit booth for support mechanisms (x2) (C1), App Lab Info Sessions (x2) (C2), App Lab Workshops (x3) (C2), App Lab Showcase (C2), HuMEL meetings (x3).</p> <p>We will aim to have about 25 events in Y4 and Y5, balancing quantity with quality and dedicating more of our efforts toward sustainable, non-event initiatives.</p>
5	Number of organizations engaged in IDEAL events	85	475	150	150	150	<p>We anticipate having more events in Y3 than Y2, but keeping the focus on food security organizations (Y2 had an upward spike in number of organizations engaged in IDEAL events due to a large number of non-food security organizations attending early IDEAL COVID-19 events). The projected number for Y3-Y5 is in line with Y1 actuals (and Y2 actuals minus the early, less targeted COVID-19 events). We expect more organizations engaged in Y3 and Y4 than Y5 when events may be shifting back to in-person [A11] [A12] [A13] [A14].</p>
6	Number of individuals to attend IDEAL events	102	1,644	500	500	300	<p>We anticipate having more targeted events in Y3-Y5 than in Y2 (when we had just begun working virtually and were not always limiting the scope or participation of our events) and aim to touch around 500 individuals/year in Y3 and Y4. We expect more participants in Y3 and Y4 than Y5 when events may be shifting back to in-person.</p>
7	Percentage of event participants who state the event objective(s) were fully met	n/a	79.2 %	80%	80%	80%	<p>We will aim for the vast majority of participants to indicate objectives were fully met, with the understanding that a minority of participants will occasionally indicate an objective was only 'partially' met.</p>
8	Percentage of IDEAL event participants who cite application of event learnings[A15] [A16]	100%	69.1 %	70%	70%	70%	<p>We anticipate about the same percentage for Y3-Y5 as Y2. This target assumes that most people will apply what they've learned from events, but as events continue to be held virtually with fewer participant restrictions, we anticipate a number of these participants might participate to gain knowledge but don't have the opportunity to apply learnings to their program, similar to the last quarters of Y2.</p>
9	Number of IDEAL products[A17] [A18] [A19] [A20]	7	17	28	23	23	<p>Products include webinar recordings, IDEAL-authored Resource Library products, e-courses, and outputs from events (full definition of 'products' available in the PIRS in Annex 2). We anticipate about 1/2 of the events will have a webinar recording, as well as an average of one product per learning stream (five learning streams total) per year and one product per TAP (5 TAPs total) per year.</p>

Indicator #	Indicator	Y1 value	Y2 value	Y3 target	Y4 target	Y5 target	Target rationale
10	Number of active communities of practice supported by IDEAL	2	2	5	5	5	<p>We have counted five communities of practice from our Y3 work plan: HuMEL (B27), QualME, EP Forum (C3), TOC knowledge sharing group (B10), SLA knowledge sharing group (B7).</p> <p>In Y4-Y5, we anticipate a few of the above might drop off (having served their purpose) and a handful will be added (potentially communities of practice for resilience and strategic management). In Y5, we will work on sustaining the communities of practice rather than adding new ones.[A21] [A22]</p>
11	Number of resources uploaded to the FSN Network Resource Library	89	153	100	100	75	<p>We saw a particularly large jump in resources uploaded in Y2 due to the mass upload of WASH resources by PRO-WASH and new resources uploaded as part of the review of resources during the FSN Network website refresh.</p> <p>We believe 100 newly uploaded resources in Y3 and Y4 is an ambitious target that encourages widespread knowledge sharing while maintaining that resources uploaded to the FSN Network are of high quality. Additions will include TAP-identified technical resources and small grants-generated products, amongst other IP-submitted resources.</p>
12	Number of times resources have been viewed via the FSN Network Resource Library	74,410	59,889	66,000	72,600	79,860	<p>The number of resources was particularly high in Y1 due to the unprecedented popularity of the TOC curriculum and relatively lower in Y2 due to lack of new content and resource promotion in preparation for the FSN Network refresh.</p> <p>We will aim to increase page views by about 10% each year (slightly more in Y3, as we aim to see increased traffic from the FSN Network website refresh) by making more resources available on the FSN Network and expanding our outreach to new users.</p>
13	Number of submissions to the FSN Network	18 orgs 18 subs.	26 orgs 65 subs.	65	65	50	<p>*Unit has changed</p> <p>The number of submissions request to the FSN Network increased significantly during Y2 with the FSN Network website refresh. IDEAL aims to maintain that level of interest. In the final year, we will aim to sustain interest in submissions while shifting some focus to other priorities related to sustainability and close-out.</p>
14	Number of FSN Network newsletter subscribers	2,513	4,394	5,053	5,306	5,571	<p>*This indicator is continuing/cumulative</p> <p>We saw a significant jump in subscribers between Y1 and Y2 largely due to an initial COVID-19 event registration where we received 647 new subscribers. We expect</p>

Indicator #	Indicator	Y1 value	Y2 value	Y3 target	Y4 target	Y5 target	Target rationale
							the increase to be less significant in Y3 (a 10% increase) and a 5% increase in Y4 and Y5, as we suspect most potential subscribers will have already subscribed toward the end of the activity.
15	Number of small grants awarded	0	11	34	44	44	<p>*This indicator is continuing/cumulative</p> <p>For Y3, we anticipate the awarding of 7 micro grants, 12 PIAs (4 for the 2019 RFA, 4 for the qual RFA, 4 for the quant RFA), and 4 research awards. For Y4, we estimate awarding around 10 new PIAs. We will not award any additional grants in the final year of the program.</p>
16	Number of products generated via the Small Grants Program	n/a	n/a	14	29	61	<p>*This indicator is continuing/cumulative</p> <p>We anticipate 1 product on average for each micro grant, 1.5 product on average for each PIA, and 2 products on average for research awards.</p> <p>In Y3, we anticipate 8 micro grants and 4 PIAs will close, making final products available. In Y4, we anticipate 6 micro grants and 6 PIAs will close. In Y5, we anticipate 16 PIAs and 4 research awards will close.</p>
17	Number of times small grants-generated products have been viewed via the FSN Network website	n/a	n/a	700	2,320	7,320	<p>*This indicator is continuing/cumulative</p> <p>The TOPS Small Grants evaluation (conducted in 2016, about three years after the beginning of the implementation period for small grants) showed 111 page views/product on average. IDEAL will aim for 50 page views/product in Y3 (as many products will not be uploaded to the Resource Library until the end of Y3), 80 downloads/product in Y4, and 120 downloads/product in Y5 (aligning with the data we saw under TOPS) .</p>
18	Number of organizations that participated in stakeholder consultations	n/a	n/a	19	23	23	[A23] [A24] We have contacted 19 organizations in preparation for Y3's stakeholder consultation. For all stakeholder consultations, IDEAL will target current BHA primes and subs as well as past FFP or OFDA awardees who don't currently have an award.
19	Percentage of participants based in countries of implementation engaged in stakeholder consultations	n/a	n/a	50%	50%	50%	We believe stakeholder consultations participation is equally important at the implementation country- and HQ-level and will equally target each. We will be doing more virtual consultations in Y3 (and likely beyond), allowing us to feasibly aim for 50% of implementation country-based participants. For Y3's stakeholder consultation, IDEAL has asked for two representatives per organization - one HQ-based and one based in the country of implementation.

Indicator #	Indicator	Y1 value	Y2 value	Y3 target	Y4 target	Y5 target	Target rationale
20	Percentage of stakeholder consultation participants who cite positive changes in process or practices as a result of stakeholder consultation	n/a	n/a	80%	80%	80%	In Y2, 69% of IDEAL event participants cited application of event learnings, a similar indicator that looks at change in behavior as a result of participation in an IDEAL event. With the audience being more targeted for stakeholder consultations, we hope to see close to 80% of stakeholder consultation participants citing positive changes in process or practices as a result of involvement in the stakeholder consultation.
21	Number of changes to BHA policy and/or guidance-IDEAL contributed to[A25] [A26] [A27] [A28]	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	Assuming BHA releases 4-5 policy/guidance documents a year, IDEAL would hope to affect half of the policy/guidance released (as a result of stakeholder consultations, feedback from IDEAL TAPs, and other engagement). In Y3, IDEAL has already contributed to the M&E Emergency Guidance document.