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Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)

USAID MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND
LEARNING ACTIVITY

Agenda & Reflection Questions – Day 1

What is CLA and
Why it is important?

How do you define CLA? Was any information in the presentation a surprise? How so? What pieces of CLA do you feel you need to work on most? What comes easiest for you? What comes hardest?

Integrating CLA into
Activity MEL Plan

How are you integrating CLA into Activity MEL Plans now? How can you improve? What are you doing well right now?

WHAT IS CLA AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?



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Why CLA?

- ✓ You have to!
- ✓ It is good for your activities.
- ✓ It is good for you.



Photo by Jacob Lund from Noun Project

Evolution of CLA at USAID

- ✓ Learning has always been important.
- ✓ Mission practiced on their own and ad hoc.
- ✓ Trying to make more systematic and intentional.



Image Credit: Literary Hub

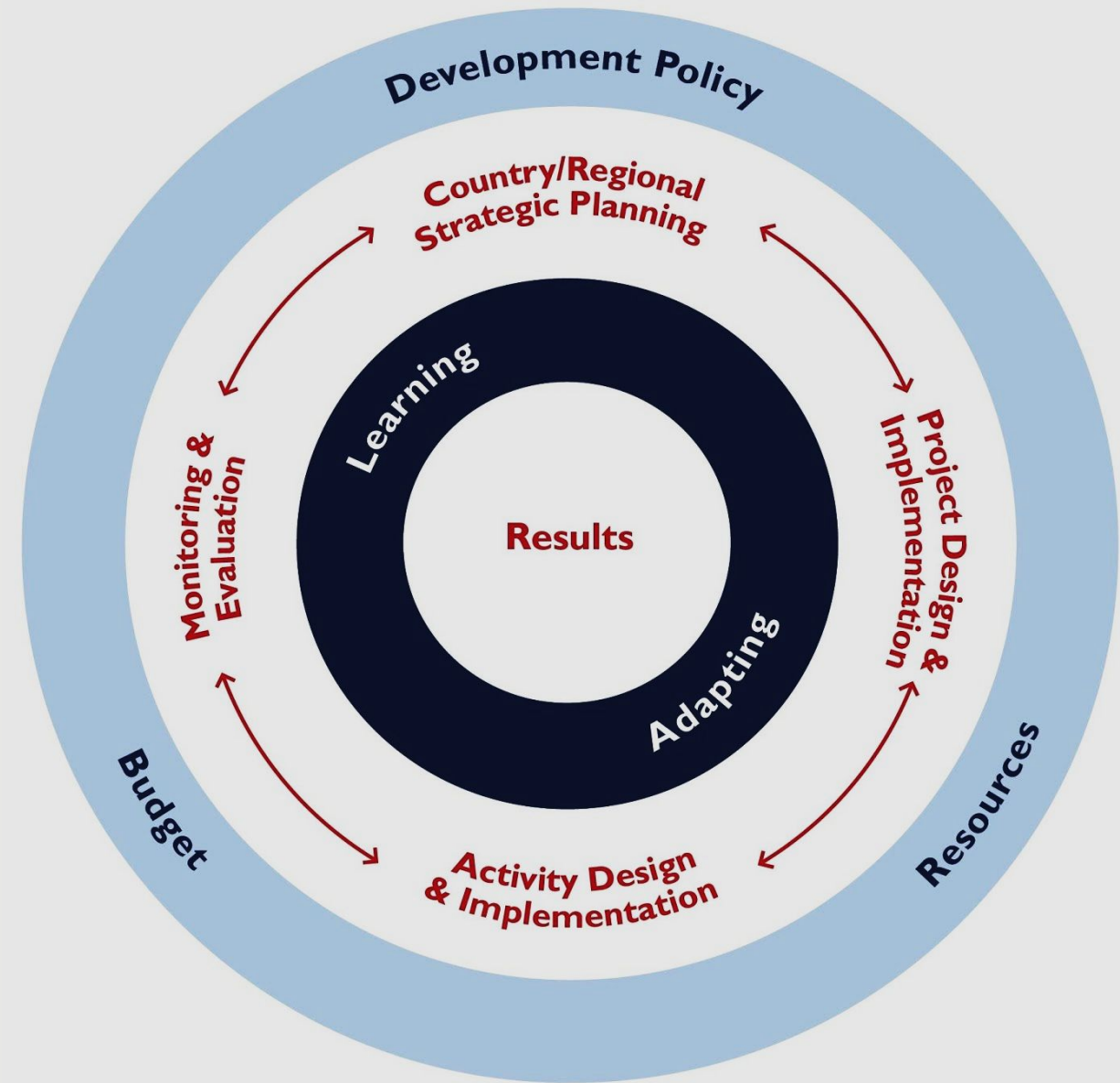


Image Credit: Wonderopolis

Key Things to Know about CLA

- ✓ Not the same for everyone!
- ✓ Rooted in collaboration.
- ✓ Share successes.

CLA In The Program Cycle



USAID Program Cycle

CLA Framework



Collaborating

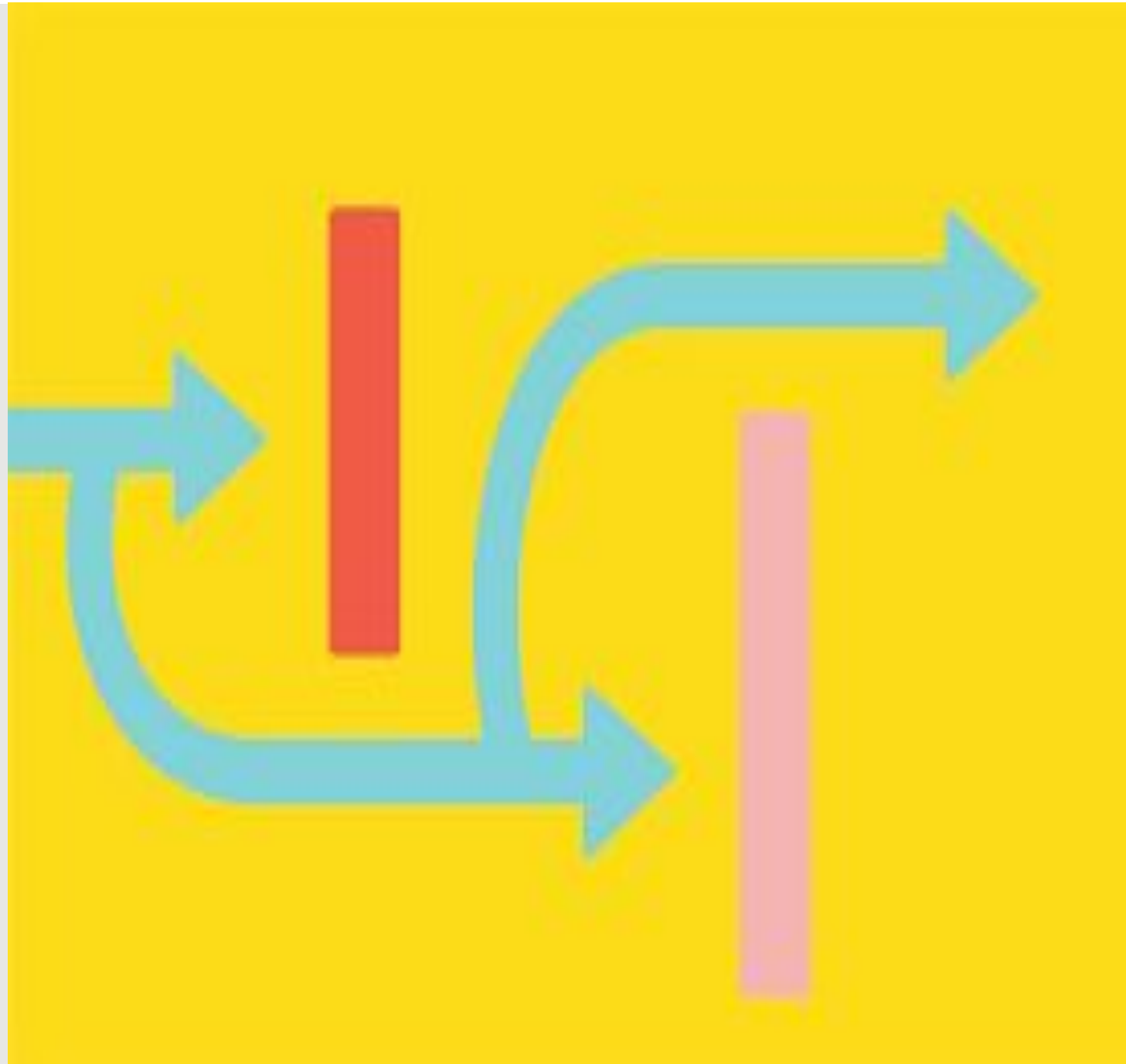


Collaborating

Learning



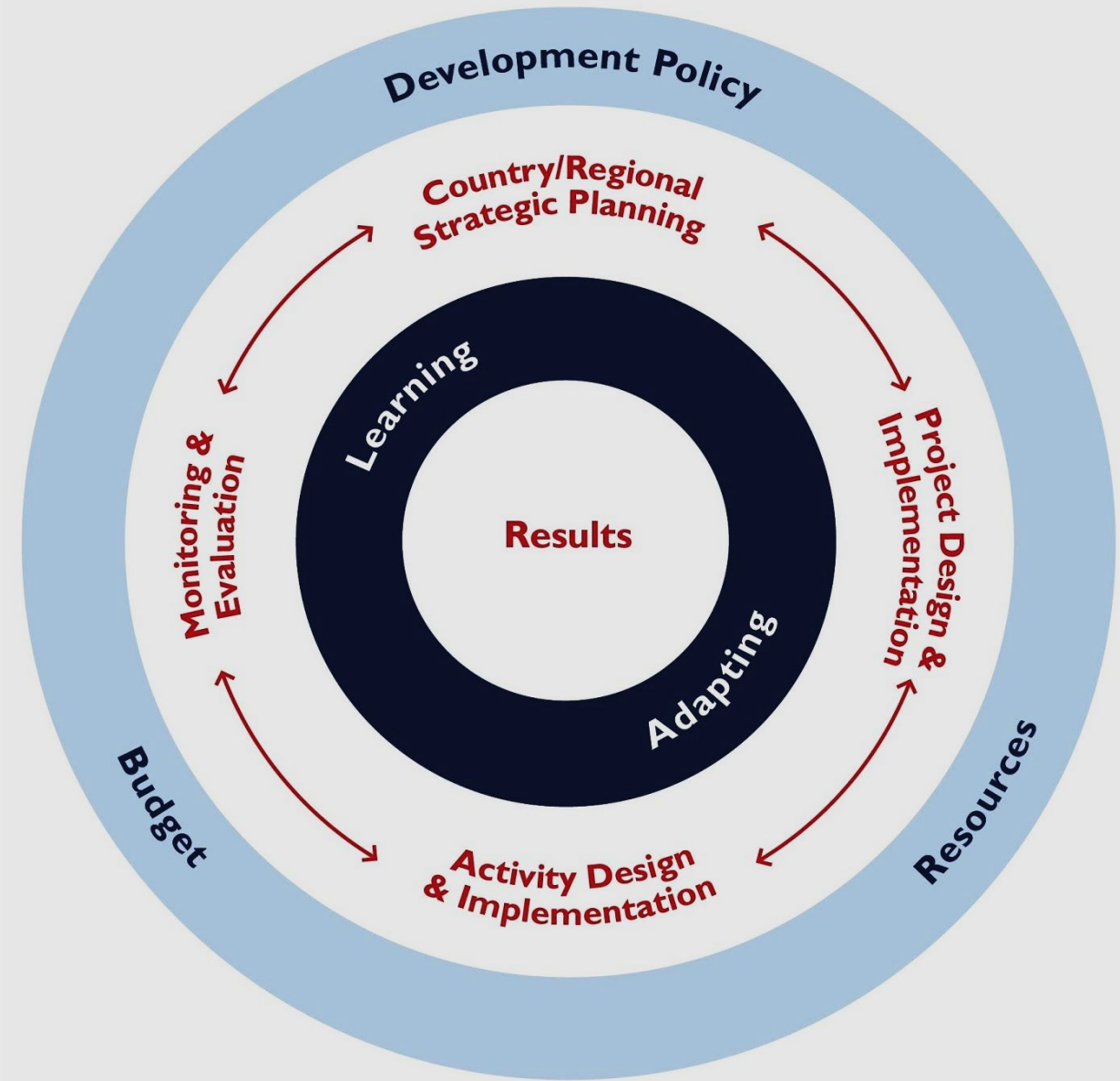
Adapting



Enabling Conditions



CLA In The Program Cycle



USAID Program Cycle

Integrating CLA into Activity MEL Plan



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Integrating CLA into the Activity MEL Plan



Activity MEL Review



Learning questions/ Learning Agenda



Beneficiary feedback plans

Image Credit: Online Marketing Institute



COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY (CDCS)

June 30, 2020 – July 1, 2025

Activity Description



Is it clear?



It is useful?



Does it connect to the bigger picture?

THEORY OF CHANGE

ASSUMPTIONS

- All communities & voices are equal
- Individuals have the ability to change institutions and systems
- Our team lives by its values

Relationships



Human Capital



Financial Resources



Information



ADAPTIVE LEARNING | GENDER EQUITY | SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

PRE-CONDITIONS

- Need for accountability exists
- Political/civic space to operate
- Communities willing to participate
- Partnerships to facilitate change

COALITION BUILDING



INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES



KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS



COMMUNITIES FOR CHANGE

OUTPUTS



CAMPAIGNS
COLLABORATION HUBS



INCUBATORS & TRAINING
FEEDBACK MECHANISMS



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES
POLICY CHANGE

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

ACTIVE, ENGAGED CITIZENS
&
RESPONSIBLE LEADERS

OUR IMPACT

MORE INCLUSIVE &
ACCOUNTABLE SOCIETIES

 accountabilitylab

Theory of Change



Is the current state/context outlined?



Are critical assumptions discussed?



Does the logic model connect to the CDCS framework

Monitoring



Image Credit: Insights



Are there outcome indicators?



Are all necessary disaggregation's included?



Are there context indicators that report against critical assumptions?

EVALUATIONS

The DEC provides access to over 10,000 USAID evaluations, spanning several decades of development activities at USAID.

- Evaluation at USAID
- FY 2015 Evaluation at USAID
- FY 2016 Evaluation at USAID
- FY 2017 Evaluation at USAID



EVALUATIONS IN THE DEC

Evaluation Plan



Reference external evaluations



Any internal evaluation plans

LEARNING by Reflecting



based on Four Dimensions of Reflective Learning by Karen Barnstable

Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano- globallyconnectedlearning.com

Learning



Where does learning fit in?



Are approaches designed to include feedback from beneficiaries?



Is there a strategy for adaptation?

Collecting and Managing Data



Is there a detailed plan for data collection and analysis?



Data security



How is data shared with stakeholders



Image Credit: Bloomfire

MEL Tasks and Responsibilities



Does schedule include all tasks including learning approaches?



Are all tasks assigned to specific people or roles?



Is there a review/update schedule?



Image Credit: Atlassian

Learning Agenda/Learning Questions



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Learning Agenda – Official Definition

A LEARNING AGENDA IS...

- ✓ A SET OF BROAD QUESTIONS
- ✓ DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE WORK
- ✓ WHEN ANSWERED, ENABLES THE AGENCY TO WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY
- ✓ PRIORITIZES QUESTIONS IN THE SHORTTERM and the LONGTERM



LEARNING QUESTIONS



PRIORITIZED AND OFTEN WITH "THEMATIC AREAS"

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



EFFORTS SUCH AS RESEARCH, EVALUATIONS, LITERATURE REVIEWS, MID-COURSE STOCKTAKING, PORTFOLIO REVIEWS, PAUSE + REFLECT SESSIONS, ETC.

LEARNING PRODUCTS



OFTEN INNOVATIVE and TAILORED TO SPECIFIC AUDIENCES; CAN INCLUDE INFOGRAPHICS, TWO-PAGERS, WEBINARS, ETC.

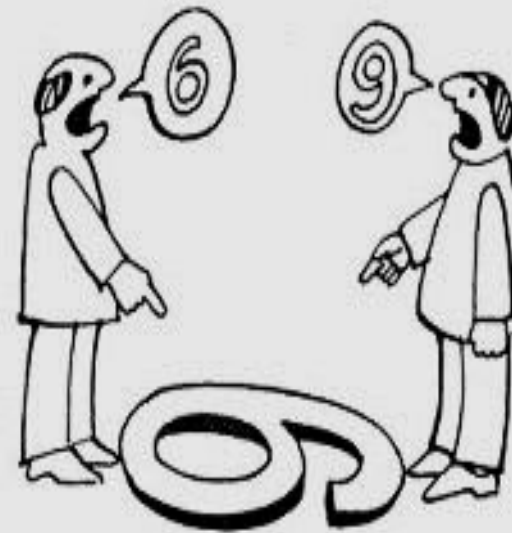
Components of a Learning Agenda



Learning Questions

Useful

Answerable Clear Collaborative



Learning Questions

Category	Feature
Factual or Descriptive	Look for relationships and describe them EXAMPLE: What is the relationship between local tour operators and the Ministry of Tourism? How does that impact implementation?
Explanatory	Explain why something happens EXAMPLE: Why do we think water usage in Amman went up (or down) last year?
Comparative	Identify two (or more) alternatives to a situation and compare the alternatives in actual practice. EXAMPLE: How do new teaching approaches work in the cities vs. rural areas? Is there a gender difference in how well they work or don't work?
Predictive	Constructing scenarios of how things might be in the future EXAMPLE: What are potential impacts of prioritizing midwifery training for women in rural areas?
Problem-Solving	Propose solutions to existing problems EXAMPLE: Should we support opening university career center services to people more than five years past graduation?
Paradoxical	Explore an apparently contradictory situation to make a suggestion for resolving the contradiction. EXAMPLE: Why aren't young women visiting career centers when they report having a positive impression of the services they provide?

Learning Activities

Portfolio Review

Contextual Review

Pause and Reflect

Staff Retreats



Learning Products

MEASURE Evaluation's Health Information System Learning Agenda

What are the factors and conditions of HIS performance progress?

Health information system (HIS) performance is the ability of low- and middle-income countries' national HIS to capture, store, manage, share, and use data to monitor and measure their progress toward sustainable health-related development goals and to meet health sector decision-making needs at all levels. **The following factors are associated with HIS performance progress:**

- Solutions are local and aligned with health ministry information system and national priorities.
- Leaders are engaged and serve as change agents and there is general political will to change.
- Interventions are integrated and mutually reinforcing.
- Processes are standardized and institutionalized.
- Approaches are flexible and adaptable, and improvement is iterative.
- Feedback systems are regular and routine.
- Assessments, review, and stakeholder collaboration occur regularly and inform interventions.
- Good teamwork and positive attitudes are in place.
- Human resources and capacity are sufficient.
- System improvements support subsequent improvements in system capabilities.

Contextual factors must also be considered. (See the HIS Strengthening Model on page 2.)

What are the stages of progression to a strong HIS and how are they measured?

Progression to a strong HIS can be measured across five stages:

1. **Emerging:** Formal knowledge and processes around HIS are limited; functional capabilities may be in place for specific projects but not nationally.
2. **Repeatable:** Efforts are being made to standardize processes; existing processes are based on previous activities.
3. **Defined:** Approved, documented processes and guidelines exist. Stakeholders share knowledge and collaborate, using innovative methods and tools.
4. **Managed:** Activities are regularly implemented using standard processes; HIS requirements and goals are detailed and achieved.
5. **Optimized:** Best practices are applied and the system is capable of adapting. Experiences and feedback are used for continuous improvement.

The **HIS Stages of Continuous Improvement Assessment Tool** measures the stages across five core domains, and is available here: <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/fs-17-246>

What are the characteristics of a strong HIS?

A strong HIS has the following characteristics:

Well-defined: It has a strategy with standards and principles; defined health indicators and data sources that are used consistently; a user-friendly structure; and standard operating procedures for data collection, analysis, and use.

Comprehensive: It captures and monitors all health services and functions (e.g., medicines, human resources, technology); includes all levels of the health system; and encompasses all data sources (e.g., routine records, population surveys, and civil registration and vital statistics).

Functional: It uses appropriate technology (including paper records) for the context; has a plan for data quality checks and strategies for using and sharing data; and has appropriate training for health workers.

Adaptable and scalable: It has the in-country capacity to redesign, reform, expand, or roll out the HIS at national and subnational levels.

Resilient: It must be able to withstand social, political, and biological crises.

Got questions? We have answers.



CLA Case Competition Q&A Webinar

Wednesday, July 6th, 8:00-9:00AM EDT - bit.ly/clacompqanda

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT EVIDENCE AND LEARNING PLAN



Akware Justice, her husband Huntington, and their children show off produce from their farm near Mbarara Uganda. The family used a loan from a local bank backed by a USAID Development Credit Authority Guarantee to build an irrigation system and increase the farm's capacity.

Photo credit: USAID



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Creating a Learning Agenda

Collaborate

Develop Learning Questions

Write a Plan

Implement Plan

Collaborate



Develop Learning Questions



Write a Plan



Implement Plan



Characteristics of a Learning Agenda



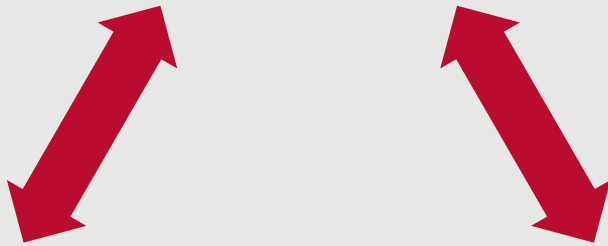
Beneficiary Feedback Plan



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Beneficiary Feedback Plan

Collect



Report



Respond



Review each component



Think about how it fits into broader Activity MEL Plan.



Relatively new (added to ADS in 2021)

Beneficiary Name

Beneficiary Name	Beneficiary type and means of identification	Summary of Activity services the beneficiary will receive	List the methods and frequency for collecting feedback	Method & Frequency of Sharing feedback with USAID.	Analysis and Response to feedback
Staci's CSO					

Beneficiary Type and Means of Identification

Beneficiary Name	Beneficiary type and means of identification	Summary of Activity services the beneficiary will receive	List the methods and frequency for collecting feedback	Method & Frequency of Sharing feedback with USAID.	Analysis and Response to feedback
Staci's CSO	A local CSO, this is an intermediate beneficiary, we will be training this group to conduct additional trainings for the ultimate beneficiary				

Summary of Activity Services

Beneficiary Name	Beneficiary type and means of identification	Summary of Activity services the beneficiary will receive	List the methods and frequency for collecting feedback	Method & Frequency of Sharing feedback with USAID.	Analysis and Response to feedback
Staci's CSO	A local CSO, this is an intermediate beneficiary, we will be training this group to conduct additional trainings for the ultimate beneficiary	Trainings, both on subject and facilitation skills development. Will also receive mentoring support on organizing trainings and reporting to USAID.			

Methods and Frequency of Collection

Beneficiary Name	Beneficiary type and means of identification	Summary of Activity services the beneficiary will receive	List the methods and frequency for collecting feedback	Method & Frequency of Sharing feedback with USAID.	Analysis and Response to feedback
Staci's CSO	A local CSO, this is an intermediate beneficiary, we will be training this group to conduct additional trainings for the ultimate beneficiary	Trainings, both on subject and facilitation skills development. Will also receive mentoring support on organizing trainings and reporting to USAID.	Participant feedback will be collected after each training and summarized in a quarterly report. Additionally, will be part of annual partner survey references in PITT.		

Methods and Frequency of Sharing with USAID

Beneficiary Name	Beneficiary type and means of identification	Summary of Activity services the beneficiary will receive	List the methods and frequency for collecting feedback	Method & Frequency of Sharing feedback with USAID.	Analysis and Response to feedback
Staci's CSO	A local CSO, this is an intermediate beneficiary, we will be training this group to conduct additional trainings for the ultimate beneficiary	Trainings, both on subject and facilitation skills development. Will also receive mentoring support on organizing trainings and reporting to USAID.	Participant feedback will be collected after each training and summarized in a quarterly report. Additionally, will be part of annual partner survey references in PITT.	Quarterly summaries of feedback and responses will be shared as part of quarterly report.	

Analysis and Response to Feedback

Beneficiary Name	Beneficiary type and means of identification	Summary of Activity services the beneficiary will receive	List the methods and frequency for collecting feedback	Method & Frequency of Sharing feedback with USAID.	Analysis and Response to feedback
Staci's CSO	A local CSO, this is an intermediate beneficiary, we will be training this group to conduct additional trainings for the ultimate beneficiary	Trainings, both on subject and facilitation skills development. Will also receive mentoring support on organizing trainings and reporting to USAID.	Participant feedback will be collected after each training and summarized in a quarterly report. Additionally, will be part of annual partner survey references in PITT.	Quarterly summaries of feedback and responses will be shared as part of quarterly report.	Will include the quarterly reviews in regular internal P&R. Will include responses to annual survey and facilitate discussion of necessary adaptation with Staci's CSO at annual learning summit.

Agenda & Reflection Questions – Day 2

Linking CLA and Learning

What tools have you used? What are new to you? Which ones would you like to learn more about? Which ones will be most useful to you in your work?

Facilitating Learning

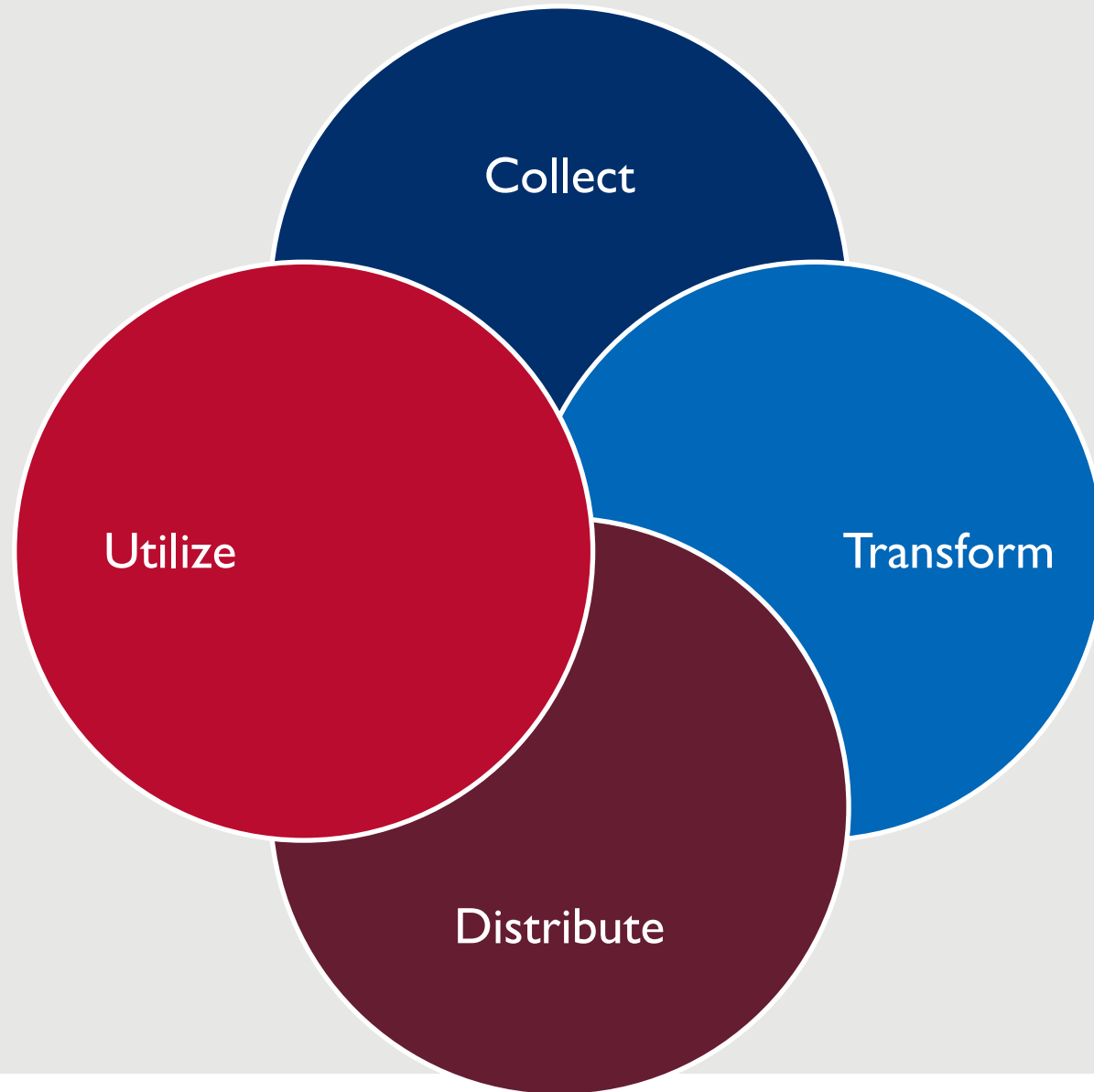
How will this change your approach to learning activities? How do you plan on building evaluation capacity in your organization? How can you build evaluation capacity in IPs.

Linking CLA and Monitoring – Knowledge Management and Adaptive Management



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Four Steps of Knowledge Management



Collect



Transform



Image Credit: LinkedIn

Distribute



Image Credit: Ritesh Seth



Image Credit: AvePoint

Utilize



Turn data into knowledge

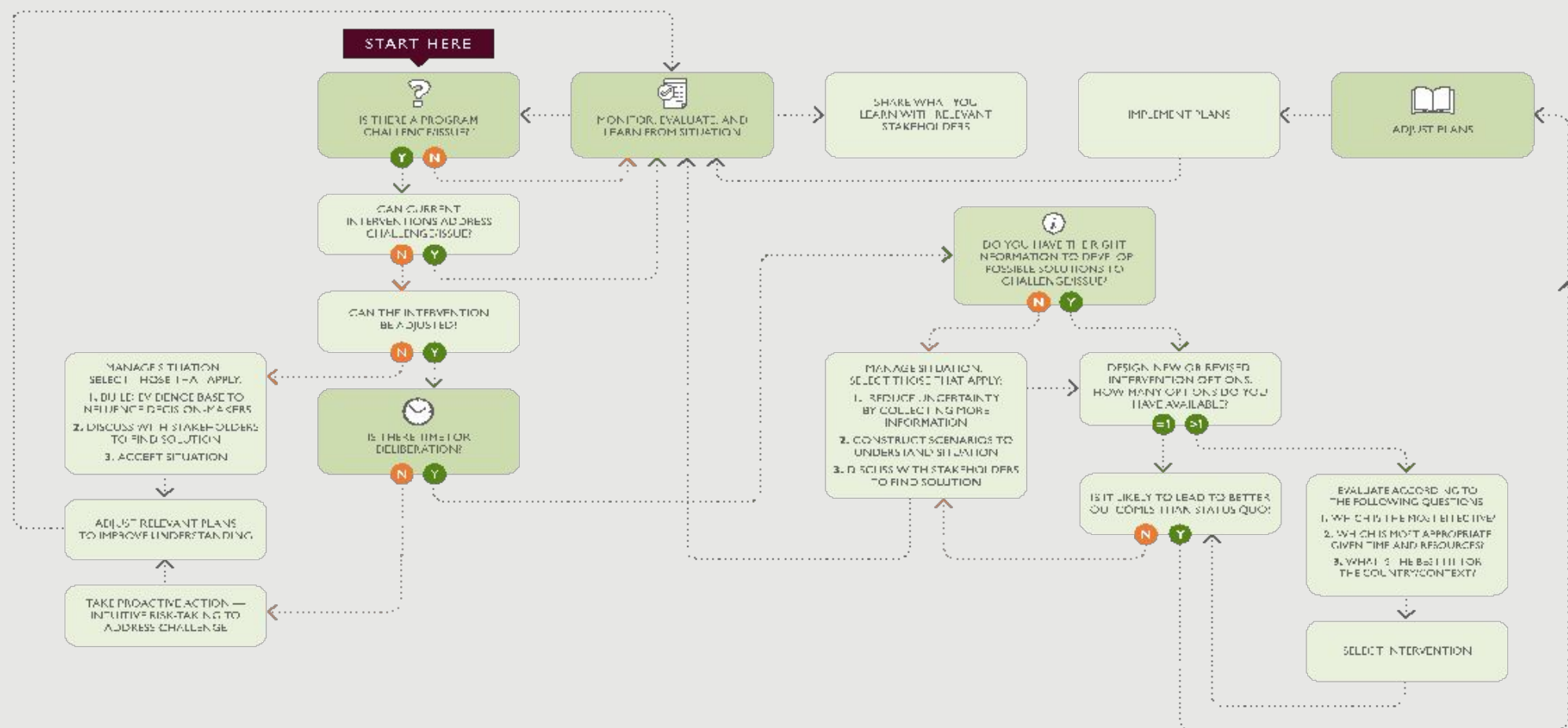


Role of systems

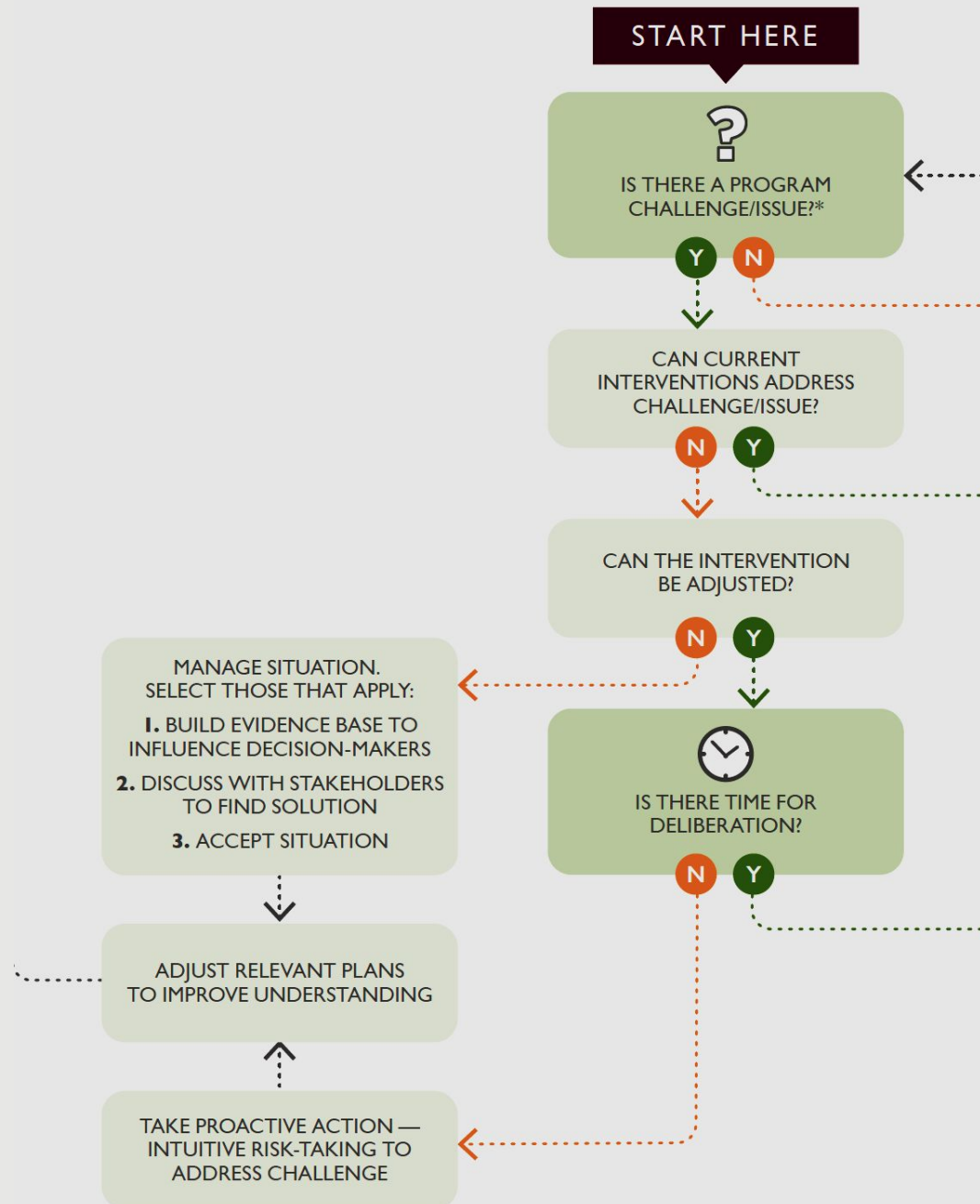
KNOWING WHEN TO ADAPT

DECISION TREE

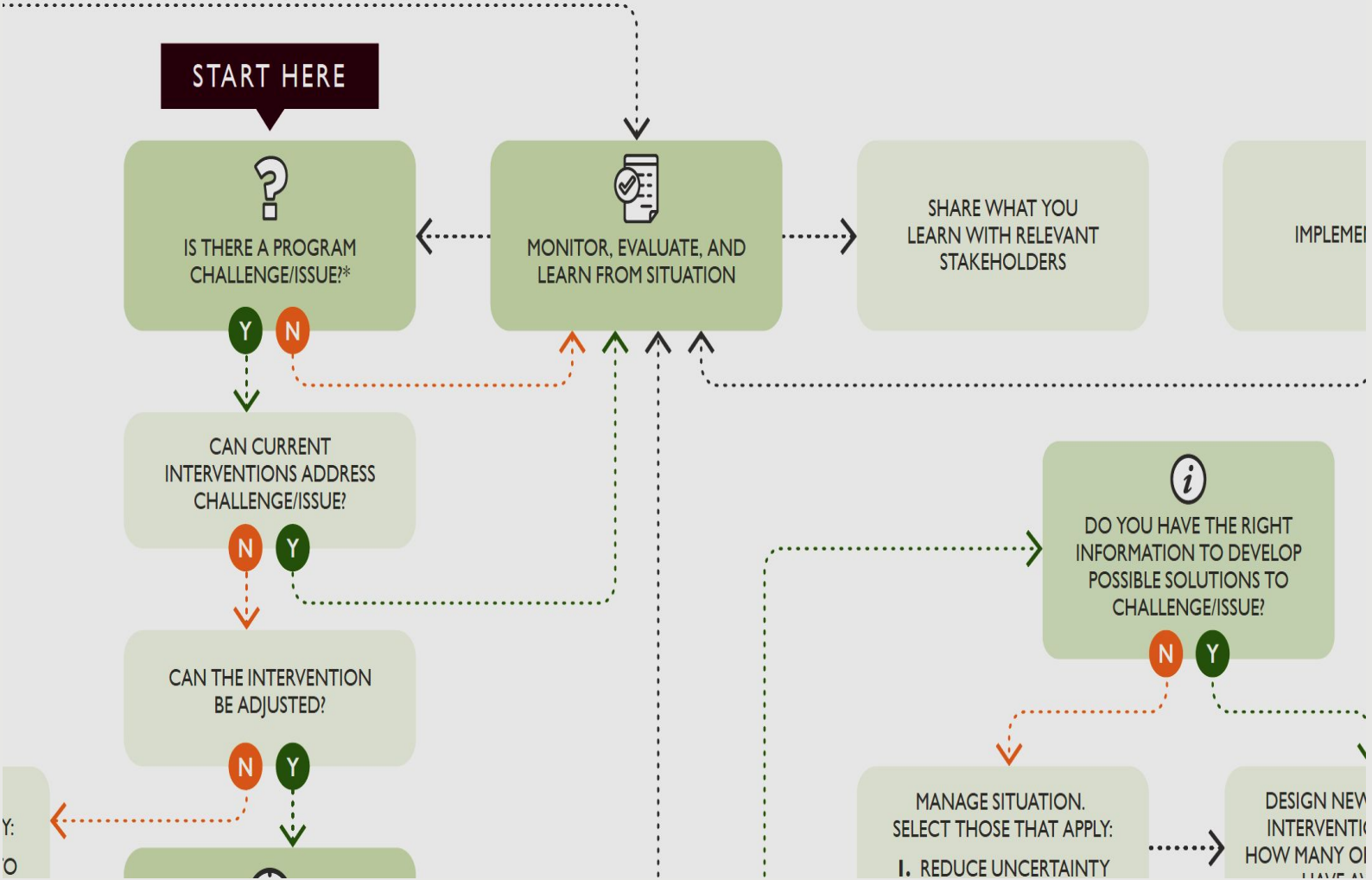
This job aid will help you determine how best to resolve a challenge/issue in programming. It is intended for use by USAID, partners, and others working in international development.



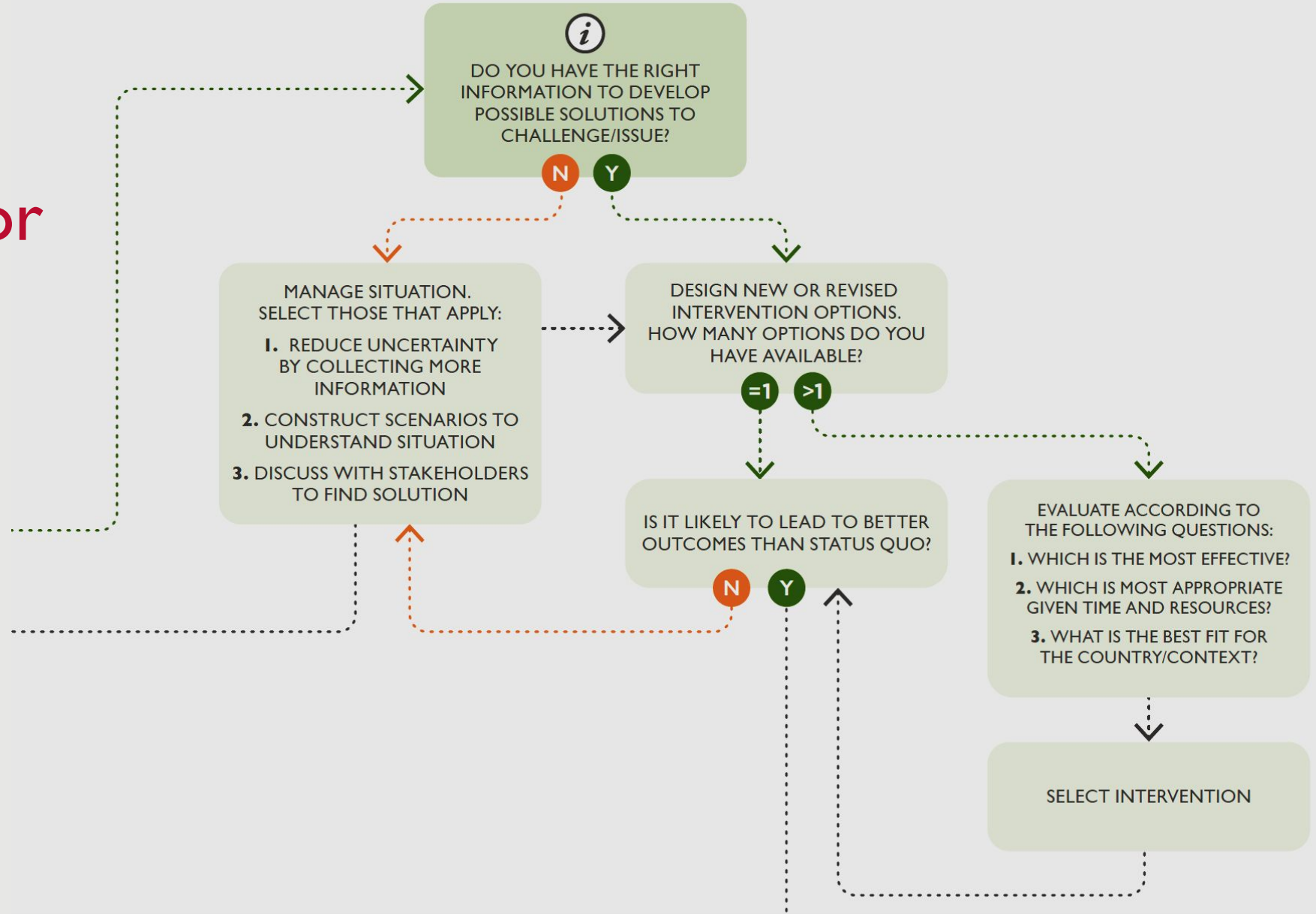
Is there a program challenge or issue?



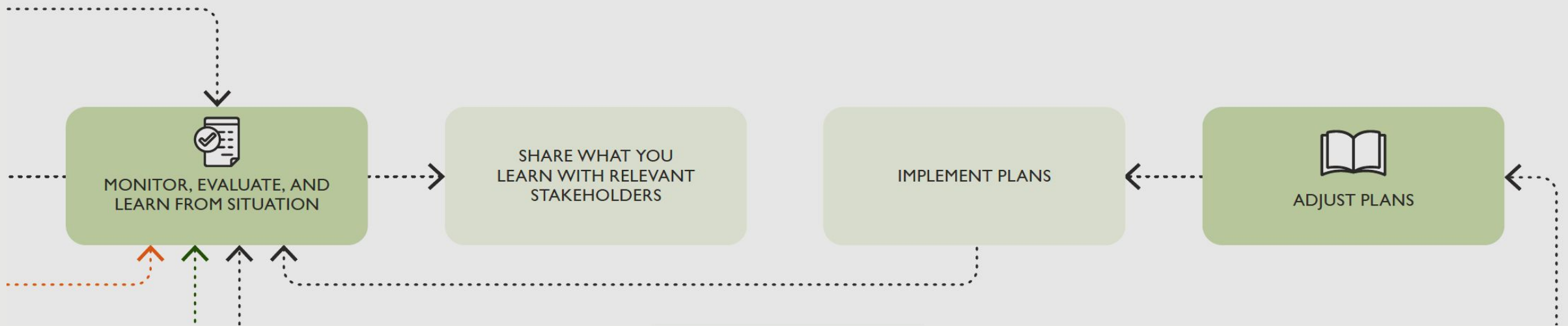
Monitor, evaluate, and learn from situation.



Is there time for
deliberation -
Yes



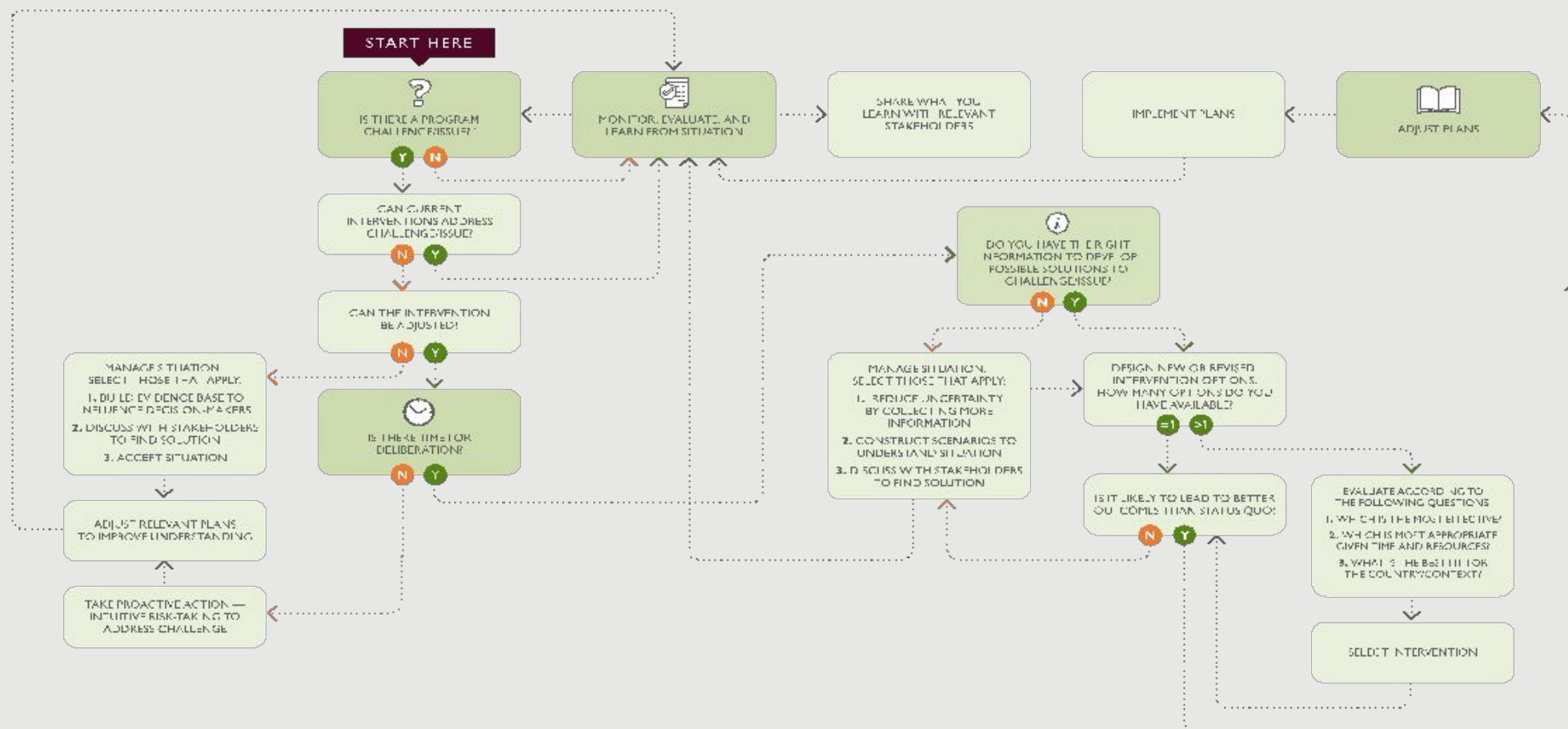
Adjusting and implementing



KNOWING WHEN TO ADAPT

DECISION TREE

This job aid will help you determine how best to resolve a challenge/issue in programming. It is intended for use by USAID, partners, and others working in international development.



Facilitating Learning



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Facilitating a Maturity Tool Session

Facilitating a Maturity Tool Session

CLA Maturity Tool Facilitator Resources

Resources



[FAQs](#)



[Maturity Tool Introduction Video](#)



[Tool Instructions](#)



[CLA Maturity Tool Slides](#)



[CLA Maturity Tool Slides \(PDF version\)](#)



[Facilitator Shorthand Guide](#)



[Additional Discussion Questions](#)



[Stage Card Print Template](#)



[CLA Self-Assessment and Action Planning Session Report Template](#)



[Sample Session Report](#)



[Facilitation Talking Points](#)



Tomorrow's activity.



Service LMOs can provide.



Conduct for yourselves as well.

Connect CLA Framework and Maturity Tool



CLA in the program cycle



Enabling conditions

Planning



Decisions



Roles



Agenda



Room Set-Up

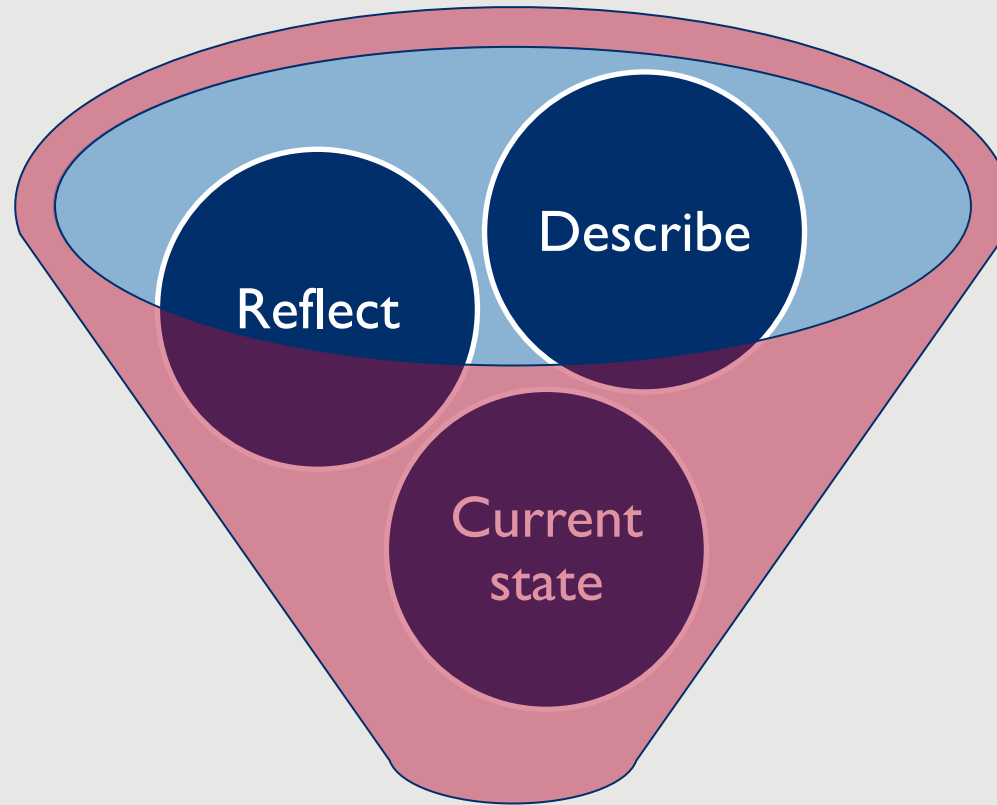
Image Credit: Workday

Introduction and Subcomponent Selection



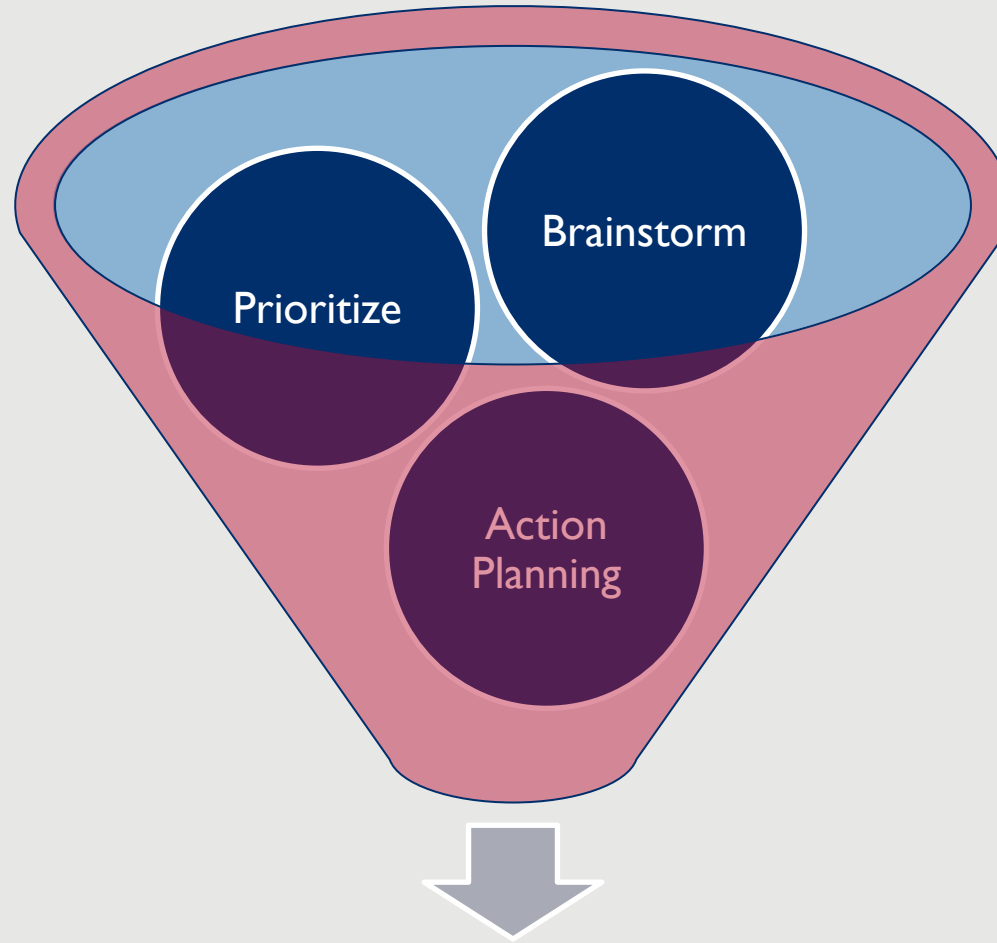
- ✓ Explain context
- ✓ Explain process
- ✓ Select subcomponents

Self-Assessment Rounds



Aspirational state

Action Planning Rounds



Accountability

Designing a Learning Event



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Learning Event – Case Study



Annual Learning Summit – in contract.



Three partners.



Tension due to slow start-up.



Case study

Image Credit: Shutterstock

Challenges



- ✓ No formal government partner.
- ✓ Disagreement over deliverables.
- ✓ Different levels of engagement between partners.
- ✓ Differing priorities on learning summit goals.
- ✓ International travel restrictions impacted attendance.

Initial Training Wants

- Sharing experiences
- Panel discussions
- Keynote speakers
- Improve collaboration
- Improve understanding
- Share lessons learned (contract language)



Pop Quiz!

Considering the information shared so far, what do you think was the final overall goal statement for the learning summit?

- A. The overall goal of this summit is to develop a greater sense of ownership toward the project and agree on collaboration and coordination mechanism among partner organizations.
- B. The underlying purpose of this summit is to provide a platform for the key national partners to listen to and learn from provincial partners.
- C. The summit is designed to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that will promote collaboration between the IP and key local government entities.

Pop Quiz!



- ✓ Who chose A and why?
- ✓ Who chose B and why?
- ✓ Who chose C and why?



Event Outputs

- ✓ Action items - Internal
- ✓ Joint action items - External



Getting to Outputs

- ✓ Reflection questions.
- ✓ Icebreaker.
- ✓ Current activities.
- ✓ Collaborative group work.



Challenges

- ✓ COVID
- ✓ Partners remote
- ✓ Senior people dominated discussion.

Case Example Post-Event Survey

- Overall participants felt they benefited by participating in the summit – with 15/17 stating they agreed or strongly agreed they had benefited (weighted average 4.41)
- Participants also generally felt they invested the right amount of time – only one of the 17 respondents disagreed (weighted average 4.18)
- Our collaboration score- whether participants believe it would have been difficult to accomplish individually what the group accomplished was also high – 15/17 agreed or strongly agreed.
- When asked if given the opportunity, would you participant in an event like this again, the respondents gave a very strong overall score of 85. Disaggregated by groups, the numbers are:
 - Educational Partner – 60
 - Private sector partner - 85
 - Government counterpart - 86
 - Implementing Partner – 97