Seila Task Force Secretariat

Seila Program Monitoring and Evaluation Manual

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADESS	Agricultural Development Support to the Seila Program
AWPB	Annual workplan and budget
CAR	Council for Administrative Reform
CAU	Contract Administration Unit (of the PRDC ExCom)
CDB	Commune Database
DFT	District facilitation team
DIW	District Integration Workshop
DoLA	Department of Local Administration (Ministry of Interior)
DoWVA	Department of Women and Veteran's Affairs
DSA	Daily subsistence allowance
ExCom	Executive Committee (of the PRDC)
FP	Focal Point, or Focal Person
FU	Finance Unit (of the PRDC ExCom)
IA	Implementing Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KAP	Knowledge – Attitude – Practice
LAU	Local Administration Unit (of the PRDC ExCom)
LDF	Local Development Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoWVA	Ministry of Women and Veteran's Affairs
NCSC	National Committee for Support to Communes/Sangkats
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NREM	Natural resource and environmental management
PBC	Planning and Budgeting Committee (of the Commune Council)
PDP	Provincial Development Plan
PDIP	Provincial Development Investment Program
PDoP	Provincial Department of Planning

PFT	Provincial facilitation team
PID	Project Information Database
PIF	Provincial Investment Fund
PMEU	Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (STF Secretariat)
POLA	Provincial Office of Local Administration
POU	Program Operations Unit (STF Secretariat)
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committee
SCD	Seila Contracts Database
STF	Seila Task Force
STFS	Seila Task Force Secretariat
ToR	Terms of reference
TSS	Technical Support Staff
TSU	Technical Support Unit (of the PRDC ExCom)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank

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Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Seila Program M&E Manual

This manual presents the Seila monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the Seila program 2001 – 2005. The purpose of this manual is to help people involved in the Seila program to understand what monitoring and evaluation are, what the roles and responsibilities are for people involved in implementing and managing the Seila program at the different levels, and how such monitoring and evaluation is done.

The manual is meant for use by national and provincial[1] level Seila staff and Seila program implementers. Efforts have been made to keep the system, formats, reporting, and processes to a minimum, and as straightforward and simple as possible for the users. However, the Seila program is a large program, implementing and testing deconcentrated and decentralized systems and policy. So, besides regular monitoring and evaluation of activities, outputs and finances, extensive lesson learning, policy analysis, dialogue and documentation are also part of the Seila program activities.

The Seila program M&E manual does not stand on its own: it is part of and refers to other management systems and guidelines, both Royal Government of Cambodia ones and Seila program specific ones, that are used to implement Seila program activities in order to achieve the program's goal and objectives. The most important Seila program guidelines and systems are described in the Seila Program Operations Manual, the Seila Program Administration Manual and the Seila Program Finance Manual.

A number of databases have been developed to help analyze, store and report information in support of Seila program implementation. Some of these databases are still Seila program specific (e.g. the Seila Contracts Database); other databases have already been institutionalized in mainstream Government structures (e.g. the Commune Database in the Department of Planning), or will most likely be institutionalized in the near future (e.g. the Project Information Database, which will replace the Local Development Fund database). The people who work with these databases will need to refer to the manuals available for each of these databases.

1.2 Scope and Limitation of the Seila Program M&E Manual

The Seila M&E manual is based on the experiences, activities, systems and formats developed in the Seila program since 1996. In the coming years, the M&E system – like the Seila program itself – will continue to change. There will be changes at all levels because of new developments related to decentralisation and deconcentration, the elaboration of national policies, and the promulgation of regulations and guidelines to implement these. The Seila program, and its M&E system, will need to be reviewed and adjusted to adapt to these changes as good as possible.

[1] For ease of reading, in this manual, the words "province" and "provincial" are used throughout, as a shorthand for "province/municipality" and "provincial/municpal". Similarly "district" is used for "district/khan", and "commune" for "commune/sangkat".

This Seila program M&E manual does not give answers to every question. Users will often experience a certain sense of frustration, as they feel insufficiently guided and helped by the current manual in how exactly to implement and manage Seila program M&E activities. This manual is rather like a foundation on which to build Seila program M&E as it is implemented in the different provinces, in the participating ministries and agencies at the national level, and – to the extent possible – in other programs that are linked to the Seila program. As the M&E system that is described in this manual gets implemented, more specific examples of Seila program M&E implementation will be compiled, thus drawing on the broad and varied Seila program experience at national and provincial levels. Such compilation of examples, although never complete, will help to revise this M&E manual, and make it more useful for future use.

It will take time to fully establish the Seila program M&E system. Many people are already involved in Seila program implementation, and more will become involved over the next few years. Some people already know parts of the Seila program M&E, but even for them there are aspects which are new and which they need to learn and apply. Others will be completely new to the Seila program or to monitoring and evaluation. For them, capacity building and training will need to start with an explanation of the Seila program's goal and objectives and the basic concepts and methods for monitoring and evaluation.

It is important to remember that the key aspects in monitoring and evaluation are: learning to understand what questions to ask, who to ask them to, and where to look for data and information to answer the questions. But this is only half the picture. The information obtained from analyzing the data, and the lessons learned must also be used to improve program and project implementation, and to inform policy-making, thereby helping people and institutions at all levels to become more effective in reducing poverty in Cambodia.

1.3 Structure of the Seila Program M&E Manual

This manual is divided into seven Sections. The next section, Section 2, presents the concepts and principles of monitoring and evaluation in the Seila program. It includes the definitions of monitoring and evaluation, the objectives of the Seila M&E system, the relationship of M&E with the Seila program logframe, and a short description of roles and responsibilities of actors at the different levels.

Because the Seila program is a big program which, as of March 2003, covers the whole country, thereby involving many people and operating at different levels, it was decided to give the detailed description of the M&E system for each level separately. The Sections 3 and 4 deal respectively with the Seila M&E system at national and provincial level. Each Section describes the Seila program management structure relevant for that level, the M&E system with the indicators and means of verification, the roles and responsibilities, and suggested capacity building for M&E.

Section 5 deals with commune M&E. Since the Commune Council elections of February 2002, the implementation of development activities and delivery of services at this level are governed by Government regulations and procedures, rather than Seila program ones. The commune M&E system is however not fully developed yet, and the purpose of this Section is therefore rather to serve as a reference for provincial staff, to help Commune Councils setting up their M&E system and building their capacity. It is anticipated that a separate, simpler and more appropriate handbook on commune monitoring and evaluation for use by the Commune Councils will be developed later.

The last Sections in the manual are Section 6, which gives some general information on data collection and analysis, and Section 7 which deals more specifically with reporting and the use of information.

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Section 2

Concepts and Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation in the Seila Program

2.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

2.1.1 Seila Program Definitions of Monitoring and Evaluation

What do monitoring and evaluation mean? There are no standard, universally accepted definitions of monitoring and evaluation. The definitions that are currently used in the Seila program are:

Monitoring is the periodic and timely collection of information about the progress of a contract, project or program, to determine if activities are being implemented as planned. It is an ongoing process that forms a normal part of day-to-day work. It is always internal to the program. The information is used to make decisions about improving the management and implementation of the project or program.

Monitoring is done continuously during the implementation of the program or project and collects directly available information about activities and outputs. It checks that activities are being implemented as planned. Staff monitor as part of their day-to-day work and use the information in order to assess progress, improve the quality of implementation and make adjustments: results of monitoring can lead to changes at the level of activity planning. Changes, however, are only necessary in case problems are identified or if things are not going according to plan. Monitoring information is also used as an input for evaluation.

Monitoring therefore serves three purposes:

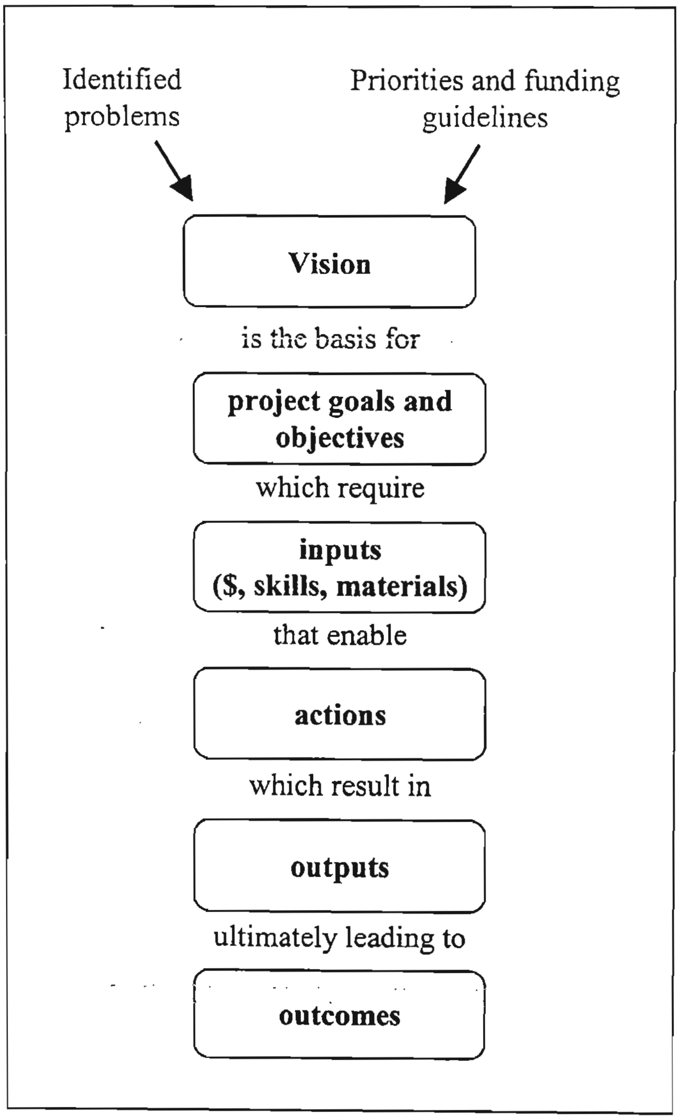
1. **To enhance accountability.** Monitoring helps to demonstrate and verify that activities have been implemented in line with the given mandate, according to plan and in the prescribed manner.
2. **To improve management and decision-making**. Through monitoring, information is obtained on overall progress with project or program implementation, and on issues or problems that emerge and which need to be addressed.
3. **To encourage learning**. By doing project or program monitoring, the people involved in the project or program become more aware of what works well and what not, and they can make adjustments so that project or program implementation in future may be more successful, or that the lessons learned are used in the design of other projects or programs, or for overall policy making.

Evaluation is a process to determine the impact and effectiveness of a project or program in order to use lessons learned. It does this by determining the achievement of goals and objectives. Project or program evaluations are separately scheduled activities performed at specific intervals by project/program staff (internal evaluation), people who are not involved in the project/program (external evaluation), or a mix of both.

Evaluation is done at fixed points during and after implementation and often collects more detailed information. Evaluation checks whether the goals and objectives of the program or project are being reached. The results of evaluation are used to judge the impact on the target population, to adjust objectives and project or program design, and to decide about the future of the program or project.

2.1.2 Similarities and Differences between Monitoring and Evaluation

The decision what to monitor and evaluate is strongly influenced by the logic behind the project formulation (see the graph below[1]). The decision to implement a project is often rooted in a problem, or to make use of an opportunity. The problem or opportunity is identified and goals and objectives are set, which the project implementers try to reach by using resources to undertake actions that produce outputs, which hopefully will result in the expected outcomes.



[1] Source : Woodhill, Jim and Lisa Robins, 1998, Participatory Evaluation for Landcare and Catchment Groups : A Guide for Facilitators, Greening Australia, Yarralumla, Australia

Monitoring and evaluation will normally focus on three levels:

- Monitoring of **inputs**, which tell us what resources are used to implement the activities:
    - project finances (to pay for materials and labour costs)
    - time, materials, equipment and funding contributed by the community
- Indicators of **outputs**, which tell us about progress and the level of activity:
    - what is being built or being implemented
    - whether the project is being implemented on schedule
    - the observations, feelings and concerns of the people involved in the project about how well it is working
- Indicators of **outcomes**, which tell us if the project is successful:
    - use of the new or upgraded infrastructure as intended
    - application of newly acquired skills and knowledge
    - changes in attitudes

In monitoring and evaluation, the key questions often relate to ***appropriateness*** or ***relevance***, ***effectiveness*** and ***efficiency*** of the activities that have been done.

Appropriateness or **relevance** – Was the project a good idea? Were the goals and objectives well chosen, considering the needs of the people, and the circumstances in which the activities had to be implemented? Were the proposed activities a sensible use of the available resources (money and time) for the existing problems?

Effectiveness – Did the project work? Did it achieve its stated goal and objectives? If not, was it because a good project idea was badly implemented?

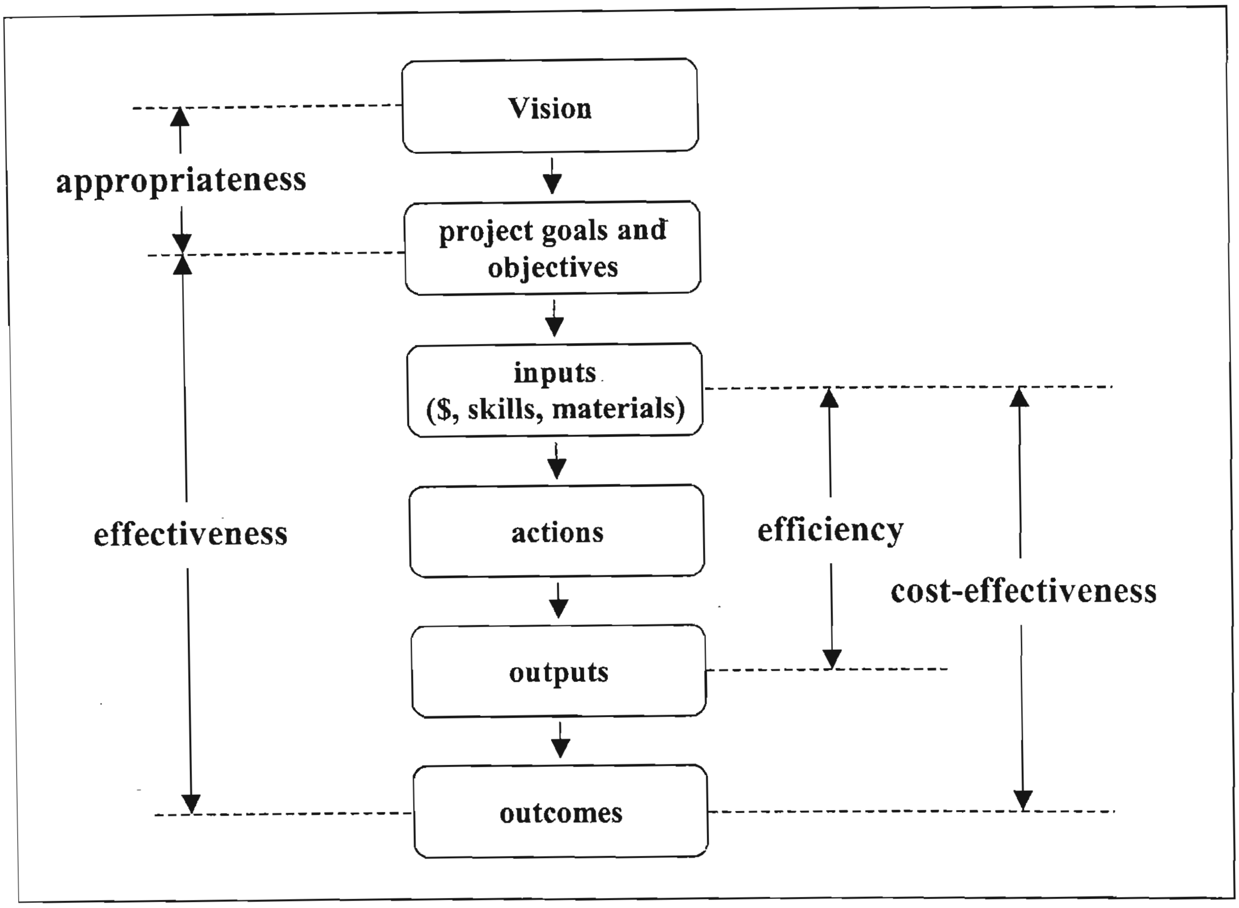
Efficiency – Was the project implemented in the best possible way? Were the resources used efficiently, or could the same results have been achieved more quickly or at a lower cost?

These considerations of appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency also relate back to the logic of the project, as illustrated on the next page.

When a project is being implemented, or a service is being delivered, the first focus of monitoring is the **monitoring of inputs, outputs and efficiency**. Are the resources which are needed to implement the activity available? If yes, are the outputs obtained as planned (in the expected quantity and with the expected quality, and in the time planned for it)?

At the end of a project, or towards the end of the year when work on preparing the annual report starts, the focus of monitoring shifts more to **monitoring of outcomes and assessing impacts**. Is the new infrastructure being used as planned, without difficulty? Is the service which has been delivered giving the expected results? Can one see any changes in the situation now, compared to what it was before the project was implemented or the service delivered?

A range of indicators, which form the backbone of a monitoring and evaluation system, provides the answers to the above questions.



2.2. Seila Program Overview

The Seila program is a national effort to achieve poverty reduction through improved local governance. The development goal of Seila is: "*To contribute to poverty alleviation through good governance.*" Seila's immediate objective is: "*To institute decentralized systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development.*" This objective will be realized through three program outputs:

1. Related institutions at all levels strengthened and effectively implementing the decentralized and deconcentrated systems;
2. Efficient and effective services and investments provided for local development;
3. Contribute to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation.

The Seila program operates at the national as well as the sub-national (province and commune) levels. At the national level the program focuses on the development and refinement of systems and regulations, and assistance in policy development; at the sub-national levels, the program focuses on establishing more capable and accountable institutions, and promoting partnerships and dialogue. In addition, Seila supports poverty alleviation by providing capital for investment in public infrastructure and services, and the development of sustainable systems for improved local governance and development. A third core component of Seila is the support for capacity building at national, provincial, district and commune levels.

More detailed information on the Seila program, its management structure and systems, can be found in the Seila Program Document and the Seila Program Operations Manual.

2.3 The Seila Logframe and M&E

One approach which is often used in designing a program or project is the logical framework approach. This approach helps to analyse and identify **what** a program or projects wants to achieve, and **how** to achieve it. The information from the analysis is usually given in the form of a table or matrix which is also known as the project matrix or the **logframe**.

The columns of the logframe give summary information on:

- **Objective hierarchy:** It specifies what the project or program intends to achieve, from the level of an overall goal down to specific activities. The logical framework approach is based on a "means-end " logic: if the planned inputs or resources (money, materials, people) are made available, then certain activities can be performed, which – if our planning assumptions are correct – will produce specific outputs. These outputs in turn are means to achieve certain objectives, which in turn may serve to achieve wider objectives. The objective hierarchy for the Seila program, as mentioned in the program design document, is given on the next page[2].
- **Key Performance or Verifiable Indicators:** These are the performance questions and/or key indicators that will be used to monitor progress and overall achievement.
- **Means of Verification:** The mechanisms or instruments that indicate how these indicators will be monitored or where the data can be found.
- **Assumptions and Risks:** The assumptions behind the logic of how activities will eventually contribute to the goal, plus associated risks for the project if assumptions turn out to be incorrect.

The Seila program logframe forms the basis for the program overall, and to formulate the national annual workplan and budget. The process of annual workplan preparation helps to 'translate' the program strategy, as summarized in the logframe, into an operational workplan and budget that are clear to staff and partners. The purpose of the workplan and budget are to make clear to staff and implementing organizations what they are expected to do, when and how, and with what resources. The workplan guides daily implementation.

[2] The wording of some logframe entries (as given in the Seila Program Document 2001-2005) has been changed, to make it conform with the conventions suggested in the IFAD, 2002, A Guide for Project M&E manual.

Goal		
Contributed to poverty alleviation through good governance.		
Objective		
To institute decentralized systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development.		
Output 1	**Output 2**	**Output 3**
Related institutions at all levels strengthened and effectively implementing the decentralized and deconcentrated systems.	Efficient and effective services and investments provided for local development.	Contributed to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation.
Activities	***Activities***	***Activities***
1.1 Assist in the refinement of decentralized planning, financing and management systems, including: definition of roles and responsibilities, establishment of guidelines, building of capacities, and provision of resources. 1.2 Establish and strengthen national, provincial and commune level institutions as necessary for the implementation of decentralised planning, financing and management. 1.3 Train and motivate national, provincial and commune level officials to promote and implement decentralised systems for investment and services delivery. 1.4 Implement guidelines and systems for decentralised planning, financing and management of investments and services. 1.5 Establish mechanisms for Government, civil society and private sector for consultation and partnership on decentralised governance at.province level. 1.6 Establish investment strategy for poverty alleviation.	2.1 Government, Private Sector and NGO's provide services and construct infrastructure in accordance with plans and good management practices. 2.2 Monitor and supervise services provided by national, province and commune levels to ensure local and external resources (financial and human) expended on investments and services are utilised efficiently (financial efficiency and accountability) and effectively (quality of investments and services). 2.3 Evaluate the impact of Seila on the accountability, accessibility, affordability, equity and sustainability of services and investments.	3.1 Establish and implement policy oriented evaluation system. 3.2 Disseminate lessons from experience. 3.3 Contribute to national policy on decentralization and deconcentration. 3.4 Contribute to national policy on poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming and natural resource management programs implemented by Ministries

It is important to understand that the Seila program, and the planning of the Seila program activities, is 'multilayered': the Seila Program Document 2001-2005 provides the basis for the national annual level workplan and budgets. This workplan and budget contains the budget allocations and summary of activities to be undertaken by the Seila program overall. A more detailed activity plan is developed each year by the Seila Task Force (STF) Secretariat, the ministries and the Provincial Rural Development Committees (PRDCs) for the activities they plan to implement. The ministries and the PRDCs prepare budgets and sign contracts with the Seila Task Force. These workplans and budgets form the basis for regular monitoring.

A similar process takes place at the provincial level. The PRDC Executive Committee (ExCom), implementing agencies and line departments prepare detailed activity plans and projects and sign agreements with the PRDC.

At the commune level the same principles are being used: Commune Councils prepare their five-year Development Plan and three-year Investment Program to prepare their annual budget. Once this has been approved, more detailed project agreements are prepared between the Commune Council and contractors. The situation for the communes is somewhat different, because they receive a major part of their funds directly from the Government, as an allocation from the Commune Fund. In the past, the communes that were involved in the Seila program, obtained funding from the so-called Local Development Fund, or LDF, which was managed by Seila.

The Seila program does however still provide resources to the Commune Fund, which makes it relevant to include commune M&E in this manual as well.

The multi-layered nature of the Seila program also means that the M&E is multi-layered. National level Seila M&E heavily relies on the M&E which is done in the provinces, and the provinces in turn partly rely on the M&E which is done by the communes.

National Seila M&E System	**Provincial Seila M&E System**	**Commune M&E System**
Seila program 2001–2005	5-year provincial development plan	5-year commune development plan
Seila annual workplan and budget	3-year rolling provincial development investment plan	3-year commune investment plan
Annual ministry contracts	Provincial annual workplan and budget	Annual budget
Annual PRDC contracts	Annual implementing agency contracts	Contracts for commune development projects
Special studies and evaluations		

The performance indicators and the means of verification (or main monitoring mechanisms) form an integral part of the program design. They are summarized in the logframe and form the basis for Seila program monitoring and evaluation. It will be clear that these multiple layers and the 'commune-level projects in provincial projects in a national program', make the Seila program and its monitoring and evaluation rather complicated.

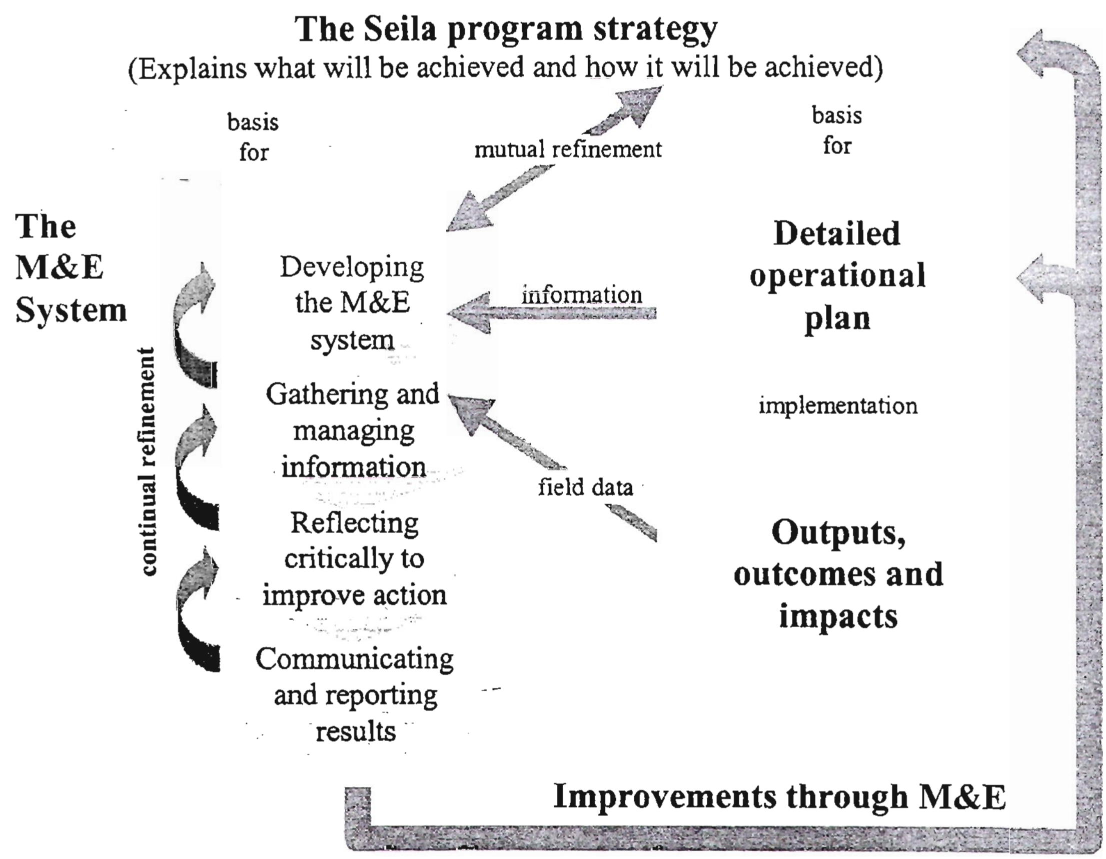
One must therefore keep in mind that the Seila logframe only presents a simplified version of the Seila program – the Seila program is a very large, multi-dimensional program, working on different levels. It is summarized in a four-by-four logframe matrix, but this matrix provides insufficient detail for effective management or M&E. The Seila logframe only provides the foundation and broad outline for M&E, but not all or enough details. To make monitoring and evaluation activities more manageable, what needs to be done at national and provincial level has been clearly separated. The activities, outputs, and outcomes at the national and provincial levels still maintain the link to the overall Seila logframe, and thus ensure that they all – in their appropriate ways – contribute to the achievement of the overall objective and goal of the Seila program.

The Seila program document 2001 – 2005 also gives performance indicators for activities. This is normally not done: a logframe usually only provides indicators for objective and output level and only specifies the necessary inputs for activities. The indicators for activities have therefore been left unspecified.

2.4 The Seila M&E System

2.4.1 The Link between the Seila Program and Seila M&E

The logframe, which presents the program strategy in a systematic manner, serves not only as the basis for developing detailed activity workplans and projects at the national level and in each province, but it is also the basis for the Seila M&E system. The figure below, adapted from an IFAD guide on M&E[3], shows how the M&E system links to the program strategy and operations.



The logframe indicates what the Seila program hopes to achieve, and how it plans to achieve this. The general program strategy gets developed into specific operational plans which indicate what projects will be implemented at what level, what outputs they will give, and what outcomes and impacts are expected as a result. The purpose of the M&E system is to gather and give information to what extent this does indeed happen, and to help identify ways on how to implement and manage the Seila program better.

In the above graph the four core tasks of the M&E system (i.e. the development of the system, the gathering and management of information, the critical reflection to improve action, and the communication and reporting of results) are shown as tasks which happen

[3] Source : IFAD, 2002, A Guide for Project M&E : Managing for Impact in Rural Development, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome, Italy

one after the other. In the Seila program (as in many other programs and projects which are continually evolving), the implementation of these core tasks sometimes overlap, and the implementation of one core task may actually be more advanced than that of a preceding one. For example, the Seila program has developed largely on the strength of its provincial, commune and village experience, and it is only in the current phase of the Seila program that the support structure at the national level receives more attention.

2.4.2 Considerations for the Seila M&E System

Based on the experience of the first phase of the Seila program (1996-2001), the following considerations were taken into account when designing the Seila M&E system for the period 2001-2005. The Seila M&E system must:

- be kept simple: it is better to start with something small and workable, and further develop it over time, then to start with something complex and difficult;
- show or create a clear relationship between the Seila logframe and activities at all levels.
- clearly define key information needs at all levels;
- take into account the roles and responsibilities of different people and their capacity;
- be flexible, adjusting over time to changing policies and systems.

To allow the monitoring of *progress* of program implementation, and the evaluation of *impact* of the program outcomes, an M&E system is needed that provides:

- information to support the focused allocation of investment funds and supports investment planning;
- information for tracking progress of the provision of services and investments at provincial and commune levels;
- information that allows the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the systems and structures that are put into place and are being supported by Seila;
- information that allows the evaluation of impact (on poverty) of the services and infrastructure provided; and
- feedback about the adoption and effectiveness of policies developed through Seila.

2.4.3 Setting up the Seila M&E System

The above graph shows that there are four core tasks in the M&E system.

1. **The development of the M&E system**. To monitor and evaluate the Seila program consistently, there must be a set of common indicators and common procedures that are used in all provinces. It involves identifying what information is needed to manage the Seila program well, and how and when to monitor and evaluate.
2. **The gathering and management of information**. This involves tracking information on outputs, outcomes and impacts. Data collection is a central part of any M&E system, and how this data is gathered and managed is very important.
3. **The critical reflection to improve action**. Data collection and information management often takes up so much time and resources, that those who are responsible for M&E do not have enough time to analyze and study the

information. What does the data tell us on how to improve the management and the effectiveness of the projects that are implemented in the Seila program?

4. **The communication and reporting of results**. It is not enough for the people who have primary responsibility for M&E to have a good understanding of how the program does or does not work. This information has to be shared with people at all levels in the Seila program, so that each, in line with his or her responsibility, can act upon it, and make the Seila program better. Information on Seila program achievement is also of interest to the organizations that support or collaborate with the Seila program.

2.4.4 Key Interest Areas for Seila M&E

Looking at the outputs and activities in the Seila logframe, we can distinguish eight key interest areas. For each of these, there will be one or more indicators that help to provide information on what the Seila program achieves. These key interest areas are briefly described below:

1. **Planning**: Provides information on the implementation of the Seila and commune planning and budgeting systems.
2. **Implementation and Progress**: Focuses on the monitoring of the implementation of workplans and contracts, and finance matters.
3. **Impact**: Examines the actual impact, at goal and objective level of the various investments, implemented projects and activities in communes and provinces, with special attention to cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, natural resources and environmental management, and gender mainstreaming).
4. **Capacity building**: Tracks the outcome and impact related to capacity building.
5. **Compliance/Systems**: Review and analysis of the operationalization, compliance and actual use, and efficiency/appropriateness of systems for planning, financing, management, monitoring and evaluation, and information.
6. **Management**: Monitoring of personnel, administration and management, and maintenance of the assets and project outputs.
7. **Partnership/Coordination**: Collaboration and cooperation in planning, funding and networking.
8. **Policy and Strategy**: Keeping track how the Seila program's lessons and experience in good governance, deconcentration and decentralization are analyzed and used as input into national policy development. This also includes the Seila strategies on poverty alleviation, natural resources and environmental management, and gender mainstreaming.

There are differences in relevance of these key interest areas between the provincial and national level. There are also differences as to how far the systems, procedures and instruments to track developments in each of these key interest areas are already developed or established. The following table shows the status of development as of early 2003.

Key interest area	Commune [4]	Province	National
Planning	Basic monitoring system established, but needs to be elaborated.	Well established	Well established
Implement-ation and Progress	Not available, needs to be developed, based on Seila experience with LDF projects	Well established, database for LDF to be adjusted for Commune Fund	Partly established
Impact	Not available, needs to be developed	Contract evaluation established, impact evaluation not available, needs to be developed	Impact evaluation at goal level not available, needs to be developed.
Capacity Building	Not available, simple self-assessment method to be developed for Commune Councils	Well established, but needs some adjustments and the development of standard training manuals.	Partly established
Compliance / Systems	Not available, needs to be developed	Established, but needs adjustment for Commune monitoring	Established, but needs further development
Management	Not needed	Well established	Established
Partnership / Coordination	Not available, needs to be developed	Some aspects being monitored, but needs further development and standardization	Established
Policy	Not needed	Not needed	Not available, needs to be developed

2.4.5 Indicators and Means of Verification

The backbone of any M&E system is the systematic collection of data, and use of certain means of verification to obtain information on agreed indicators. In the Seila program, the following definitions and characteristics for indicators and means of verification are used.

An ***Indicator*** is an explicit and objectively verifiable measure of expected results. Indicators are realistic and measurable and allow participants and relevant stakeholders to monitor and evaluate whether a program or project does, or did, what it said it would do. The indicators of a program or project are normally decided when the project is being designed.

[4] The commune level is included in this table for the sake of completeness. One has to keep in mind that the monitoring and evaluation at this level is no longer Seila program M&E but local government M&E..

The selection of indicators is a very important initial step in establishing the monitoring and evaluation plan of the contract. For all Seila activities, implementing agencies are required to identify objectively verifiable indicators. "*Objectively verifiable*" means that, if different people use the same measuring process independently of each other, they should obtain fairly similar results. Indicators can be quantitative (expressed as a number) or qualitative (describing a condition or change, normally by using words).

Depending on what is being measured, indicators can be *input indicators* (measuring something going into the project), *output indicators* (that measure a result of the project), or *impact indicators* (which try to assess the actual change that took place as the result of the project). Impact indicators are used to evaluate the project or program objective, while input and output indicators are more closely linked to monitoring.

Means of verification are the monitoring mechanisms that will be used to measure or track the indicators. They tell how and where necessary information will be gathered, or what activities must be done to collect the data.

In monitoring, collecting data is part of the day-to-day work. Often data is collected through informal discussions and observation during field visits, meetings, etc. One can also develop monitoring forms or checklists to use during field visits to help ensure that the field visits are used effectively.

For each level in the Seila logframe matrix, indicators have been selected which allow the measurement of *impact* (for goal, objective and outputs), or the measurement of *progress* (for outputs only: as mentioned in Section 2.3, Seila logframe indicators for activities have not been included). The means by which the indicators can be verified have also been specified.

The multi-layered nature of the Seila program also makes that not every indicator is meaningful or useful for every level. For example, impact on policy formulation is a *national* indicator, and is less relevant for the provincial level. The key information needs are therefore considered separately for each level, which is done in the next Sections. A complete list of the Seila logframe indicators, their means of verification and likely relevance to each level is included in Annex 1 of this manual.

The majority of the sources of data for the verification of indicators exist in the form of Seila systems and records (such as the finance system, quarterly reports or various databases), but some of these may need further development or revision. There do also exist sources of information external to Seila, such as the Socio-Economic Survey that is published by the Ministry of Planning. A third group of information sources are special studies undertaken at Seila's request for the express purpose of providing either baseline data or information about program impact.

As for the means of verification, the Seila program uses a range of M&E tools or mechanisms and methods. Some of these exist already, but may need some adjustment or revision ; others still need to be developed. The table below provides an overview by level.

Type	M&E Tools and Methods	Work done at Levels *		
		N	P	C
Databases/ Spreadsheets	Commune Database	✓	✓	✓
	Project Information Database	✓	✓	✓
	Commune/Sangkat Monitoring Spreadsheet	✓	✓	✓
	Seila Contracts Database	✓	✓	✓
Reports	Annual Report Commune Council			✓
	Annual Financial Statement Commune Fund			✓
	Mid-year financial Statements Commune Fund			✓
	Monthly Reports Commune Council			✓
	Annual Report PRDC		✓	
	Annual Financial Report PIF / Commune Fund		✓	
	End of Contract Report Implementing Agency		✓	
	End of Contract Report PRDC		✓	
	Quarterly Reports Implementing Agency		✓	
	Quarterly Reports PRDC		✓	
	Seila Annual Reports	✓		
	Seila Monthly Financial Reports	✓		
	Seila Quarterly Reports	✓		
	Seila Quarterly Financial Reports (to UNDP)	✓		
	Monthly Financial Reports National Implementing Agency (by STFS)	✓		
	Quarterly Reports National Implementing Agency (including field visit or workshop reports, analyses or other documentation, etc.)	✓		
	End of Contract Reports National Implementing Agency	✓		
Reviews (internal and external)	Review Commune Planning and Budgeting System			✓
	Review Finance System			✓
	Review M&E System			✓
	Review Planning System (internal/external)	✓	✓	
	Review Finance System (internal/external)	✓	✓	
	Review M&E and Reporting System (internal/external)	✓	✓	
	Review Management System (internal/external)	✓	✓	
	Commune Review (POLA/DoLA)	✓	✓	
Assessments/ Surveys/ Studies	Projects and beneficiaries surveys		✓	✓
	Impact Study and Report Commune Council			✓
	Periodic surveys and opinion polls		✓	
	PDP, PIF, Commune Fund and Sector Impact Studies	✓	✓	
	Qualitative Infrastructure Surveys and follow up	✓	✓	
	KAP & beliefs survey	✓		
	Partnership/Coordination Study	✓		
	Gender Survey	✓		
	Projects and Beneficiaries Surveys	✓		
	Evaluation Studies: Seila Communication/ Information, Gender mainstreaming, NREM, Poverty Alleviation	✓		
	Policy Analysis Studies	✓		
Audits	Annual Financial audit (internal, external)	✓	✓	
Management Structure/ Charts	Seila/Governance Structure Table (in AWPB)	✓	✓	
	Overview Staffing Changes	✓	✓	
	Seila Management Structure Organigram	✓	✓	

Type	M&E Tools and Methods	Work done at Levels *		
		N	P	C
Secondary data collection and analysis	MoP Socio-Economic Survey	✓		
	Poverty alleviation monitoring and support project reports (UNDP/MoP)	✓		
	National Poverty Monitoring Systems	✓		
	Government and Donor Documents (budgets, agreements, and expenditure reports)	✓		
	CAR documents on Government staffing levels	✓		
	Cambodia National Gazette, Prakas, Decrees, Sub-Decrees, Announcements, Ministry Records and Policy Statements, Government Officials' speeches, etc.	✓		

* Please note: this column only indicates at what level work related to the means of verification is done: the information might be relevant for, and used by, other levels as well.

2.5 Who Does the Monitoring and Evaluation in Seila?

Monitoring and evaluation includes many people at different levels in the Seila program. Although the principles are the same, the scope and focus is slightly different for each level. For example, policy and systems analysis and development take place at national level, whilst at provincial level, the focus is more on the compliance with, use and efficiency of existing systems. The table below indicates broadly who does what. In Sections 3 and 4 more detailed information about roles and responsibilities in Seila M&E at national and provincial level are included, and Section 5 gives an introduction to commune M&E.

National Level	
Seila Task Force	Responsible for monitoring overall implementation of the Seila program, looking mainly at the 'big picture' and maintaining contact with donors and national policy makers.
Ministry staff – STF focal points	Responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Seila and government policies and systems, especially related to their ministry. Also responsible for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the STF-ministry contracts.
STF Secretariat staff	Responsible for monitoring the detailed implementation of the Seila program, including all planning, financial, management and reporting. Monitors all contracts with ministries and provinces. Also organizes and coordinates the Seila impact evaluation and policy analysis and development activities. Supports ministry staff with M&E related issues or perform special M&E tasks.

Provincial Level	
Line department staff – M&E focal points, implementing agencies	Routine day-to-day monitoring and regular reporting on the progress against the indicators, and budget in the contract of the department/implementing agency with PRDC. Make regular field visits to check activities and assess progress, perform monitoring of inputs and outputs, (technical) quality control, and participate in evaluation of contracts and/or sector approaches.
PRDC ExCom staff	Routine day-to-day monitoring and regular reporting on the progress against the indicators, workplan and budget in the contract of the PRDC with Seila Task Force. Also monitor compliance with, use and efficiency of various systems and policy. PRDC ExCom M&E staff support department, implementing agency and other PRDC staff with M&E related issues and training. Organize the evaluation of Seila contracts and/or sector approaches.
Commune Level	
Commune Council members	Routine day-to-day monitoring and regular reporting on the progress against their commune workplan and Commune Fund budget. As communes become more capable, this should also expand into impact assessment of the implementation of the Commune Development Plan.
Other	
Project beneficiaries and stakeholders	Are responsible for monitoring the works and services they receive. This increases their ownership and they can provide first hand information about activities and progress in their area or in which they are participating. They can assist the Commune Councils and provincial staff.

For evaluations, there are many internal or external teams that evaluate the Seila program. External teams are often assigned by donors to evaluate specific aspects of the Seila program. For mid-term and final evaluations in the provinces, however, the evaluations will normally be organized by the ExCom M&E staff, together with the implementing agency, e.g. the line department.

An evaluation team usually consists of persons involved with contract implementation as well as people who have not been directly involved – often specialists in a particular field. To the extent possible, the evaluation team should also include project beneficiaries, both men and women. Generally, the majority of persons on the evaluation team should not have been directly involved in the implementation of project activities. However, experience shows that involving project staff in planning and organizing the evaluation and the analysis of the data is in itself a very useful capacity building opportunity. Such involvement in evaluation heightens staff's awareness of using proper indicators from the start, and of good data management in general.

2.6 Policy and Systems Development Support

One aspect of the Seila program that makes it different from 'regular' development projects and programs, is that one of its stated outputs is to "contribute to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation". The Seila program therefore also needs information for policy analysis in addition to that required for management and operation. This is an information need that is only relevant for the national level Seila M&E system.

Seila will distill from its experience "lessons learnt" to illustrate the positive link between good governance and poverty alleviation, and thereby contribute to the refinement of policies and development of systems of the Royal Government of Cambodia. This is Output 3 of the Seila program, based on the impact of Outputs 1 and 2. Such a policy evaluation mechanism is more accurately described as a research and analysis activity than as a strict evaluation activity.

The contributions Seila intends to make in the policy arena fall into the following categories:

- Decentralization;
- Deconcentration;
- Poverty alleviation;
- Natural resource and environmental management; and
- Gender mainstreaming.

However, analysis can only be done meaningfully after the implementation of Outputs 1 and 2 has begun to bear fruit.

2.7 Requirements for Doing Seila Monitoring and Evaluation

Before getting started and in order to become more effective in Seila monitoring and evaluation, there are a few requirements and guidelines related to knowledge and attitude to consider. The Seila M&E system will be most effective and provide relevant quality information when all staff involved:

- Know the basics of the **Seila program** and the **concepts** of decentralization and deconcentration, as well as the cross-cutting issues of poverty alleviation, natural resources and environmental management, and gender mainstreaming.
- Know the Government and Seila **systems** they are working with: for planning, implementation, finances, and management, as well as their requirements in terms of workplans and budgets, submissions, reporting and the timeframe.
- Understand the basic **principles of monitoring and evaluation**: what are they and when are they used.
- Know the different **M&E methods**: relevant and appropriate for the level they will be used at, and
- Know how to **use M&E**: for lessons learning, decision making and adjusting and improving things

- Know the **Seila M&E System** and **components**, especially for the level that they are working on
- Are **practical and realistic**: M&E should be an integral and contributing part of everyone's work, but should not get in the way of actually doing that work
- Are **flexible**: Seila systems are changing regularly, information needs are changing, Seila is changing, Government policies and systems are changing, so M&E will have to change with it.
- **Communicate**: don't keep things for yourself, but share with others: they might need it or it might help them.

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Section 3

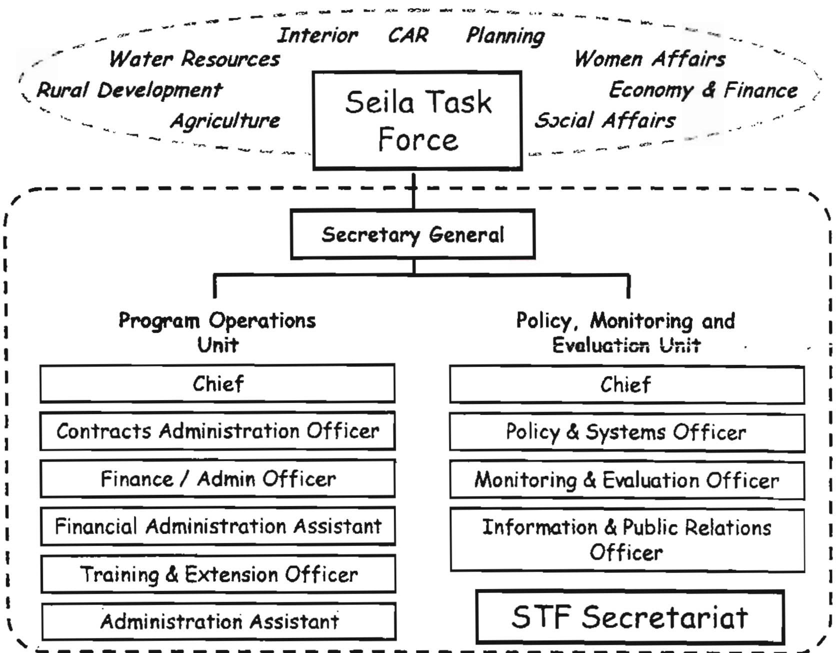
National Seila M&E System

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The National Seila Management Structure

The Seila program at the national level is managed by the Seila Task Force (STF) and its Secretariat (STFS). The STFS, on behalf of the STF, monitors the overall execution of the Seila program, reports to and maintains contacts with Government ministries, the National Committee for Support to Communes/Sangkats (NCSC), donors and other stakeholders. The STF is responsible for the regular review of decentralized and deconcentrated systems and supports policy analysis and policy development.

Two main management units exist under the STFS to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities. The figure below shows the membership of the STF and the STFS management structure.



- **Program Operations Unit** (POU), consisting of the Contract Administration Office, the Financial Administration Office and the Training and Extension Office; and
- **Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Unit** (PMEU), consisting of the Policy and Systems Offices, the Monitoring and Evaluation Office, and the Information and Public Relations Office

The detailed job descriptions for these units and their staff are included in the Seila Operations Manual and are not repeated here. In this Section, the focus will be specifically on the monitoring and evaluation functions of each of these units, where necessary specified for certain jobs.

3.1.2 National Seila Program Implementation

The Seila program annual workplan and budget allocates the available resources for investments, systems development, capacity building, and policy support. The annual workplan and budget document gives the national level activities as well as the summary of the budgets and activities to be implemented by the provincial level. After approval of the workplan and budget, STF enters into contracts and agreements with ministries, NGOs, research and training institutes and the private sector.

3.1.3 Government and Seila Program Systems and Guidelines that are Relevant for the National Level

There are a number of Government and Seila program policies, systems, guidelines and formats for decentralized and deconcentrated planning, financing and management. People who are involved in the implementation and management of the Seila program have to know, understand and be able to apply these. For this manual, it is assumed that the reader is familiar with these systems, and that they are applied correctly. Below these systems and guidelines are listed, with the places where comprehensive descriptions, roles and responsibilities, planning and report formats etc. can be found.

- **Seila Financial Management System.** See the Seila Finance System Manual.
- **Seila General Management System,** including personnel. See the Seila Operations Manual.
- **Seila Reporting System**. See the Seila Operations Manual.
- **Seila Contracts Database**. See the Seila Contracts Database Manual.
- **Commune Database**. See Seila Commune Database Manual. Maintained and updated at provincial and managed at national level by the Ministry of Planning, with input from the commune level.
- **Commune Development Planning Process**. See the Inter Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning and the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Interior Guideline on Commune Sangkat Development Planning Process.
- **Commune Fund Management**. Sub-Decree Commune/Sangkat Financial Management System and Commune Fund Management Training Manual (forthcoming)
- **Commune Fund Implementation Process**. System details being developed and forthcoming.
- **Project Information Database**. See Project Information Database Manual, forthcoming (continue to use the Local Development Fund (LDF) database until replaced by the Project Information Database).
- **Roles and Responsibilities of STFS**. See Sub-Decree on Establishment and Operation of Seila Task Force and Seila Operations Manual.

3.2 National Seila M&E

The national Seila M&E system is fairly new. It has basically only been established during the current phase of the Seila program, and some parts of it are still being developed. In this sub-section, the four core tasks of the M&E system, as mentioned in Section 2, are elaborated.

3.2.1 Development of the National Seila M&E System

The **purpose** of national Seila M&E is not different from the purpose of Seila M&E overall: it is to monitor the progress of Seila program implementation from a national perspective, i.e. covering both the national level activities as well as summarizing what is happening in the provinces, and to assess the impact of these activities.

Information needs at the national level cover all identified categories mentioned in Section 2, i.e. planning and allocation of resources; implementation and progress; capacity building; impact; compliance with and functioning of systems; management; partnership and coordination, and policy and analysis.

Progress of project implementation, and achievement of outcomes and impact is monitored and evaluated through a set of indicators. The table on the following pages shows the 'translation' of these identified information needs into national Seila program **key indicators**, as well as the **means of verification** which should provide the data.

Seila Program Hierarchy of Objectives, Indicators and Means of Verification at National Level

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
Goal: Contributed to poverty alleviation through good governance			
1 Reduction of national poverty level	The program will not attempt to specifically monitor or evaluate its' contribution to poverty alleviation. Reduction of poverty levels in Cambodia will be monitored and evaluated by other parties.		
2 Decreased disparity between poverty levels of men and women			
Objective: To institute decentralized and deconcentrated systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development			
1 Seila program experience in decentralisation and deconcentration reflected in legal instruments	Laws, Prakas, Decrees, Subdecrees, Guidelines, etc	STFS	Collect and document Seila involvement
2 Systems for decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation of Commune Fund projects, and reporting are operational in all communes	National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet by each province. National summary through linked spreadsheets.
3 Systems and structures in support of decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and reporting are operational in all provinces	Reports from ministries on implementation of decentralisation	PMEU (based on inputs from MoP, MEF, MoI, MRD, NCSC)	Annual reports, occasional reports.
4 Annual increase in demand responsiveness from Temporary Agreements to priorities identified in the Commune Development Plans	National level summary of district integration results	PMEU	Compilation of district integration results of all provinces
5 Increase in number of Temporary Agreements signed by departments and NGOs with communes at District Integration Workshops	National level summary of district integration results	PMEU	Compilation of district integration results of all provinces

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
6 Increase in number of women in leadership positions at commune and provincial level	National level summary of women commune councilors and PBC members	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Compilation of data collected in all provinces
	Summary of women in management structure at national and provincial levels	POU	Seila program staffing records
7 National budget resources allocated to the Commune Fund	MEF decision on RGC contribution to Commune Fund	MEF, Commune Fund Board	Annual announcement of RGC contribution to Commune Fund
8 Average per-capita transfers through the Commune Fund	Commune Fund allocation and commune population figures	MEF and MoP	Ratio of total Commune Fund allocation and total population
9 National budget resources allocated to the provinces for capital and recurrent budgets to implement decentralisation and deconcentration	MEF decision on RGC contribution in support of provincial investments through deconcentration	MEF	Announcement by MEF
10 Average per-capita transfers through the PIF, by province	PIF allocation and provincial population figures	POU	Ratio of PIF and population per province
11 Amount of resources managed annually by provincial authorities using deconcentrated management systems designed by the Seila program	Reports from MEF and donors	MEF, donors	Announcements, records and communications

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
12 Amount of own-source revenue generated by communes and provinces	MEF records and national level summary of annual finance reports of provinces and communes	MEF, provincial authorities	Announcements, records and communications
Output 1: Related institutions at all levels strengthened and effectively implementing the decentralized and deconcentrated systems			
1 CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets prepared in all communes by the last quarter of each year	National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet by each province. National summary through linked spreadsheets.
2 Percentage of CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets that pass legality checks by provincial Governor	National level summary of provincial assessment reports of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Assessment of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets
4 Number of commune councilors/staff trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training	National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet by each province. National summary through linked spreadsheets.
	Training reports	POU (based on inputs from MoP, MEF, MoI, MRD, NCSC)	Reports
5 Number of men and women at district and provincial level, trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training	Seila Contracts Database	POU	See SCD manual
	Training reports	POU (based on inputs from MoP, MEF, MoI, MRD, NCSC)	Reports

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
6 Number of men and women at provincial and district levels providing support to communes	National level summary of provincial support staffing levels	POU	Staffing records
7 Frequency of sub-national support provided to communes	Summary of POLA annual reports	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	POLA annual reports
8 Resources for gender mainstreaming mobilized at national, provincial and commune level	Seila annual workplan and budget	POU	Prepared as per STF process and format
	Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
9 Resources for NREM mobilized at national, provincial and commune level	Seila annual workplan and budget	POU	Prepared as per STF process and format
	Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
10 Number and status of ministry contracts under implementation	Seila Contracts Database	POU	See SCD manual

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
Output 2: Efficient and effective services and investments provided for local development			
1 Number and status of Commune Fund contracts/projects under implementation, in accordance with CDPs	Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
2 Percentage of final payments to contractors for Commune Fund projects within 12 months of commune budget approval	Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
3 Impact assessment of a sample of Commune Fund projects	Socio-economic baseline + follow-up surveys	PMEU	Reports of surveys
4 Impact assessment of decentralisation on livelihoods, gender and vulnerability	Socio-economic baseline + follow-up surveys	PMEU	Reports of surveys
5 Percentage of Commune Fund projects of satisfactory technical quality standards	Technical audit	STFS	See project implementation manual
6 Increased perception of appropriateness, relevance and quality of services and investments for Commune Fund and PIF funded projects (for both men and women)	Client satisfaction survey	PMEU	To be determined
7 Number and status of provincial contracts under implementation	Seila Contracts Database	POU	See SCD manual

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
Output 3: Contributed to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation			
1 Effectiveness of systems, structures and procedures continuously improved through reviews and evaluations	Periodic in-depth review of the planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and management systems	STFS	Assessment and analysis of systems
2 National level workshops focusing on periodic reviews of RGC systems for decentralization and deconcentration, and Seila program systems	Workshop reports	STFS	Analysis of reports
3 Lessons from the Seila program for decentralisation and deconcentration contributes to national policy making	Analysis of reports, announcements, ministry records and policy statements, government officials' speeches	PMEU	Analysis of documents
4 Seila program experience with cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, NREM and gender mainstreaming) reflected in policy and practices	Statements, meeting reports, evaluation studies	PMEU	Reviews
5 Strategic dialogue on decentralization and deconcentration informed by Seila program experience	Strategic study reports	PMEU	Analysis of reports
	Seila Forum reports	STFS	Analysis of reports
6 Knowledge, attitudes, practices and belief regarding good local governance improved	KAP and beliefs survey	PMEU	Study/survey

3.2.2 Gathering and Managing Information

Once indicators have been selected and means of verification and sources of information have been identified, it needs to be determined what activities will be undertaken to actually collect or gather the information.

The table below groups the M&E tools and methods that will be used by type. More information and descriptions for some of these is provided in Sections 6 and 7.

Type	National Seila M&E Tools and Methods
Databases/Spreadsheets	▪ Project Information Database ▪ Seila Contracts Database ▪ Commune Database ▪ Commune Monitoring Spreadsheet
Secondary data collection and analysis	▪ Ministry of Planning Socio-Economic Survey ▪ Poverty alleviation monitoring and support project reports (UNDP / Ministry of Planning) ▪ National Poverty Monitoring Systems ▪ Government and donor documents (budgets, agreements, and expenditure reports) ▪ Cambodia National Gazette, Prakas, Decrees, Sub-Decrees, announcements, ministry records and policy statements, government officials' speeches, etc.
Reports	▪ Monthly financial reports of national implementing agencies (by STFS) ▪ Seila monthly financial reports ▪ Quarterly reports national implementing agencies (including field visit or workshop reports, analyses or other documentation, etc.) ▪ Seila quarterly reports ▪ Seila quarterly financial reports (to UNDP) ▪ Seila Forum Meetings ▪ Seila 6-monthly presentation for Council of Ministers ▪ Seila annual reports ▪ End-of-contract reports national implementing agencies
Reviews	▪ Review planning system ▪ Review finance system ▪ Review M&E and reporting system ▪ Review management system ▪ Commune review (DoLA)
Surveys and studies	▪ KAP & beliefs survey ▪ Projects and beneficiaries surveys ▪ Evaluation studies ▪ Impact studies
Audits	▪ Annual financial audit ▪ Technical audit

3.2.3 Critical Reflection to Improve Action

The collected data holds much information. This information will help to assess the performance of the various projects that together make up the Seila program. It helps to identify what is not going according to plan, so that measures can be taken by the program implementers (the implementing agencies in the provinces and at the national level) to improve what might otherwise go wrong.

At the national level, the key events for reflection are the preparation of the quarterly and annual report, the preparation of Seila program wide workshops, and STF and Seila Forum meetings.

3.2.4 Communication and Reporting of Results

To be of use, the results of the data analysis and the lessons and insights learned from it, need to be shared with the people for whom such information is important. Communication and reporting of results is often almost exclusively seen as an obligation vis-à-vis higher level authorities and/or donors. National Seila M&E also needs to provide feedback to the provinces and national level implementing agencies on their performance, so that they can – if necessary – take measures to improve it, and achieve better results in future.

3.3 National Seila M&E Roles and Responsibilities

Monitoring and evaluation at national level involves the ministries and other institutions / agencies that have a contract with the STF to implement Seila program activities, and the Seila Task Force Secretariat.

3.3.1 Ministries and Other National Level Institutions/Agencies

There are several ministries and other national level institutions/agencies that have a contract with the Seila Task Force for the implementation of Seila program activities. These ministries and institutions/agencies all have a STF Focal Point, who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these contracts and the timely submission of quarterly progress reports, and an end-of contract report.

The monitoring information collected by the Focal Points is first and foremost for internal use by the implementing agencies, to assist them with the contract implementation, and to assess progress against the workplan. The Focal Points should:

- help to monitor the compliance of their departments, institutions or agencies and staff with both Government and Seila systems and procedures, and check if they are understood and being used properly, and perform quality control of outputs.
- assist STFS in the internal reviews of the systems and procedures pertaining to them, and assess whether they are effective and efficient, and what adjustment or changes are recommended.

One ministry which has a Seila program implementing agency contract that is somewhat different in scope from that of other ministries is the Ministry of Interior. The Department of Local Administration (DoLA) in the Ministry of Interior has special tasks in monitoring and supporting Commune/ Councils. These tasks are primarily implemented through the Provincial Offices of Local Administration (POLA). The Commune Councils, and the way they work, are no longer 'Seila specific': they are part of national legislation and implement Government policies and systems. But the activities at the commune level are relevant for the Seila M&E system because the Seila program provides support and technical assistance to the communes, and is dedicated to assessing the relevance and success of – both Seila program specific and general Government – policies and systems related to decentralization and deconcentration in Cambodia.

3.3.2 Seila Task Force Secretariat

The Seila Task Force Secretariat has two distinct monitoring and evaluation roles in the Seila program:

- The STFS receives (summarized) monitoring information from all PRDCs and from national level agencies and institutions which implement Seila program activities. This monitoring information is mainly in the form of regular reports and updated database files. STFS has to compile this information to assess the overall progress of the implementation of the annual Seila program workplan and budget, and to address the issues that are being raised by the program implementers at provincial and national level.
- The STFS engages in monitoring and evaluation activities itself, to generate additional information which will help it to manage the Seila program better, and to assess the achievement of the overall program objective.

The STFS units aggregate all the information and reports, sends regular progress reports to STF and prepares draft reports for STF's review and approval and submission to Government and donors. These are monthly financial reports, quarterly reports and the Annual Seila Program Report.

The most important monitoring and evaluation tasks of the STF Secretary General and the different staff members of the STFS are listed below.

Seila Task Force Secretary General

- All Seila program management systems - planning, finance, contracting, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting – are documented, regularly reviewed, adjusted in accordance with national policies on decentralization and deconcentration and implemented.
- All Seila strategies relating to decentralization, deconcentration, good governance, poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming, natural resource and environmental management and technical cooperation are effectively and efficiently developed, planned and implemented.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems provide appropriate information for management, assessment, decisions and policy support.
- Reports are provided to the Council of Ministers and donors in a timely fashion.

Chief - Program Operations Unit

- All contracts and agreements are implemented in accordance with Seila program systems and procedures as approved by the Seila Task Force.
- Seila program Management Information Systems provide adequate information to inform effective management decisions regarding the implementation of the Seila program (including inventory and personnel).
- Reports in accordance with Seila program financing agreements are prepared for approval of the STF Secretary General and/or STF.
- Reports from the PRDCs and the ministries on progress against contracts/agreements as per reporting procedures are analyzed and feedback is provided in a timely fashion.
- Coordination with implementing institutions at national and provincial level regarding program implementation issues is regularly conducted.
- Prepare workplans and reports as required.

Contracts Administration Officer

- Maintain the Seila Contracts Database (SCD) and produce timely reports to the STF and provinces.
- Ensure that the provincial SCD is properly installed and maintained in the provinces and travel to provinces as necessary to assist.
- Review progress reports from ministries and provinces on contract implementation and ensure that data and information is properly recorded in the SCD.
- Ensure that reviews of the contract administration system, including formats, guidelines and procedures, are carried out and recommend adjustments to the system in order to improve performance.

Financial Administration Officer

- Maintain the financial management system for the STFS, including monitoring, and reporting.
- Carry out periodic monitoring visits to provinces to ensure that financial management procedures are properly understood and being performed and to identify areas where additional training is required.
- Prepare consolidated financial statements for contributions under the authority of the STF and submit them through the Chief POU to the STF Secretary General.

Training and Extension Officer

- Develop, deliver and review training modules on Seila's structure, systems and procedures in close consultation with stakeholders
- Assist PRDC ExComs to undertake training needs assessment for Seila provincial government staff as requested
- Provide training on Seila systems and procedures to national level Seila program implementers as requested.
- Ensure that the training information in the SCD is maintained at national level.
- Prepare reports for the STF on progress and issues on the implementation of the Seila capacity building strategy.
- Ensure that the training information from provinces is entered into the SCD.

Chief - Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Unit

- Ensuring that a systematic program of policy evaluation, research and analysis is designed, budgeted and implemented under the PME Unit and that studies, reports and policy recommendations are prepared for submission through the STF to policy making bodies within the Royal Government.
- Participate as requested by the STF Secretary General in meetings, workshops and exercises organized by the National Committee for Support to Communes/Sangkats (NCSC) for the preparation of the decentralized regulatory framework and subsequently the monitoring of implementation by Commune Councils.
- Assist the STFS to organize workshops and seminars to review program performance against the Seila program document, 2001-2005, and assist in drafting revisions to the document as necessary.
- Participate as requested in workshops and seminars organized by other institutions and agencies to ensure that Seila is well represented in overall policy dialogue and is able to disseminate lessons learned relating to good governance and poverty alleviation.
- Assist the STF Secretary General in keeping donors updated on the progress of the Seila program.
- Coordinate studies and consultancy activities commissioned by the Donor Forum and financed through additional contributions to the Seila funding framework.
- Maintain communications with the provincial authorities to ensure that the Seila program strategies and strategic initiatives are properly implemented at province level.
- Prepare periodic and ad hoc reports as requested by the STF Secretary General on policy lessons generated through Seila.

Policy and Systems Officer

- To design and implement a systematic program of policy analysis, evaluation and research related to decentralized local governance and poverty alleviation within Seila.
- To coordinate workshops and seminars to disseminate lessons learned, and to stimulate and sustain dialogue between the government, civil society and donors on the policy implications of the Seila program.
- To coordinate studies and consultancy activities commissioned by the Donor Forum and financed through additional contributions to the Seila funding framework.
- To prepare program correspondence and reports.
- To ensure that the provinces are fully informed of any changes in Seila systems and procedures.
- To assist the provinces to perform their reporting responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

- Ensure the preparation of annual M&E work plans and budgets at national level in accordance with the Seila program document and the Seila M&E system.
- Ensure that the Seila M&E system is understood and being applied by all implementing institutions; the STFS, the ministries participating in the Seila program and the provinces.
- Facilitate the coordination of the overall provincial Seila monitoring process.
- Ensure that the Seila reporting system is functioning and that the reports received from provinces and ministries are reviewed and consolidated.
- Assist in the design, preparation and coordination of internal and external evaluation studies.

- Liaise closely with the Policy and Systems Officer to ensure that policy lessons are being generated and disseminated through the M&E and reporting systems.
- Ensure that Seila databases are being properly maintained at national and provincial level and that data sets and/or reports are disseminated to relevant institutions at national level.
- Assist in the preparation and implementation of a training program (including the development of training materials and modules) on M&E procedures and tools for relevant national and provincial officials consistent with the Seila program M&E system.
- Carry out periodic visits to the provinces to follow up on both general and specific issues related to the Seila M&E system.
- Prepare workplans and reports as required and submit through the Chief of the PMEU to the STF Secretary General.

Information and Public Relations Officer

- Ensure the periodic review and refinement of the Seila Information and Communications Strategy.
- Travel periodically to the provinces to assess implementation of the Seila Information and Communications Strategy and provide guidance for improvement.
- Prepare workplans and reports as required and submit to the PMEU Chief.

3.4 Capacity Building for M&E at the National Level

Staff training and development is a critical part of the Seila program. One of the objectives of Seila is to build the capacity of government staff in a variety of areas, including M&E. Staff should have the opportunity to acquire and apply relevant skills and knowledge. Capacity building occurs through on-the-job training as well as formal training courses, interaction with the provincial and national level implementing agencies, study tours, etc.

For an effective M&E system, skilled people are needed who can, between them, fulfill the M&E functions and tasks. Meeting capacity needs can be done in a number of ways.

Get the right people by:
- Hiring or seconding trained people
- Training the staff (internal or external)
- Hiring external people (consultants, institutes, etc.) for special inputs.

The Seila program has clear guidelines for the recruitment of staff and personnel management. These are described in the Seila Program Operations Manual in detail and are not repeated here. The Operations Manual includes Seila recruitment procedures and contracting of staff and consultants. These procedures need to be followed for all Seila staff. The recruitment panel needs to ensure that the best candidate is selected. This includes ensuring candidates have good skills and capacity for carrying out the required M&E tasks, or at least having the potential to learn them quickly. M&E staff needs to provide input in the interview questions, and should be included in the recruitment panel when staff with major M&E tasks is being recruited.

Ensure capacity of good quality by:

- Being clear about what you expect
- Regular staff performance evaluations
- Incentives for learning
- Limiting staff turnover
- Having qualified persons to coordinate M&E

All Seila STFS job descriptions include M&E tasks. Chiefs and colleagues need to assist new staff or staff assigned to new tasks in getting familiar with the day-to-day work, standards to be met, time schedules and output of M&E activities. It is also the duty of every staff member to make sure s/he has clearly understood what s/he has to do and deliver.

The Seila Program Operations Manual includes a section Performance Evaluation Procedures, indicating the steps to be undertaken to assess staff performance. This includes self-evaluation and a panel review. It also includes steps to be undertaken when a staff member is not performing his/her duties. The Operations Manual includes the Terms of Service Contracts for Seila staff, including their benefits and salary supplements.

Training for M&E. Training, as part of a broader capacity building effort, should be based on a training plan for all relevant people at national level. The basis for this plan is an assessment of skills and conditions related to peoples job descriptions and tasks expected from them. Training can be undertaken using the appropriate combination of training methods, including some of the following:

- Internal courses, tailor made for the target group
- External courses
- On-the-job training/mentoring
- Workshops
- Study tours and exposure visits

Depending on how long people have been working in the Seila Program and/or on M&E, the training received and given previously, different skills and capacity levels will exist.

STFS PMEU needs to design, budget and implement a M&E capacity/training needs assessment and prepare and implement, annually, a capacity building program, addressing the specific needs of everyone involved in the Seila M&E system. In general, if a staff member is interested in joining particular training courses or classes, s/he should inquire with his/her supervisor, especially if it is related to skills needed on the job.

A staged approach should be developed in order to disseminate the following (but adjusted to the level and relevance for the target group of the training):

- Basic knowledge of monitoring and evaluation and its use and importance
- The Seila Logframe
- The key government policies of decentralization and deconcentration, and the Seila program cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, natural resources and environmental management, and gender mainstreaming)
- The Seila M&E system with specific roles and responsibilities of different people
- Introducing and implementing the Seila M&E system

The stress of capacity building at the national should be, in line with the Seila M&E system, on monitoring and strengthening the use of monitoring information in management and decision-making, designing and managing reviews of systems, policy analysis and impact assessment at the objective and goal level.

Seila Program
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Section 4

Provincial Seila M&E System

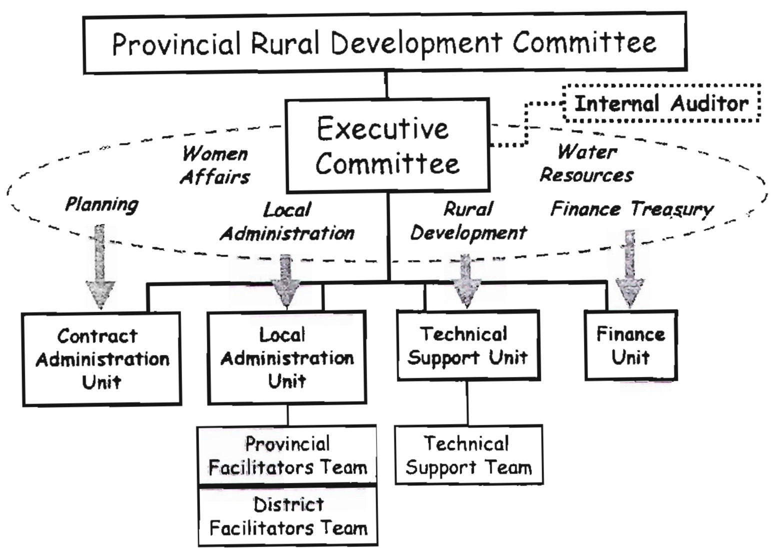
4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Provincial Seila Management Structure

At the provincial level, the Seila program is managed by the Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC) and its Executive Committee (ExCom). The ExCom itself has four management units, to help it implement the Seila program. These are:

- The Contract Administration Unit (CAU), with the chief of the unit from the Department of Planning
- The Local Administration Unit (LAU), with the chief of the unit from the Office of Local Administration
- The Technical Support Unit (TSU), with the chief of the unit from the Department of Rural Development
- The Finance Unit (FU), with the chief of the unit from the Department of Finance and the deputy chief from the Treasury

The figure below shows the Seila management structure at provincial level.



The detailed job descriptions for the PRDC, ExCom and its units are included in the Seila Operations Manual and are not repeated here. In this Section, the focus is specifically on the monitoring and evaluation functions of each of these provincial units.

4.1.2 Provincial Seila Program Implementation

The PRDC ExCom manages the implementation of the Seila annual workplan and budget. The actual implementation is done through a variety of organizations and institutions, primarily provincial line departments, but occasionally also by NGOs and the private sector. Each Seila program implementer signs an implementing agency contract with the PRDC ExCom. The funds for these activities come from the Provincial Investment Fund (PIF) allocation which the province annually receives from the Seila Task Force. For its own support activities, the PRDC ExCom receives annually a program support budget.

The PRDC / implementing agency contract formats are designed to directly link provincial outputs and activities with the overall Seila logframe through use of a standard coding and reporting system. The codes are used to link with the Seila Contracts Database (SCD), which is the main tool for monitoring progress of PIF-funded Seila projects. The SCD tracks progress of activities and contract implementation, outputs, as well as financial information. For non-PIF funded Seila projects (such as ADESS and other donor projects for which the resources are not being disbursed through the PIF), a contracts spreadsheet is the main monitoring tool.

4.1.3 Government and Seila Program Systems and Guidelines that are Relevant for the Provinces

There are a number of Government and Seila program policies, systems, guidelines and formats for decentralized and deconcentrated planning, financing and management. People who are involved in the implementation of the Seila program have to know, understand and be able to apply these. For this manual, it is assumed that the reader is familiar with these systems. Below these systems and guidelines are briefly listed, with the places where comprehensive descriptions, roles and responsibilities, planning and report formats etc. can be found.

- **Provincial Seila Planning Process**. See Ministry of Planning guidelines and the Seila Operations Manual for details, standards and formats.
- **Seila Financial Management System.** See the Seila Finance System Manual.
- **Seila General Management System**, including personnel. See the Seila Operations Manual.
- **Seila Reporting System**. See the Seila Operations Manual.
- **Seila Program Strategies for Cross-cutting Issues.** The Seila program has, or will have, specific strategies for three cross-cutting issues : poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming, and natural resources and environmental management.
- **Seila Contracts Database**. See the Seila Contracts Database Manual.
- **Contracts Spreadsheet**. A quarterly updated spreadsheet of all Seila-related contracts that are managed by the PRDC, covering both PIF and non-PIF funded projects.
- **Commune Database**. See Commune Database Manual.
- **Commune Development Planning Process.** See the Inter Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning and the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Interior Guideline on Commune Sangkat Development Planning Process.
- **Commune Fund Management.** Sub-Decree Commune/Sangkat Financial Management System and Commune Fund Management Training Manual (forthcoming)
- **Commune Fund Implementation Process**. System details being developed and forthcoming.
- **Project Information Database.** See Project Information Database Manual, forthcoming (continue to use the Local Development Fund (LDF) database until replaced by the PID).
- **Roles and Responsibilities of PRDC**. See Prakas on Structure, Roles and Responsibilities of the PRDC and the PRDC Executive Committee and the Seila Operations Manual.

4.2 Provincial Seila M&E

Much of the provincial Seila M&E system already exists, as it has been developed during the previous phase of the Seila program. Some parts of the M&E system need to be revised because of the changes that have happened for the commune and village levels. What also needs to happen is the streamlining of the provincial Seila M&E between provinces, to achieve a more uniform and consistent Seila program management. In this sub-section, the four core tasks of the M&E system, as mentioned in Section 2, are explained in detail.

4.2.1 Development of the Provincial Seila M&E System

The **purpose** of provincial Seila M&E is not different from the purpose of Seila M&E overall: it is to monitor the progress of Seila program implementation at the provincial level, and to assess the impact of these activities. The provincial Seila M&E system should not be too advanced or sophisticated ; it should not require the collection of a very large amount of data, and should mostly rely on fairly simple methods of data gathering and data analysis.

Of the eight **key interest areas** mentioned in Section 2, seven are relevant for provincial Seila M&E :

1. **Planning**: Provides information on the implementation of the Seila planning and budgeting systems at the provincial level.
2. **Implementation and Progress:** Focuses on the monitoring of the implementation of workplans and contracts, and finance matters.
3. **Impact:** Examines the actual impact, at goal and objective level of the various investments, implemented projects and activities in the provinces, with specific attention for cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, gender, and natural resources and environmental management).
4. **Capacity building:** Tracks the outcome and impact related to capacity building.
5. **Compliance/Systems:** Review and analysis of the operationalization, compliance and actual use, and efficiency/appropriateness of systems for planning, financing, management, monitoring and evaluation, and information.
6. **Management:** Monitoring of personnel, administration and management, and maintenance of the assets and project outputs.
7. **Partnership/Coordination:** Collaboration and cooperation in planning, funding and networking.

Progress of project implementation, and achievement of outcomes and impact is monitored and evaluated through a set of indicators. The table on the following pages shows the set of provincial Seila program **key indicators**, as well as the **means of verification** which should provide the data. The numbering order for the rows in the table is not always continuous, because the table doesn't show the indicators that are only monitored at the national level.

Seila Program Hierarchy of Objectives, Indicators and Means of Verification at Provincial Level

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
Goal: Contributed to poverty alleviation through good governance			
1 Reduction of national poverty level	The program will not attempt to specifically monitor or evaluate its' contribution to poverty alleviation. Reduction of poverty levels in Cambodia will be monitored and evaluated by other parties.		
2 Decreased disparity between poverty levels of men and women			
Objective: To institute decentralized and deconcentrated systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development			
2 Systems for decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation of Commune Fund projects, and reporting are operational in all communes	Commune monitoring spreadsheets	POLA	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet in each province
3 Systems and structures in support of decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and reporting are operational in all provinces	Reports from provincial agencies	Provincial departments and ExCom units	Assessments and reports
4 Annual increase in demand responsiveness from Temporary Agreements to priorities identified in the Commune Development Plans	District integration results	Department of Planning	Percentage of commune requests that receive a positive respons
5 Increase in number of Temporary Agreements signed by departments and NGOs with communes at District Integration Workshops	District integration results	Department of Planning	Number of TAs signed with the communes
6 Increase in number of women in leadership positions at commune and provincial level	Number of women commune councilors and PBC members	POLA	From commune reports and information gathered by DFTs
	Number of women in management structure at provincial levels	PRDC ExCom CAU and FU	Seila program staffing records

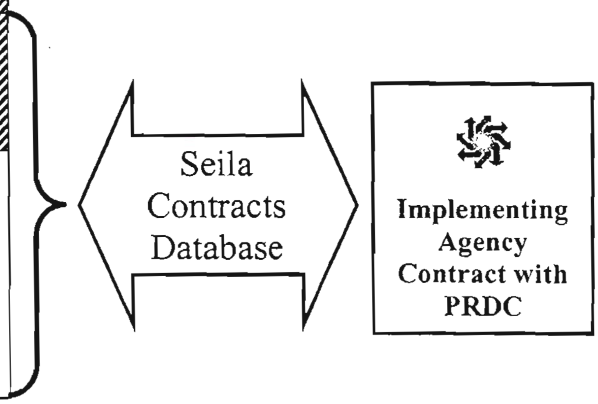
Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
11 Amount of resources managed annually by provincial authorities using deconcentrated management systems designed by the Seila program	Reports from provincial authorities	Provincial departments	Announcements, records and communications
12 Amount of own-source revenue generated by communes and provinces	Annual finance reports from communes and provinces	Treasury, provincial departments	Annual reports, announce-ments, records and communications
Output 1: Related institutions at all levels strengthened and effectively implementing the decentralized and deconcentrated systems			
1 CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets prepared in all communes by the last quarter of each year	Commune monitoring spreadsheets	POLA	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet in each province
2 Percentage of CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets that pass legality checks by provincial Governor	Provincial assessment reports of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets	POLA, PDoEF	Assessment of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets
3 All provinces produce 5 year PDP and 3 year rolling PIP	PDP and PIP documents	PDoP	Assessment of planning documents
4 Number of commune councilors/staff trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training	Commune monitoring spreadsheets	POLA	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet in each province
	Commune reports	POLA	Section on capacity building in monthly and annual commune reports
	Training reports	POLA, provincial departments, PRDC ExCom units	Reports

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
5 Number of men and women at district and provincial level, trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training	Seila Contracts Database	PRDC ExCom CAU	See SCD manual
	Training reports	POLA, provincial departments, PRDC ExCom units	Reports
6 Number of men and women at provincial and district levels providing support to communes	Provincial support staffing levels	ExCom Units	Staffing records
7 Frequency of sub-national support provided to communes	POLA annual report and commune monthly and annual reports	POLA	Section on supporting visits to communes
	Records of visits and support activities by PRDC ExCom Unit staff	PRDC ExCom Units	Activity reports
8 Resources for gender mainstreaming mobilized at national, provincial and commune level	Provincial Seila annual workplan and budget	PRDC	Prepared as per STF process and format
	Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
9 Resources for NREM mobilized at national, provincial and commune level	Provincial Seila annual workplan and budget	PRDC	Prepared as per STF process and format
	Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual

Key Indicators	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
Output 2: Efficient and effective services and investments provided for local development			
1 Number and status of Commune Fund contracts/projects under implementation, in accordance with CDPs	Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
2 Percentage of final payments to contractors for Commune Fund projects within 12 months of commune budget approval	Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
5 Percentage of Commune Fund projects of satisfactory technical quality standards	Technical audit	PRDC ExCom TSU	See project implementation manual
6 Increased perception of appropriateness, relevance and quality of services and investments for Commune Fund and PIF funded projects (for both men and women)	Implementing Agency - PRDC contract evaluations	Implementing agencies and PRDC ExCom CAU	End-of-contract evaluations
7 Number and status of provincial contracts under implementation	Seila Contracts Database	PRDC ExCom CAU	See SCD manual
Output 3: Contributed to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation			
No key indicator at provincial level			

The above table only gives key indicators for the overall Seila program objective and the three outputs. It does not give indicators for the activities of the Seila logframe. The activities of the Seila logframe are however used implicitly, because the PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts are prepared using the Seila Contracts Database. In this database, the standard outputs are linked to Seila logframe activities and outputs.

Objectives hierarchy	Key indicators
Goal of Seila program	
Objective	
Outputs: 1. Related ... 2. Efficient ... 3. Contribute ...	
Activities: 1.1 Assist ... 1.6 Establish ... 2.1 Government ... 2.3 Evaluate ... 3.1 Establish ... 3.4 Contribute ...	



The key indicators in the table on the previous pages are however more suited to assess the overall Seila program performance in the province, than to monitor the PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts. To monitor these contracts, additional project performance indicators should be identified which are more specific for the type of activity that is implemented. To identify the additional indicators, the approach described in sub-section 4.3.2 is suited.

4.2.2 Gathering and Managing Information

Once indicators are selected and means of verification and sources of information are identified, the activities that will be done to actually collect the data or gather the information must be determined. Common sources of information are field visits and observation, interviews, surveys or studies, progress and final reports.

In monitoring, collecting data is part of the day-to day work. Care should be taken to use the most appropriate method and collect relevant and sufficient (but not too much) data. Structuring and standardizing data collection by using forms or guidelines helps to focus efforts, ensures the right data is collected or produced, and makes aggregation and analysis easier.

When evaluating, it is also important to choose the most appropriate way to obtain the information needed. The factors influencing the choice of methods are the purpose of the evaluation, the skills available, and the available resources such as time, budget and people.

Evaluation and impact assessment at provincial level are relatively new and need further development and capacity building. In general they will focus on impact assessment of the PIF investments, the Provincial Development Plan and special Sector Impact Studies. Although these studies can be organized at provincial level, they are often initiated and organized by Seila program management at the national level.

Below, the above logframe table is summarized in terms of the main provincial Seila M&E tools and methods. More information and descriptions of these and other tools and methods that will help implement the Seila M&E work is provided in Section 6.

Type	Provincial Seila M&E Tools and Methods
Databases/Spreadsheets	▪ Project Information Database ▪ Seila Contracts Database ▪ Commune Database ▪ Commune Monitoring Spreadsheet
Reports	▪ Monthly Progress Reports, by the implementing agency ▪ Quarterly Reports, by the implementing agency ▪ End of Contract Report, by the implementing agency ▪ Quarterly Reports, by the PRDC ▪ End of Contract Report, by the PRDC ▪ Annual Financial Report (PIF and Commune Fund) ▪ Annual report PRDC
Reviews	▪ Review planning system ▪ Review finance system ▪ Review M&E and reporting system ▪ Review management system ▪ Commune Review (POLA)
Surveys and studies	▪ Projects and beneficiaries surveys ▪ PDP, PIF and Sector Impact Studies
Audits	▪ Annual financial audit ▪ Technical audit

In sub-section 4.4 below, the roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation of the Seila program at the provincial level will be described.

4.2.3 Critical Reflection to Improve Action

The collected data contains a lot of information. This information will help to assess the performance of the various projects that together make up the provincial Seila program. It helps to identify what is not going according to plan, so that measures can be taken to improve what might otherwise go wrong. The information also gives a better insight into what works well and what doesn't, so that the people implementing the projects now – or other people wishing to implementing similar project elsewhere – can become more effective in future.

To obtain information, the data must be analysed. Depending on the type of data, and the kind of information one is looking for, there are often several ways in which data can be analysed.

It is important to choose analysis methods that are appropriate for the available data, for the type of information needed, and that the methods used for data analysis can generally be understood by the people for whom the information is important.

Initial data analysis will often be done by the people who are implementing or supervising the project on a day-to-day basis, or by the M&E staff. Reflection on the results of the data analysis, however, is best done together with a wider group of people, who are closely involved in the project. Looking at the results of the data analysis, and trying to understand what this means for the project together with the people who either have done the work, or who are supposed to benefit from it, may result in interesting information. This can help to make further implementation of the project activities (or a repeat thereof), more successful.

4.2.4 Communication and Reporting of Results

To be of use, the results of the data analysis and the lessons and insights learned from it, need to be shared with the people for whom such information is important. Communication and reporting of results is often almost exclusively seen as an obligation vis-à-vis higher level authorities and/or donors, but that overlooks many other users who can potentially benefit from the information. There are, e.g. the people who are in a similar situation than the ones who will now benefit – at least, that is the intention – from the implemented activities. Knowing what worked well and what didn't work well can help them to decide whether or not to implement a similar project in the same manner. Reporting the results to the people who have been implementing the project, or those that have been managing it, may also help them to understand better what they can do differently, to achieve better results in future.

At the higher level, and for donors, the reports provide information on what has been accomplished, and how this has contributed – or not – to achieve the intended purpose of the program.

4.3 Preparing for Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementing Agency Contracts

A substantial part of the provincial Seila program resources are dispensed through the PIF, which are implemented by the provincial line departments. In this sub-section, we give more details on how to plan for, and conduct monitoring and evaluation of implementing agency contracts.

4.3.1 The M&E Workplan

What, who, where, when, and how to monitor and evaluate needs to be planned. M&E activities are not separate activities, isolated of the rest of the work. M&E is an integral part of everyone's day-to-day work, just as the M&E plan is an integral part of the overall Seila workplan. It does however make sense for the people who are in charge of coordinating the provincial Seila M&E activities to make a specific plan for M&E, to ensure that the M&E activities are conducted efficiently and effective.

An M&E workplan is a standard part of the implementing agencies' contract with the PRDC (Part III, point C) for Seila PIF funds. This sub-section describes the what, who, how often, and what means of M&E related to the contract. Besides a narrative, the implementing agency can prepare a schedule that provides a quick overview of all activities and the timeframe. It should include all means of verification identified for their contract, like reporting, field visits, studies, evaluations, etc. The workplan should be very specific (for example 4 monitoring visits for 3 days each, 2 persons), to enable budgeting the activities.

The CAU, as the unit which coordinates the provincial Seila M&E, should prepare a consolidated M&E workplan, which shows the major activities of the implementing agency M&E workplans, and the M&E activities which will be done by the CAU and the three other ExCom units.

The ExCom units do not have separate contracts with the PRDC. They do prepare an annual workplan for the PRDC and their budget is included in the contract of the PRDC with the Seila Task Force. The ExCom unit workplans should indicate which M&E activities each unit plans to handle, and who will be involved, how often, and how.

4.3.2 Preparing an M&E Workplan

The starting point to prepare an M&E workplan is always the contract or project document. Here it is the contract that each implementing agency has with the PRDC. The format of Part III, Contract Description, of the standard PRDC / implementing agency contract is given on the next page.

Part III: Contract Description

A. Justification for the Contract (narrative)
Definition of major opportunities/problems to be addressed, present situation. Inclusion in Seila annual workplan and budget. Achievements from previous/ongoing contracts. How will this contract address the lessons learned from previous/ongoing contracts? Discussions with community, government, agencies to date on contract formulation

B. Objective of the Contract: Poverty Alleviation (narrative)
What outputs and activities in the Seila logframe is this contract specifically addressing? How will this contract contribute to poverty alleviation? How will this contract contribute to the current sector strategy?

C. End of Contract Status (narrative)

D. Monitoring and Evaluation workplan for contract
What is the monitoring and evaluation plan? Who will carry out the work, how often, and through what means?

E. Important Assumptions/Risks (narrative)

F. **Beneficiaries (narrative)**
Describe how the numbers in the contract summary page were arrived at.

G. **Seila Gender Mainstreaming (narrative)**
How does this contract address and contribute to mainstream gender issues? To what extent are resources allocated in the contract budget to support gender mainstreaming?

H. **Seila Natural Resource Management (narrative)**
How does this contract address and contribute to mainstream natural resource management and environment issues? To what extent are resources allocated in the contract budget to support natural resource management and environment?

I. **Maintenance (narrative)**
Arrangements for maintenance of outputs. Coverage of recurrent costs

J. **Inputs (describe)**
Inputs from PRDC. Inputs from implementing agency. Inputs from local communities. Inputs from other sources/donors

K. **Summary Budget, Detailed Budget and Payment Schedule (formats)**

L. **Contract Implementation Timetable (format)**

ANNEXES
- Implementing agency information, i.e. organigram, annual report, brochures, etc.
- Detailed designs and specification and cost calculation of any construction works, if available

The contract will specify the expected outputs and achievements, planned activities and the budget. These form the starting point for an M&E workplan. In the case of Seila, the contracts between PRDC and line departments or other implementing agencies contain all this information. A few easy steps can help to 'translate' this into an M&E workplan.

1. **Clarify the output or achievement**: For each output or achievement, take the outputs or achievements and the activity schedule and the description of what it is that the project will produce. If the document is not very specific, find out the following for each output and write it down:
   - Target groups: who?
   - Type: what?
   - Time: when?
   - Quality: how good?
   - Location: where?
   - Amount: how many?
2. **Decide what you want to know**: The next step is to formulate the questions that need to be answered to track each output or achievement. Take into account the activities and inputs to produce these activities. These questions can be listed in the order of the implementation of activities.

3. Then decide and describe:
    - **how** you will to get the answers to the questions (for example by going to the field and observing, by measuring, or by talking with people)?
    - **who** will do the work?
    - **where** do you need to go to get the information: a village, an office, the library?
    - **how** will the information be used?
    - **when/how often** do you think it is necessary to collect the answers? Consider what has to be done on a regular basis, to measure the progress of the implementation and quality of the work produced, and at the end, when the contract is finished, to check whether the outputs or achievements have been produced as specified.

   You can make a simple table of the above to help you. A blank table is given on the next page, together with a simplified example. They are examples: you can develop your own forms as needed. In a narrative section you can provide additional explanation.

4. **Identify the different types of M&E work** You can now start preparing a consolidated workplan, using the table produced during step 3. If you group or combine all the same answers to the "How to find the answer" question, you can usually see a pattern develop: some questions have to be answered by going to the field and observing, some by measuring something, some by talking with people. These are different types of work or methods for data collection.

5. **Group the questions for each method/prepare tools.** Group the questions for each method or activity and if necessary prepare a tool for it that can easily be used. For example a form or the list of things to measure, questions to ask, things to look at. Leave space on the to write down the answers. This will help you focus and not forget anything.

6. **Reporting.** Look at how and what you need to document and report on a regular basis, either for your own use, or to give to others.

7. **Prepare the workplan,** for example by writing in a simple table the activities, who will do the work, what tool to use and when to do the activity.

8. **Use the workplan as a guide**: Things change, work is delayed, etc., adjust your workplan as needed. Use it to prepare a more detailed monthly or individual workplan.

Output / Achievement	How to find the answer?	Who will do the work?	Where to go/ Who to talk to?	How to use the information?	When											
					J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Describe here: Output 1																
Questions to answer:																
1 Is progress according to plan?																
2 Is the quality of the work good?																
3 Are people participating as foreseen?																
4 Etc.																
Describe here Output/Achievement 2																
Questions to answer:																
1																
2																
3																
Etc.																
Reporting to do																
Monthly																
Quarterly																
Annual																

Example of a simplified M&E workplan

M&E Activity	Who will do the work ?	What tool to use?	When											
			J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1. Progress Field visits	M&E FP	List of Guiding Questions			1x		1x		1x	1x	1x			
2. Quality control construction	TSS	Quality control form						1x	1x	4x				
3. Participation Assessment	M&E FP + CAU	Informal discussion group								1x				
Etc.														
6. End of Contract Evaluation	Evaluation Team	Quality control form, Group discussion									1x			
Reporting to do														
Monthly	M&E FP	Seila monthly report format												
Quarterly	M&E FP + accountant	Seila quarterly report format												
Annual														

4.3.3 Planning and Implementing an Evaluation, Study or Review

Evaluations, studies and reviews are often used to look closely at impact, specific aspects or processes of a project or program, for example an impact evaluation of the agricultural investments made, or a review of a planning process that was being piloted. An evaluation, study or review must be planned and implemented carefully, to ensure that it produces the desired result. The following summarizes a number of planning steps.

1) **Prepare Terms of Reference**

   Preliminary planning discussions, involving relevant stakeholders such as M&E staff, project implementers, funding agencies, should result in the formulation of Terms of Reference (ToR), including:

   - Background information about the program, project, topic or process to be studied
   - The purpose and objective of the study
   - What indicators to track, questions to be answered
   - Who will implement the study, what should be their qualifications, team composition (if a team, it is recommended to have both men and women on the team, as this may increase gender sensitivity in the study)
   - Timeframe for the study
   - Budget
   - Data collection methods to be used
   - Field work and geographical area to be considered
   - Potential sample size
   - Outputs to be produced by the team, specifying formats, number and/or type of reports
   - Management arrangements for the study (e.g. who supervises, contact points)
   - Support arrangements (for external teams or consultants)

2) **Review existing materials**

   Materials which are particularly relevant for an evaluation, study or review are:

   - The original project, program or process documents
   - Correspondence related to the contract
   - Monitoring or progress reports, including financial reports
   - Field trip reports, case studies, etc. that are relevant to the study
   - Reports from missions or project meetings
   - Data collection forms/questionnaires from other evaluations that may be relevant.

3) **Select data collection methods**

   - See what data collection/means of verification were listed in the project document
   - Determine what other data collection tools may be needed (see also the Terms of Reference for the study)
   - Select data collection methods

   Section 6 of this manual deals with data collection and data analysis in more detail.

4) **Design the data collection tools (survey forms, questionnaires, interview guidelines) and plan**

- Design the questionnaire, guidelines, etc.,
- Decide how to select households, sites.

5) **Field test and revise data collection tools**

- Select a site and time for field testing the tools
- Have one supervisor or advisor observe the field test to make recommendations for improvement of the tool or the interviewer's skills
- Revise the tool according to findings of the field test

6) **Make final preparations for data collection and train staff**

- Make logistical arrangements for fieldwork. Inform all parties concerned
- Finalize detailed schedule for data collection
- Orient and train staff who will be doing the data collection - review roles and responsibilities

7) **Implement the data collection**

- Perform quality control during the data collection

8) **Summarize the information**

- Start data processing and tabulation (as soon as possible, don't necessarily wait for the field work to end, it can sometimes be done simultaneously)

9) **Analyze the data collected**

- Interpret the results and draw conclusions
- Decide on recommendations
- Check the analysis with the implementers, stakeholders and other key informants

10) **Produce a report**

- Use the format provided for the report in the Terms of Reference
- Summarize data in tables and graphs or other appropriate ways to present information where possible
- Write the draft report

11) **Organize a workshop or presentation with all project/program stakeholders to review and validate findings, get feedback**

A workshop can be used to review the findings of the data collection exercise. This will also allow persons to comment on the findings and any possible explanation for discrepancies or issues arising. If it is a mid-term evaluation, the workshop participants can provide feedback on proposed changes and corrective actions to be taken in the future. Similarly, if it is an end-of-project/program evaluation, lessons can be learned and incorporated into future projects/programs.

12) **Finalize report**

- Adjust the draft report where necessary and finalize the report
- Submit report

4.3.4 Budgeting for M&E

Proper monitoring and evaluation costs money. Funds and resources for M&E are not 'extra': they are a normal part of a budget, and are necessary to enable good management and lesson learning. Financial resources are needed to cover the costs of the time people spend on M&E activities, to pay for transport, training, supporting materials and the production of reports, etc.

The easiest way to prepare an M&E budget is to carefully look at the M&E workplan or the specified M&E activities. There will always be overlap, to some degree, with other project activities. It is not necessary to detail every minor M&E activity, but it is important to budget for special events, such as review workshops, studies, M&E training. One way to budget is to assess which of the costs related to each M&E activity in the workplan are not, or not sufficiently, covered in the general budget for the project, contract or the ExCom Unit. Some costs will be included in the unit or contract budget. Normal staffing costs, or e.g. car fuel and maintenance costs may already be covered through a standard, monthly budget allocation.

Other M&E cost items may have to be budgeted specifically, such as:

- For regular monitoring or field visits, check if there is enough budget for transport (fuel, maintenance), and DSA (in case of overnight stays, for how many people and days, at what rate)?
- Is there sufficient budget for consultants or temporary staff needed for some M&E activities?
- Is there money allocated for the training and study tours planned?
- Is there money for workshops (participants), meetings, briefings planned or materials needed (maps, books, copies, etc.)?

Don't 'over-budget', but make sure that lack of financial resources will not be the reason for not implementing M&E activities.

4.4 Provincial Seila M&E Roles and Responsibilities

Monitoring and evaluation at province level involves the agencies that implement the Seila program (mainly provincial line departments, but occasionally also NGOs and the private sector), and the ExCom units. The focus for monitoring and evaluation, and the roles and responsibilities for each of these, is detailed below.

4.4.1 Implementing Agencies

Each implementing agency is primarily responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of its' Seila contract with the PRDC. To do this, each implementing agency has one or two M&E "focal points", who carry the main responsibility for the following:

- Monitor progress and implementation of their contracts with PRDC
- Prepare and submit Monthly reports
- Prepare and submit End of Contract Reports
- Prepare and implement internal contract evaluation in cooperation with PRDC ExCom CAU (if/when deemed necessary)
- Assist in Seila sector, PIF and PDP impact evaluations as needed.

Progress information about contract implementation is communicated by the M&E focal points to the CAU in monthly progress reports, and more detailed quarterly reports. All monitoring information collected is in the first place for use at the provincial level. It is to assist the implementers of the Seila program to assess the progress against the workplans, approved budgets and agreed standards. Part of this information also needs to be reported to higher levels, for use there.

4.4.2 Contract Administration Unit

The ExCom CAU has the coordinating role for the provincial Seila M&E. The CAU ensures regular monitoring and evaluation of the Annual Workplan and Budget and prepares progress reports for submission to the ExCom, especially:

- Ensuring that line departments and other contractors/suppliers are reporting regularly and on a timely basis to the ExCom
- Reviewing the progress and final reports submitted by implementing agencies prior to their acceptance by the ExCom
- Maintenance of the Seila Contracts Database, the Contracts Spreadsheet and the filing system on all contracts between the ExCom and implementing agencies
- Prepare/update annual overview of Seila management structure and staffing, including turnover rates
- Assist the ExCom to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of the annual workplan and budget is carried out in accordance with established guidelines and procedures
- Provide support and training to relevant staff of provincial Departments to ensure that monitoring and evaluation concerns are addressed in the design and implementation of the Implementing Agency Contracts financed under the provincial workplan and budget

- Ensure the receipt and review of periodic monitoring reports received from implementing agencies and prepare quarterly and donor specific progress reports for submission to the ExCom in accordance with reporting guidelines and procedures
- Coordinate with the Local Administration Unit to ensure consistency between the commune and provincial monitoring and evaluation systems
- Develop a workplan and schedule for direct monitoring and evaluation of specific Implementation Contracts in accordance with criteria approved by the ExCom
- Document and collect information on lessons learned within the Seila program including case studies and special research
- Assist external monitoring, review and evaluation missions visiting the province as required
- In collaboration with LAU assist with the development of simple information materials that can be understood by villagers to promote understanding of decentralization principles and local awareness of provincial plans and activities
- Prepare the layout, production and distribution of provincial development newsletters
- Coordinate with the Information Department on the dissemination of information through radio, TV and print media
- Maintain the ExCom Resource Library consisting of documents, data and information materials collected from national and provincial institutions, development committees, NGOs and other development agencies

4.4.3 Local Administration Unit

The monitoring and evaluation which the LAU supports is part of the M&E system which operates within the Ministry of Interior, and which links DoLA, the Provincial Office of Local Administration (POLA) and the Communes. POLA supports capacity building and the functioning of the Commune Councils.

POLA/LAU has the following M&E roles and responsibilities:

- Monitoring and evaluating the performance and capacity of the communes to manage the implementation of the regulatory framework, to effectively administer the commune and to promote socio-economic development of the commune
- Organize assistance and develop workplans to assist the communes to carry out monitoring and evaluation at the local level
- Oversee the implementation of provincial monitoring and evaluation of the communes in accordance with approved guidelines from the MoI/DoLA
- Maintain databases/spreadsheets and monitoring reports and prepare aggregated reports for submission through the ExCom to the national authorities in accordance with approved formats
- Ensure that PFTs and DFTs are properly trained in the monitoring, evaluation and reporting system for the communes, and can adequately support and coordinate the delivery of training to the communes
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the PFTs and the DFTs
- Assist the LAU Chief to organize regular progress review meetings with the Facilitation Teams to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance and to solve problems related to the implementation of decentralization
- Prepare regular progress reports for submission to the LAU Chief;

4.4.4 Technical Support Unit

The Technical Support Unit has the following M&E roles and responsibilities:

- Monitor and supervise implementation of investment activities and certify quantities and quality of works implemented by contractors
- Maintaining the Project Information Database for monitoring projects implemented by Commune Councils and preparing regular database reports for submission to the ExCom and Governor
- At the request of other departments and agencies, provide supervision and certification of quantities and quality of works implemented by contractors.

4.4.5 Finance Unit

The Finance Unit has the following M&E roles and responsibilities:

- Monitor and evaluate the efficiency of the financial management systems and formulate recommendations on improvements for submission to national level
- Ensure that accounting procedures as specified in the relevant Financial Systems Manuals are properly carried out including the maintenance and reconciliation of financial records, the preparation of periodic financial statements and reports, the updating of the chart of accounts and the enforcement of internal control mechanisms at all levels
- Monitor the execution of the Seila Financial System, evaluate its efficiency and transparency, identify constraints to effective operation of the system and propose solutions for review in periodic meetings/workshops
- Prepare periodic financial reports for submission through the Finance Unit Chief to the Governor

The provincial Treasury, which is linked to the Finance Unit, has monitoring and evaluation responsibilities related to the Commune Fund, as the Commune Accountants are based in the provincial Treasury. Because the Seila program provides resources to the Commune Fund, it has an interest in monitoring and evaluating how the communes use their Commune Fund allocations. The main tool for monitoring the use of the Commune Fund resources will be the Project Information Database.

4.4.6 PRDC and PRDC ExCom

The PRDC must review and forward the reports on the implementation of Annual Workplan and Budget to the Seila Task Force and other development agencies within the province.

The PRDC ExCom has to:

- Manage, monitor and conduct regular auditing of the financial system and provide payments to approved contracts in accordance with the financial manual/guidelines of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the program in accordance with guidelines and procedures to promote program effectiveness and to support the formulation of national policies.

- Produce periodic financial and progress reports on implementation of the Seila Annual Workplan and Budget in accordance with approved formats and guidelines and submit to the Seila Task Force.
- Share information on planning, contracting, implementation, monitoring/evaluation reports and other relevant development activities to line departments and development institutions to support the effective implementation of provincial/municipal development.
- Meet at least once per week to review and discuss progress, identify operational constraints, resolve problems and ensure efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation.

4.5 Capacity Building for M&E in Provinces

Staff training and development is a critical part of the Seila program. One of the objectives of Seila is to build the capacity of government staff in a variety of areas, including M&E. Staff should have the opportunity to acquire and apply relevant skills and knowledge. Capacity of staff to implement the M&E system is strengthened through on-the-job training as well as formal training courses, provincial and multi-provincial workshops, study tours, etc. As staff leave or are re-assigned to other tasks, there will always be a need for training in M&E in the Seila program.

For an effective M&E System you need skilled people who can, between them, fulfill the M&E functions and tasks. Meeting capacity needs can be done by a number of ways.

Get the right people by:
- Hiring or seconding trained people
- Training the staff (internal or external)
- Hiring external people for special inputs.

The Seila program has clear guidelines for the recruitment of staff and personnel management. These are described in the Seila Program Operations Manual in detail and are not repeated here. The Operations Manual includes Seila recruitment procedures and contracting of staff and consultants. These procedures need to be followed for all Seila staff. The recruitment panel needs to ensure that the best candidate is selected. This includes ensuring candidates have good skills and capacity for carrying out the required M&E tasks, or at least having the potential to learn them quickly. M&E staff needs to provide input in the interview questions, and should be included in the recruitment panel when staff with major M&E tasks is being recruited.

Ensure capacity of good quality by:
- Being clear about what you expect
- Regular staff performance evaluations
- Incentives for learning
- Limiting staff turnover
- Having a qualified person to coordinate M&E

PRDC and Seila job descriptions include M&E tasks. Supervisors, managers and colleagues need to assist new staff or staff assigned to new tasks in getting familiar with the day-to-day work, standards to be met, time schedules and output of M&E activities. It is also the duty of every staff member to make sure s/he has clearly understood what s/he has to do and deliver. The Seila Program Operations Manual includes a section Performance Evaluation Procedures, indicating the steps to be undertaken to assess staff performance. This includes self-evaluation and a panel review. It also includes steps to be undertaken when a staff member is not performing his/her duties. The Operations Manual includes the Terms of Service Contracts for Seila staff seconded to the PRDC ExCom, including their benefits and salary supplements.

Training for M&E. Training, as part of a broader capacity building effort, should be based on a training plan for all relevant people at provincial level. The basis for this plan is an assessment of skills and conditions related to peoples job descriptions and tasks expected from them. Training can be undertaken using the appropriate combination of training methods, including some of the following:

- Internal courses, tailor made for the target group (e.g. for communes, line department, etc.)
- External courses
- On-the-job training/mentoring
- Workshops
- Study tours and exposure visits

Depending on how long people have been working in the Seila Program and/or on M&E, the training received and given previously, different skills and capacity levels will exist in and between provinces. Each CAU should budget and implement a special M&E capacity/training needs assessment and prepare and implement, annually, a capacity building program, addressing the specific needs of everyone involved in the Seila M&E System.

In general, if a staff member is interested in joining particular training courses or classes, s/he should inquire with his/her supervisor, especially if it is related to skills needed on the job.

A staged approach should be developed in order to disseminate the following (but adjusted to the level and relevance for the target group of the training):

- Basic knowledge of monitoring and evaluation and its use and importance
- The Seila Logframe
- The key government policies of decentralization and deconcentration, and the Seila program cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, natural resources and environmental management, and gender mainstreaming)
- The Seila M&E system with specific roles and responsibilities of different people
- Introducing and implementing the Seila M&E System

The stress of capacity building in the provinces should be, in line with the Seila M&E System, on monitoring and strengthening the use of monitoring information in management and decision-making.

National level M&E Staff should assist where necessary and set the standards, distribute the modules etc. for the training and capacity building activities.

Seila Program
M&E Manual

Section 5

Commune M&E System

5.1. Introduction to the Commune Management Structure

The Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat, which was promulgated in 2001, regulates the administration and management of the communes. This law specifies that each commune is administered and managed by a Commune Council, which consists of between 5-11 locally elected councilors. To support the Commune Council in its administrative task, the Ministry of Interior has appointed to each commune a Commune Clerk.

The Commune Council also has the right to establish advisory committees to assist with the administration and management tasks of the Council. One such advisory committee is the Planning and Budgeting Committee which assists the Commune Council with the formulation of the commune development plan, the commune investment plan and the annual budget.

The powers, roles and functions of the Commune Councils are specified in the above mentioned law, and in several sub-decrees and guidelines from various ministries (such as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy and Finance,, and the Ministry of Planning). The formulation of implementing regulations is however a task that is not finished yet, and even the implementing regulations that have been produced so far will need to be assessed and perhaps improved. The commune level M&E system will therefore be incomplete for some time, and will need to be updated and adjusted as and when new Government guidelines for operationalization become available.

It is important to keep in mind that, since the election of the Commune Councilors in February 2002, the Commune Council, and the planning, finance and management systems that it uses, are a **government structure** and **government systems**. This structure and systems are used in the whole country. The structure and systems that were used in the communes in the Seila program before 2002 were **program** or **project** specific structures and systems. It is for this reason that this chapter has as title "Commune M&E system" and not "***Seila*** Commune M&E system" ; the commune M&E system is no longer Seila-specific, but it is a general monitoring and evaluation system for all communes.

5.2 Commune Monitoring and Evaluation

One important difference between commune M&E and provincial Seila or national Seila M&E is that, at the commune level, there is a much clearer distinction between M&E ***by*** the commune (i.e. by the Commune Council, by the Planning and Budgeting Committee, and to some extent by the people living in the commune), and M&E ***of*** the commune (which is primarily done by district and provincial agency staff). This can also be called the "internal" M&E (by the commune itself), and the "external" M&E (by non-commune people or agencies). This internal and external commune M&E should however not be considered as separate systems ; they should be well integrated and complement one another.

5.2.1 Internal Commune M&E

One of the duties of the Commune Council, as specified in the Law on the Administration and Management of the Communes/Sangkats, is that it must monitor, follow-up and evaluate the implementation of its' development plan in a transparent manner. The Commune Council may do such monitoring, follow-up and evaluation with the help of others (like e.g. the Planning and Budgeting Committee), but the overall responsibility remains with the Commune Council.

The basis for such internal commune M&E is the commune development plan and the annual budget. The Commune Chief is required to report monthly to the full Commune Council on the work performance and progress. In February 2003, the Ministry of Interior has issued a Prakas on the format of the commune monthly and quarterly report. This information from the Commune Chief, and from the monthly report enables the Council to assess progress against workplan, approved budget and agreements made with other parties.

Commune finance administration and management – and therefore also the M&E connected to it – is currently still a shared responsibility. The communes have the right to make small payments from a petty cash account, but the commune account is kept and managed by the provincial treasury.

There is currently no approved system yet for internal commune M&E.

5.2.2 External Commune M&E

The Law on the Administration and Management of the Communes/Sangkats specifies that there must be monitoring and control of the ***general*** activities of the communes, to :

- Examine the legality of what is done by the commune. What needs to be done by the commune, and how this should be done, is often specified in the law and in various implementing regulations. Agencies entrusted with legality control of the communes must monitor that the commune operates according to the law and those regulations.
- Examine capacity development of the communes. Do the communes have the capacity to play their roles and perform their duties ? How is the capacity of the communes being developed ?
- Assess support interventions to strengthen a commune's capacity to manage its work, to exercise its' powers, and to perform its' roles and duties.

The primary agency which is tasked with monitoring and evaluating the communes is the Department of Local Administration (DoLA) in the Ministry of Interior, and its' Provincial Office of Local Administration (POLA). In the provinces that take part in the Seila program, the POLA is also assisted in this by the Local Administration Unit (LAU) of the PRDC ExCom.

Supervision of the communes' finance management rests primarily with the provincial treasury, and this for both the general administration component of the Commune Fund, as for the development component. In order to monitor the progress of development activities being implemented using the development component, the provincial treasury will need a system, most probably a computerized database. This database will track progress of activities and contract implementation, outputs, as well as financial information.

5.3 Indicators for the Commune M&E System

For the purpose of setting up a commune M&E system that will serve both the Commune Councils as well as the agencies at provincial and national level tasked with the supervision of the communes, a set of indicators must be identified. The table below shows some indicators that could be tracked, and how the required information could be obtained. At some time, discussions should take place involving all stakeholders, to decide on a minimum set of common indicators to be used by all communes, so that the systems for commune M&E can be further developed.

Key Indicators	Means of Verification	Int. M&E	Ext. M&E
The systems for decentralized planning, finance and management are operational at the commune level	Minutes of Commune Council meetings	✓	✓
	Commune monthly report	✓	✓
	Commune finance accounts		✓
	Commune assets register	✓	✓
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
	Commune development plan		✓
	Commune annual budget		✓
The systems to support commune planning, finance and management are operational at the province level	POLA monthly report		✓
	Provincial treasury monthly report		✓
	District and provincial facilitation teams monthly report		✓
Accountability and transparency of Commune Council decisions to the local population	Public information channels at commune and village level (e.g. meetings, information boards, bulletins, ...)	✓	✓
	Informal assessments by the Commune Council	✓	
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
	Annual financial audit	✓	✓

Key Indicators	Means of Verification	Int. M&E	Ext. M&E
Local participation in commune management and commune development	Commune development plan	✓	✓
	Project beneficiaries surveys	✓	✓
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
The performance of the Commune Council to promote social and economic development, and upgrading of living standards, whilst preserving the environment and the commune's natural resources.	Commune database	✓	✓
	Commune development plan	✓	✓
	Commune annual budget	✓	✓
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
Frequency, effectiveness and timeliness of support provided to communes	Informal assessments in the communes		✓
	Reports of district and province facilitation teams staff		✓
Number of village and commune people trained in commune management systems and procedures	Project information database		✓
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
	POLA monthly report		✓
The use of the development component of the Commune Fund	Commune database	✓	✓
	Commune development plan	✓	✓
	Commune annual budget	✓	✓
	Project information database		✓
	Commune Fund database		✓
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
Project management of the commune development projects (e.g. timeliness of implementation, cost control, …)	Project information database		✓
Quality, relevance and impact of commune service delivery and commune development investments	Commune database	✓	✓
	Commune annual report	✓	✓
	Projects and beneficiaries surveys	✓	✓
	Commune assets maintenance surveys	✓	✓
Effectiveness and appropriateness of commune management and administration systems and procedures.	Planning system review		✓
	Finance system review		✓
	Implementation system review		✓
	M&E system review		✓
Own-source revenue generation	Commune annual budget	✓	✓

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities for Commune level Monitoring and Evaluation

The following roles and responsibilities were extracted from the Commune Law and other official Government guidelines relating to Commune Councils.

Commune Council

- Review and approve the planning process workplan and annual budgets to implement the commune development plan
- Monitor the progress of, control and evaluate the implementation, results and impact of the (development) plans, programs, projects and the delivery of services with transparency and accountability, This includes activities undertaken in the territory of the commune by government, non-government, international and private sector organizations.
- Adopt the budget, budget amendments and monitor budget implementation
- Prepare/review, adopt and submit an annual report within 45 days after the end of each financial year
- Review, adopt, disseminate and publicize all Deikas (order/decision) of the Commune Council in the commune
- Liaise with the people and report the results of implementation of the commune development plan to the population.

Commune Chief

- Prepare and submit a draft workplan and budget to prepare the commune development plan to the Commune Council for approval
- Report monthly on the work performance and submit draft financial reports (monthly and mid-year) to the Commune Council
- Prepare and submit to the Commune Council, with the assistance of the Planning and Budgeting Committee, the annual report and annual financial statements at the end of each fiscal year

Planning and Budgeting Committee

- The Planning and Budgeting Committee should monitor the planning process and the implementation of the planning process workplan.
- Report monthly on the progress of its activities
- Assist the Commune Chief to prepare and submit to the Commune Council, the annual report at the end of each fiscal year.
- Recommend actions to be undertaken concerning the subject matter that is given for consideration to them.

Village Chief

- To provide recommendations to the Commune Council on matters relating to the interests of his/her village.
- To make recommendations to the Commune Council or Commune Chief to manage and coordinate works in his/her village.

Citizens

- The citizens (are to be) encouraged to share their views on the planning process and its activities.
- The citizens (are to be encouraged) to monitor the budget implementation.

5.5 Data Collection and Means of Verification

Based on the selected indicators, and the means for their verification, one can determine what activities must be undertaken to actually collect or gather, present and analyze the information. Some simple methods for collecting information at commune level are: field visits and observation, (informal or group) interviews, meetings, (informal) assessments. The collected information can be summarized in regular progress and annual reports, following standard formats.

In monitoring, collecting data is part of the day-to day work. At the commune level, monitoring should be kept fairly simple and methods appropriate for this level should be chosen. Monitoring forms and guidelines are important to help focus efforts, to ensure that the right data is collected, and to make aggregation and analysis of the collected data easier.

Evaluation of the impact of the development investment, in relation to the stated objectives of the commune development plan is not further elaborated here, since detailed guidelines are not available yet. Here also, it will be important to choose the most appropriate way to collect the data needed for the stated purpose, fitting available capacity at the commune level, time, and budget.

The table below summarizes commune M&E tools and data collection methods. Brief descriptions follow, indicating the work to be done by and at the commune level, and how data is to be analyzed, reported and used. A number of these means of verification and tools have not been developed yet. These will only be mentioned briefly here. More information, descriptions and general guidelines for use of these and other tools and methods that can help guide the implementation of the commune M&E work are provided in other sections of this manual.

Type	Commune M&E Tools and Methods
Databases / Spreadsheets	▪ Commune database ▪ Project information database ▪ Commune/Sangkat monitoring spreadsheets ▪ Seila contracts database (capacity building information only)
Reports	▪ Annual commune report ▪ Annual financial statement of the Commune Fund ▪ Mid-year financial statements of the Commune Fund ▪ Monthly commune reports
Reviews	▪ Review of commune planning and budgeting system ▪ Review commune finance system ▪ Review commune project implementation and service delivery system ▪ Review commune M&E system
Assessments / Surveys / Studies	▪ Projects and beneficiaries surveys ▪ Commune Council capacity assessment ▪ Impact study
Audit	▪ Annual financial audit (performed by provincial level)

5.6 Data Collection, Analysis, Information Use and Reporting

This section describes briefly the proposed data collection tools and methods, their purpose and what they monitor, the work to be done, and the use and reporting of the obtained information.

5.6.1 Commune Database (CDB)

The Commune Councils play an important role in the collection, validation and use of the village and commune data. The commune database, and the computer program that goes with it, are based in the Provincial Department of Planning (PDoP). The commune database is widely recognized as being very useful and relevant, and the information obtained from it is used much wider than at the commune level only. For more detailed descriptions of the CDB and its maintenance and use, please refer to the CDB manual. The information below applies to the commune level only.

Purpose

To provide annually updated village and commune data on a range of relevant and reliable indicators. The data is used for planning, resource allocation, and monitoring changes.

Work to be done

The data of the commune database is collected through commune data sheets, provided by PDoP. During the planning process, villagers review and validate village data from the commune database. The PBC organizes the following process for that purpose during Step 2 of the commune development planning and budgeting process:

- Presentation of the village data to villagers
- Villagers provide inputs
- Village representatives validate data, fill in data book

Reporting

Data is compiled in a commune data sheet and village data books, which are forwarded to the PDoP.

Use

The commune data sheet is used during the commune development planning and budgeting process. The PDoP updates the commune database.

5.6.2 Project Information Database (PID)

The data collected by the Commune Council related to the contracts for the development projects in the commune, funded from the Commune Fund and other commune resources, will help the Commune Council to monitor the contract implementation and payment status. The PID and the computer program that goes with it will be managed and operated at the PRDC ExCom. The information of the PID is not only useful for the communes, but also for the provincial and the national level. For more detailed descriptions of the PID and its maintenance and use, please refer to the PID manual, once the system has been developed. The information below applies to the commune level only.

Purpose

The data on contracts implementation, as stored in the PID, enables the Commune Council to follow the progress of contract implementation and budget expenditure.

Work to be done

Prepare the project (with assistance from facilitators, if needed) and prepare a contract.
Conduct regular field visits and spot checks to assess progress in implementation, and to do quality control (by both PBC, and citizens)
Keep track of payments for the projects.

Reporting

Complete the needed project design, contract, progress and project completion reports, as per required formats (forthcoming). These reports are forwarded to the PRDC ExCom (for use by the LAU and TSU).

Use

The Commune Councils use the information to check progress against project contracts and budget, to assess and discuss implementation problems, and take decisions to address these problems.

5.6.3 Commune Monitoring Spreadsheet and Commune Reporting System

Helps to keep track of the implementation of the development planning workplan and commune budget implementation.

Purpose

Enables the Commune Council and the provincial agencies to assess and discuss progress of development planning workplan implementation and the status of the commune's Commune Fund account. If problems are identified, the Commune Council needs to decide how to deal with these.

Work to be done

Regular discussion when preparing these reports for submission to the provincial level, as per required standard and frequency.

Reporting

- Monthly commune reports
- Monthly commune revenues and expenditure statement
- Mid-year commune revenues and expenditures statement
- Annual commune report

Use

Commune Councils use the reports to check progress of implementation against workplan and budget.

5.6.4 Compliance with and Review of Systems

The purpose of checking the **compliance** of Commune Councils with decentralized systems and policy is to check if the Commune Councils are operating within their legal mandate. An obstacle to working out more detailed operational M&E procedures for this compliance monitoring is the absence of agreed upon indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) and their means of verification.

Regular **reviews** of the systems are needed to ensure the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the systems. Compliance with, and reviews of systems at the commune level will mostly be organized and undertaken externally, e.g. by POLA and national level agencies. However, Commune Councils can and should also do checks and reviews themselves.

1. **Commune development planning and budgeting system:** The commune development planning and budgeting system has been applied in 2002 for the first time. A regular check will have to be done to assess if the Commune Councils are following and implementing the guidelines for planning and budgeting correctly. A separate note is attached as Annex 4, suggesting some methods the Commune Council can use to organize simple reviews of the planning process on a regular basis.

2. The **commune finance system** is currently still being developed. The manual and training for Commune Councils on the commune finance management system should include simple checks that the Commune Council can perform to ensure proper implementation of the system.

3. The **commune project implementation system** is also still being developed. It is advised that during the design phase and in the manual of this system, a chapter will be included to describe the roles and responsibilities of, and methods to be used by, the Commune Councils to ensure compliance with and regular review of the system, to ensure quality outputs and an efficient and effective implementation of the system.

4. The **commune M&E and reporting system.** This Section basically offers some initial suggestions for the development of the M&E system. The national level and the provincial level will have to first further develop the system, provide training and establish it at the commune level. The role of Commune Councils in reviews of the systems will need to clarified and specified.

   The reporting system for Commune Councils, with standardized monthly and annual report formats, has been established in February 2003. It is expected that the current formats will be assessed for their appropriateness, and that the formats may evolve over time, to make use of increased capacity of both the Commune Councils and the POLA staff. This will allow increased sophistication in information systems and perhaps the inclusion of more data. It is important that the reporting requirements of the different systems the communes have to comply with are as much as possible streamlined. The communes should only have to prepare one annual report for both the planning and the finance system.

5.6.5 Assessments and Surveys

There is a range of topics that the Commune Council needs to keep an eye on in their commune. To name but a few:

- the quality of project outputs
- the use and maintenance of outputs and facilities
- participation
- service delivery
- citizen's opinions on appropriateness, relevance, price and quality of services and investments.

Quick assessments and mini surveys are excellent methods to be used by the Commune Councils – and even the supervising authorities – in this respect. It will be most useful for the Commune Council to learn how to plan, implement and use a simple kind of assessment or survey that they can subsequently apply in different situations as necessary. However, it is a priority that more specific standards, definitions and indicators become available for key issues at commune level, so that focused M&E activities can be planned.

5.7 Managing, Planning and Financing M&E at the Commune Level

5.7.1 Planning for Commune M&E

Planning of M&E for Commune Councils needs to be very simple and easy. To start with, a simple schedule that lists the tasks, who is responsible, when and where and how often will be sufficient. The schedule can be split up in few categories, for example: meetings, planning process, project implementation, reports, and special M&E activities. For each of these categories, the Commune Council works out the necessary activities and how often they should be done, lists them and discusses and agrees on the details. The schedule can be used during monthly meetings to check if activities were undertaken and what the results were.

A tentative time schedule can be prepared at the beginning of the year and can be updated and adjusted once the time schedule for the planning process and the workplan for the implementation of project has been prepared.

5.7.2 Finances and Resources for Commune M&E

Using the schedule, the Commune Council can check in the proposed budget if there are enough resources available for the activities. Costs for regular tasks are usually small, like for field visits, planning process monitoring, or meetings and will be part of the regular budget. The Commune Council should make sure special M&E events or 'extra' activities, have been included in the budget, for example a survey or assessment.

5.8 Building Capacity for M&E at the Commune Level

5.8.1 The Choice of Focal Persons for Commune M&E

The Commune Council as a whole is responsible for M&E, and therefore all councilors need to understand the basic principles of M&E. However, after an initial orientation and joint formulation of the M&E workplan, the Commune Council should appoint two people to keep track of the implementation of the M&E workplan, and report on the progress to the Commune Council. One of these two people should be a Commune Councilor ; the other person should be someone who is proposed by the Planning and Budgeting Committee, and who has been endorsed by the Commune Council. These two commune M&E focal persons should be a man and a woman. These people would also be the focal persons for training and capacity building activities on M&E when only a limited number of commune people are invited to participate.

5.8.2 Building up Capacity

Capacity building of Commune Councils in a range of topics, including M&E, is the responsibility of the POLA. They will be assisted by different groups of people, such as NGO's, Provincial Treasury/DoEF, MoP, PDRD, etc. Each of these partners is responsible to train Commune Councils in their M&E roles and tasks related to planning, finances, implementation and management.

For a more general development and gradual increase of the capacity of Commune Councils in M&E, the Commune Council mandate of five years provide good options for a step-wise approach. The following phased strategy is proposed:

Year 1 – Establishment, basic principles and M&E workplan

- Step 1. Define the M&E tasks of the Commune Council and identify the individual members for the specific M&E and reporting tasks they are to perform.
- Step 2. Focus capacity building of the Commune Council on the understanding of a simple planning and implementation cycle, basic monitoring concepts and project implementation monitoring, including the use of the related forms and reports.
- Step 3. Preparation of a simple monitoring activity schedule for the Commune Council.

Year 2-4 – Consolidation: Annual Investment Monitoring, different methodologies

- Step 4. The commune moves towards close monitoring of the implementation of the a complete annual development plan, consisting of several projects (as apposed to individual projects), including projects funded from both their own and other resources, and implemented by both private contractors directly supervised by the Commune Council and other organizations and agencies.
- More advanced and qualitative methods of monitoring are included in the capacity building for monitoring.

Year 5 – Advanced: Impact and Evaluation

- Step 5. The commune will learn to evaluate the commune development plan, assess the impact of the development activities implemented over a number of years and evaluate the achievement of the commune development goal, as a basis for the development of the next commune development plan. Guidelines to be provided by the Government.

Notes:

- A Commune Capacity Assessment should provide specific input about the capacity levels in M&E of Commune Councils. Capacity building activities, through use of a wide range of capacity building tools, needs to be tailored to the identified needs.
- Develop a series of training manuals for commune M&E training, matching the three levels identified above. Stress should be on what information is needed, and how to use it. Present M&E in small, understandable practical components, related to the stages and activities of the Commune Councils: planning process, implementation, finances, reporting requirements, etc.
- Develop training modules and handouts appropriate for the level of the Commune Councils

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Section 6

Data Collection and Analysis

6.1 Data Collection

6.1.1 Data and Data Collection

Monitoring and evaluation are basically systems for collecting data, and analyzing the data to obtain information. There are two types of data:

- **Quantitative** data, meaning it can be expressed in a number; and
- **Qualitative** data, meaning it is expressed in words, describing observations, actions, feelings, beliefs, etc.

Good monitoring and evaluation will usually use a mixture of both types of data. The quantitative data has the advantage of being able to give information on characteristics for a whole village, district, province or even the whole country. Quantitative data methods can range from simple counting of inputs, outputs or beneficiaries to sophisticated formal household surveys, census, etc.
Qualitative data, on the other hand, is often better at describing what has happened and pointing to possible explanations, but analysis of such data is more difficult than with quantitative data. Examples of qualitative data are: open ended in-depth interviews with key informants, focus group discussions, case studies, mapping, observation, wealth ranking, etc.

As someone who is involved in monitoring and evaluation, it is important to become familiar with different methods for data collection, and what their advantages and disadvantages are, so that you choose methods which are appropriate for the type of activity or project that must be monitored or evaluated.

In general, a data collection process will consists of the following steps:

1) Selection of the appropriate method(s) for data collection
2) Designing data collection forms
3) Training staff in the use of the tools
4) Implementing the data collection

In monitoring one needs to decide how often the required information must be collected (once a week, once a month, once every three months,....). In evaluation, a decision may be needed on a sample size.

6.1.2 Examples of Data Collection Methods

Below are a number of brief descriptions of data collection methods that are often used.

1. **Review of existing materials.** This is also called review of *secondary sources*. These form the background information to the project, and you can save much time by finding out what data already exists about the project area or the project.

2. **Direct observation**. By direct observation we mean systematically observing things, events, people, etc. and recording what you see. It is a good way to cross-check answers you get from people in interviews, group discussions and the like. Direct observation is always relevant when conducting an evaluation. It is important to use a checklist to do observation systematically and in a standard way (so results can be compared with each other, if several people are working independent from each other). Field visits are occasions where informal observation often takes place. The project manager or field worker keeps a list 'in his or her head' of things he or she wishes to observe. After the visit the observations are recalled and recorded, or discussed with other staff.

3. **Interviews**: Interviewing is one of the main tools used in data collection (just like observation). Interviews can be very structured (asking a specific number of precise questions and selecting the answer from some options given on a questionnaire), or they can be unstructured (asking an 'open' question, and deciding what to ask next based on the answer). It is this last type, the informal interview, which is most used. There are four basic types of interview to choose from:

   - **Individual interview**
     This is used to get specific information. Hold individual interviews with a number of people selected on purpose. Individual interviews are suitable to get information about sensitive subjects, or subjects about which there is conflict or disagreement in the community.

   - **Key informant interview**
     A key informant is anyone who has special knowledge about a subject. You interview them to get special knowledge. For example, you can interview a midwife to learn about birthing practices, or a village chief because he will normally have a good knowledge of various aspects related to his village. Key informants are normally able to answer questions about the knowledge and behavior of others.

   - **Group interviews**
     These are organized to get village and community level information. They usually provide access to a lot of information, and there is an immediate cross-check, since people correct each other. They cannot be used to collect sensitive information, and they take more time and effort to plan. They also need a facilitator to guide the discussion. When the group gets bigger than 20 people, it is better to split off into smaller groups.

     Splitting up groups may also help to get more qualified answers. The information given by a group of only men may be different from what is reported by a group of only women. Other examples of splitting up groups which can result in differences of answers obtained are : old people vs. young people, or abled people vs. disabled people.

   - **Focus group discussions**
     These are held to discuss specific topics in detail with a small group of people who are knowledgeable or interested. Just as with a group interview, you need a facilitator. Focus groups should be small; between 6 to 12 people works best.

4. **Surveys** are generally used to collect large amounts of quantitative information. Data collection usually takes quite a bit of time, and analysis is normally done by computer. Examples include formal household surveys or census. Formal methods such as surveys have the advantage of generating quantitative data that are relatively accurate and have high reliability and validity. Formal methods are very structured following precise, established procedures that limit errors and biases. They generate systematic, verifiable information. The disadvantages are that they are usually expensive and require higher technical skills

5. **Mini-surveys** involve interviews with approximately 25-50 individuals, usually selected using sampling techniques. Structured questionnaires are used that focus on a limited number of questions. Mini-surveys are useful to generate quantitative data that can often be collected and analyzed quickly. However, their findings are less generalizable than those from formal sample surveys.

6. **Case Studies** are detailed examinations of a relatively few persons or items. In most cases, subjects are not chosen by a formal sampling process. Often subjects are self-selected, or are selected on the basis of relevant features. Case studies provide in-depth, detailed analysis of only a small number of groups or people: it is not possible to draw general conclusions from case studies. They can, however, be informative and good examples to illustrate certain points or aspects of a program or problem.

6.1.3 Design of Data Collection Tools

The 'tools' that are used for data collection are forms to record responses or observations during fieldwork. Data collection tools include:

- Questionnaire for a formal, structured interview (exact list of questions for a personal interview)
- Focus group guide
- In-depth interview guide
- Observation checklist
- Data sheet for document review
- Data sheet to record findings from measurements

The following approach can help with the design of such forms or checklists:

1. Decide what instruments need to be designed, and what information needs to be collected by each.
2. Review similar forms used for other studies to get some practical ideas.
3. Preferably in a small group, or with a team, brainstorm questions, categories, layout etc. Prepare a first draft based on the brainstorm.
4. Ask other people to give comments on the first draft.
5. Improve the first draft based on the comments, and prepare a second draft.

6. Pre-test the second draft. Pre-testing means taking it into the field, and using it as a final product, but with a small group of people. Get comments and feedback from the interviewers/observers, but also from the respondents, about:
   - sequence and flow of the questions
   - understanding of the questions (language used)
   - appropriateness of the questions
   - coding to fit responses (see the section on designing questionnaires to find out what that means)
   - time required to complete the form
7. Review the second draft based on the findings of the pre-test, and prepare a final draftx

6.2 Data Analysis

It often happens that monitoring and evaluation does not go much further than data collection, with little or no data analysis. Analyzing M&E findings requires looking closely at the data that has been collected, clarifying and structuring it, understanding connection and identifying core elements, in order to arrive at information, conclusions and decisions that can result in follow-up action. Analysis – and particularly participatory analysis which involves stakeholders and the intended beneficiaries – helps to:

- Refine understanding and insights
- Limit bias by cross-checking information
- Build a clear picture of a situation/event/process and reach consensus
- Strengthen ownership of conclusions and motivate people to make changes happen (using participatory analysis).

6.2.1 Two Phases in Data Analysis

Data analysis can normally be divided into two phases:

1. **Summarizing the data** – collect the data from the group interviews, observation sheets, and completed questionnaires. Make summaries to count how many people gave the same answer or said similar things.

   With **quantitative** information (dealing with numbers) this is easy to do. Summarizing the data is done by:

   - Counting and preparing and presenting it in summary tables,
   - Breaking the data down by relevant categories (for example by male-female, by age group, education, occupation or location).
   - Present information in different ways, such as percentages, ratios, averages, medians and range.

Summarizing **qualitative data** (dealing with descriptions) is harder. Some extra work may need to be done first, for example:

- Coding the responses and then counting them
- Identifying different categories of responses and the number or percentage of responses in each category
- Present the information including narrative background information or quotes from the interviews as examples as illustration.

2. **Interpreting the data** - After summarizing the data, careful data analysis begins. What is the data saying? Keeping in mind the objectives and outputs of the program or project, what conclusions can be drawn and what recommendations made? If several tools, i.e., focus group discussions, surveys, are being used, it is important to reconcile the results from these tools to make sure they do not conflict. Persons familiar with the implementation of the contract can be useful in explaining some of the findings.

6.2.2 General Guidelines for Data Analysis

Data analysis is a continuous process of reviewing data as it is collected, in order to obtain the information that it holds. Use the analysis to formulate further questions, to verify preliminary information, and to draw conclusions. Analysis is the process of making sense of the collected data. It should not be left until all data has been collected.

Some general guidelines for data analysis are:

- Look at the summarized data, and seek relationships between the parts. See what conclusions you can draw based on the summaries (keeping in mind the goal and objectives of the project!).
- Arrange a list of key issues, and arrange your findings according to this list. Look through your data, and look for differences, variations and contradictions. Judge the relative importance of the information.
- Formulate a series of questions based on the purpose of the evaluation (or the objective of the project), and try to answer them using the collected data.
- Use diagrams, ranking methods and other analytical tools.
- Check your results and conclusions by presenting them to key informants or a group of community members.
- Be self-critical; does the information make sense to you?
- Results have to be consistent and must not contradict each other. Two opposite statements cannot be true at the same time. If your results contradict secondary sources or other information, you must be able to explain why. Your findings have to be believable.

6.2.3 Data Storage and Information Management

During project implementation, and as a result of monitoring and evaluation, a lot of data gets collected. Such data may not only be needed shortly after it has been collected, but also at a later time (e.g. to compare the "before" and "after" situation of a project). It is important that the collected data gets properly and systematically stored, so that it can easily be found in case it is needed again.

Data on projects is also used by more than one person, so it is important that whoever needs access to data or information, can find it without much extra help of the person who has stored it in the first place. There needs to be a system to store and manage project or program data and information. When setting up a data and information management system, there are four questions that should be considered:

1. **What data and information needs to be stored?**

   Data and information storage is needed at two levels: to guide the project strategy and for tracking operations. In principle, everything you decide to monitor and evaluate will need to be stored in some way. Data about progress with implementation, stakeholder reviews, annual project reviews, primary stakeholder databases, changes in the context, information on impacts, minutes of meetings... the list quickly becomes very long. Therefore, consider carefully what data and information needs to pass to whom for decision-making and for reporting.

2. **Who needs access to the data and information and when?**

   How the data is stored depends on who is to have access to the data and information and how often. Information to guide the project strategy is critical for managers (project staff and implementing partners), steering committees, primary stakeholder representatives and funding agencies. Data and information on operations is critical for fieldworkers, managers of project components and stakeholders.

   For data and information storage it is important to consider the skills of the users and the types of communication with which they are comfortable. Only store material where it will be used. This is particularly important with data on paper. Do not assume that all data needs to be copied, distributed and stored at all levels. Only keep the data where it is used. This usually means leaving the originals with the stakeholders who produced them.

3. **What type of data and information needs to be stored?**

   As computers become more generally available, and more and more people know how to use them, there is often a tendency to computerize most of the data. The decision whether or not to store data electronically should be considered carefully. If the data needs to be accessible to many people, or if one should be able to access it quickly in different locations, there is some advantage in electronic storage. But if it is unlikely that the data will be needed regularly in future, and if it is basically only needed in one location, then it may not be worth the effort of entering all of it in the computer.

It is important to store both paper data and electronic data systematically. For paper data, we often use maps, folders and boxes to store documents in a chronological order (i.e. according to the date the data was obtained or the information was produced), or in a thematic order (i.e. by subject). For electronic data, sub-directories and databases are used to avoid having all data and reports together in a way which finds it difficult to get access to the data or the information again.

A brief description of the main databases used in the Seila program is given below.

4. **How long do we need to keep the data and information? Regularly assess what information you need to keep and what can be discarded.**

   A data and information storage system will soon get congested and overflow if it is not updated regularly. Not all data and information must be kept forever. There are some documents which legally must be kept for a number of years (especially documents related to project finances and expenses). Some data and documents will also be needed throughout the project, or to enable you to make comparisons of change over time. This includes baseline data, summaries of progress in implementation and interim impact information. Some data and documents also have an interest beyond the project or program itself, and can be a source of useful information to researchers and evaluators even after the project has ended. But there is also much data and information that can be discarded. This is as true for archives of hard copies as it is for computerized data.

6.3 Databases in the Seila Program

There are several databases that play a key role in the Seila program:

- Commune Database
- Seila Contracts Database
- Project Information Database

6.3.1 Commune Database

The Commune Database (CDB), which started off as a Seila program database, is a national information system of the General Directorate of Planning in the Ministry of Planning. The CDB is managed by the Provincial Departments of Planning under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Planning.

The CDB includes standard data which is collected each year (normally in December-January) by village leaders in the entire country, through the village data book, with some additional commune level data. This data is entered and processed into provincial systems, and commune profiles are generated. Printouts of the commune profiles are sent to the districts and the communes, to be used as inputs in the local planning process, and copies of the electronic files are sent to the Ministry of Planning in Phnom Penh, for compilation and analysis at the national level.

The CDB serves four objectives:

1. **Planning** – The CDB provides reference information and reports for annual commune profiles, district profiles, province profiles, and special ad hoc planning requirements. The information includes all five planning areas defined in the Commune Law: social, economic, gender, environment, and administration/security. CDB planning products help to identify issues by comparing local areas with each other and with the larger region, and help prioritize assistance. Planning documents such as the Commune Profile are delivered back to communes for their use.

2. **Reporting and tracking changes** – The CDB program generates reports for all indicators collected through the village data book, as well as data from the 1998 census and from some ministries (education ; agriculture, forestry and fisheries ; and geography). The CDB produces reports that compare performance of indicators over time and allows to track changes. In addition to charts and tables, the CDB is geo-coded, which enables mapping of indicators at village or higher level.

3. **Resource allocation** – One of the main objectives of the CDB is help the Ministry of Planning to rank all communes in the country, to support the Commune Fund Board in the annual allocation of resources of the Commune Fund. The CDB-based poverty rank of the communes enables the government to allocate resources to the communes considering poverty as one element in the resource allocation formula. The poverty rank is based on 'proxy' indicators that were identified after extensive reviews of poverty studies in the country.

4. **Special requests** – Another objective of the CDB is to provide an easy to use village based information system for every province in Cambodia, which can be used to produce short reports, tables, charts and summary findings on request by provincial departments, NGOs and other development agencies. The CDB can also provide timely 'ground truthing' in support of more in-depth socio-economic studies.

The use of the CDB for M&E is primarily to support the preparation of reports, and to check if there are noticeable improvements of socio-economic conditions at the local level. The CDB is not really suited for impact assessment of the Seila program, because the basic unit in the CDB is the village and not households.

6.3.2 Seila Contracts Database

The Seila Contracts Database (SCD) is a database for managing Seila program contracts. There are three types of contracts:

1. **PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts.** These are the sub-contracts that relate to the Provincial Investment Fund investments. They are signed by the head of the Implementing Agency, and by the provincial Governor in his capacity as Chairman of the PRDC. For these contracts, the following gets stored in the SCD : detailed line-item budgets, planned activities, physical quantities of outputs, monthly workplans, and progress against outputs and expenditures. The outputs in the contracts are selected from a standard list of outputs, which also makes the link to activities in the Seila logframe.

2. **STF – PRDC contracts.** These contracts summarize the PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts, and add to it the program support costs for the operation of the ExCom units. The contract gets signed by the provincial Governor, as the Chairman of the PRCD, and by the Secretary-General of the STF. The SCD stores information on workplans, budgets and progress for each provincial contract.

3. **STF – Ministry contracts.** These contracts relate to the national level activities from the ministries or agencies that participate in the Seila program. These contracts are signed by the Seila program focal persons in those ministries or agencies, and by the STF Secretary-General. For these contracts, the database stores information on workplans, budgets and progress.

The SCD is useful for both the provincial and the national level.

Provincial level

The SCD helps the managers of the PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts:

- to prepare their annual Seila program contracts and contract amendments more easily
- to store the data on program workplans, budgets, progress and outputs
- to prepare quarterly and end-of-contract reports using the SCD

For the ExCom Contract Administration Unit, the benefits of the SCD are:

- All contract information relating to PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts is stored together and in the same format. This makes it easier to prepare summary reports on program implementation, and to analyze the data of the different contracts.
- The SCD makes it easier to prepare the STF – PRDC contract, and possible contract amendments.
- It helps the CAU to prepare quarterly and annual reports more easily.
- The SCD serves as a resource database for provincial level M&E.

National level

When the ministries and agencies that implement national level Seila program activities will use the SCD, the benefits for them will be similar as those listed for the PRDC – Implementing Agency contracts.

For the STFS Contract Administration Unit, the benefits of the SCD are:

- All contract information relating to all Seila program contracts is stored together and in the same format. This makes it easier to prepare summary reports on program implementation, and to analyze the data of the different contracts and of all Seila program implementers (at provincial and national level).
- It helps to prepare quarterly and annual reports for the Seila program overall.
- The SCD serves as a resource database for national level M&E.

6.3.3 Project Information Database

The Project Information Database (PID) is the database that will replace the Local Development Fund (LDF) database. It will be the key tool to monitor the commune projects implemented with Commune Fund resources. The PID will be maintained by the PRDC ExCom, and will provide a province-wide monitoring tool of Commune Fund activities.

The database will hold all relevant information on the Commune Fund projects and outputs that are implemented by commune councils, including financial information updated monthly from provincial Treasury reports on the payments that have been made. The PID will hold information on:

- **Project information**, such as: name and GIS of the commune; name of the project; objective of the project; number of beneficiaries; etc.
- **Operation and maintenance, and compliance criteria.** For example: estimated service life of project outputs; estimated periodic maintenance interval; estimated costs of annual routine and periodic maintenance; annual cost of operation; etc.
- **Contract information.** Such as: type of contract; name of contractor; price of contract; allocation of Commune Fund for contract; date of contract signature; planned schedule of payments; etc.
- **Outputs.** Such as: location of outputs (if possible with GPS coordinates); type of outputs; quantity of outputs; cost of outputs; etc.
- **Progress.** Such as: date of progress report; percentage completion; assessment of quality and workmanship; adherence to project design; etc.
- **Payments.** Such as: date of payments; amounts of payments.
- **Results.** Success rating of project outputs compared with project objective.

At provincial level, the ExCom Local Administration Unit will be responsible for maintaining the database in collaboration with the Technical Support Unit. LAU will prepare regular database progress reports on commune contract implementation for submission to the ExCom and the provincial governor. However, as much of the information in the database will be collected by the TSU, LAU may agree with TSU that TSU are responsible for data entry, when this is appropriate.

At national level, the PID will be maintained by the Department of Local Administration (DoLA) of MoI. DoLA will provide up to date copies of the database to STFS and to the Ministry of Rural Development.

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Section 7

Reporting and Use of Information

7.1 Introduction

There are many different audiences for M&E information. For example it might be necessary to report on progress of a project or program to managers, implementing agencies, steering committees, funding agencies, stakeholders. Funding agencies and managers need information on impact, while implementing partners need to understand problems in order to find solutions.

When presenting and communicating M&E information, keep the following in mind:

- **Know who the audience is**: who needs what kind of information? Is it needed for accountability, for action and decision-making or advocacy? What do you expect from the audience? What content and form is most appropriate?
- **Build communication into the M&E system**: plan it from the start, design information flows, and decide who is responsible for communicating what and when/how often.
- **Invest in communication**. Professional presentations and reports, capable people make all the difference.

7.2 General Guidelines for Writing Reports

Regular reporting of information is important to document the results of the project or program. Reporting the information in a meaningful way is essential to communicate the results of the data collection and analysis. A report should be clear, and describe succinctly what has been done, what methodology has been used, and how conclusions and recommendations have been reached.

The general guidelines for monitoring or evaluation reports are the same. What is often different is how the information gets presented. Monitoring information is often incorporated into periodic reports (e.g. monthly or quarterly progress report), whereas evaluation reports are often separate reports.

Some general points for writing monitoring and evaluation reports are as follows:

- **Keep it short.** Very long reports tend to be used less than short ones. Often people do not have time to read a long report.
- **Keep it clear.** The report is supposed to be read and understood. Avoid technical words and jargon. Use simple, clear and familiar words that everybody can understand.
- **Use short sentences.** Try not to use more than about 16 words in a sentence. Use positive sentences. Do not put a lot of different ideas in one sentence.
- **Plan spacing and layout.** For a clearer layout, break up the text into short paragraphs to help the reader. Present one main idea in each paragraph.
- **Use subheadings.** These help people to remember what they read, and make the report more interesting.

- **Emphasize key points.** Use larger letters, underlines, italics or bold text to emphasize key points in the report (but don't overdo it by combining too many different styles or sizes on one page). For example, this manual does use not more than two fonts and three character sizes.
- **Use lists and tables.** Information can be presented very clearly and concisely in a bulleted list or table. It also saves space and the reader's time.
- **Present findings in an easy-to-understand manner.** The information and findings are often complex and difficult to describe in words. Graphs and maps, besides lists and tables, can make key information more easily accessible.
- **Edit your report carefully.** If possible, always spell check the document. After you finish the report, leave it for a day. Take a fresh look at it the next day to do the final editing. It is also a good idea to ask colleagues (or a manager) to read a draft version and to give feedback.
- **Submit on time.** Ensure that the report is submitted on time, especially when the results are to be used for decision-making.

7.3 Reporting in the Seila Program

In the Seila program, a lot of reports are prepared by the provinces and ministries/agencies at the national level (both periodic reports and evaluation reports). Report writing involves a lot of work, and there is the risk that reporting gets done as a habit, for the sake of reporting, without it being clear what purpose the report serves.

Preparing reports takes time and energy, and this is time and energy which is taken away from the core activities of the Seila program. It is therefore important :

- **To limit the time needed to prepare reports, and to handle and analyze reports.** Reports should as much as possible be to-the-point, without long paragraphs of descriptive text, but still provide a minimum of essential information that needs to be shared with other people.
- **To make reporting as automatic and standardized as possible.** Part of this is to have standard sections of quantitative information generated automatically through the database programs. Using standard formats for narrative sections will also help to prepare these sections more quickly.
- **To avoid overlap in reporting.** The PRDC ExCom and the Seila Program Support Office work in collaboration. What one reports should normally not be repeated by the other (except perhaps for translations from Khmer to English).

The reporting and document preparation requirements at provincial and national level are discussed in the following sub-sections.

7.3.1 Implementing Agencies at Provincial Level

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Annual PRDC to implementing agency sub-contract	🗎[1] —	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Monthly report	🗎	🗎		🗎	🗎		🗎	🗎		🗎	🗎	
Quarterly report	—	—	🗎	—	—	🗎	—	—	🗎			
End of contract report (for implementing agency sub-contracts)	—	🗎[2]										

At the beginning of each year, each implementing agency that has a Seila program contract with the PRDC prepares an annual workplan and budget. This contract, the PRDC – Implementing Agency contract, is a contract between the implementing agency and the PRDC, and is prepared using the Seila Contracts Database (SCD). The standard format of this contract– and all other contracts mentioned in this sub-section – can be found in the SCD manual.

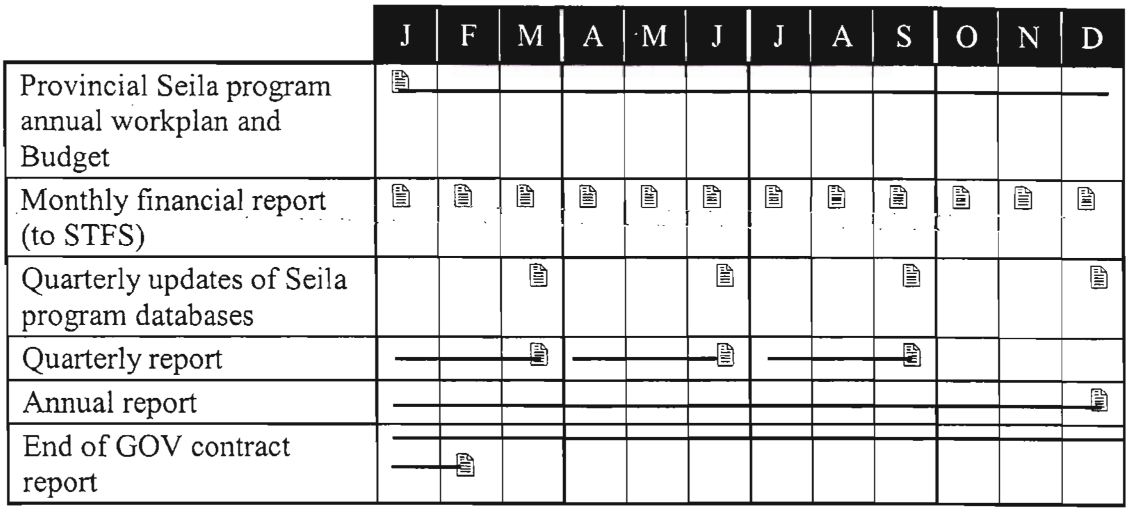
Every month, each implementing agency provides a report to the CAU in the PRDC ExCom. Part of this monthly report can be generated from the SCD. At the end of the quarter, the monthly report is replaced by a quarterly report (except for the 4th quarter when the end-of-contract report will provide this information).

All implementing agency contracts should, in principle, finish at the end of the year. It can however happen that some scheduled activities have not been fully completed by the end of December, and that it needs some extra time to finish them. In consultation with the CAU, and after assessment of the reasons for requesting the extension, a limited extension can be granted. At the end of the contract, an "End of Contract" report is prepared. Parts of this report can also be prepared through the SCD.

[1] The horizontal line indicates the period covered by the plan, contract or report. The line does not indicate the time needed to draft the plan or contract, or to prepare the report.

[2] The choice of February is only as an example, to indicate that the "end of contract" does not necessarily coincide with the end of the year.

7.3.2 PRDC ExCom



All the implementing agency contracts, together with the Seila program support activities, form the annual provincial Seila program. At the beginning of the year, each province prepares its Seila program annual workplan and budget and its GOV contract. This is a contract between the PRDC and the Seila Task Force, which incorporates all the provincial sub-contracts with the implementing agencies.

Each month, the ExCom Finance Unit sends information on the month's expenditures to the STFS, where the information is compiled for the whole Seila program.

Contract information is updated continuously, and at the end of each quarter, the ExCom CAU sends an update of the SCD to Phnom Penh. The PRDC also prepares a quarterly report, except for the 4th quarter, when an annual report is prepared that gives an assessment of the progress during the last year. The last report to be made is the end-of-contract report for the GOV contract.

It is recommended that each ExCom unit prepare its internal workplan and budget at the start of the year, to ensure that the key activities of that unit will be properly implemented, and that it will have the resources available to do so. Whether or not there should be regular internal reporting by each ExCom unit to the ExCom is a decision which rests with the ExCom.

7.3.3 Ministries/Agencies at the National Level

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ministry/Agency Seila program annual workplan and budget	📄	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Monthly financial report (to STFS)	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄
Quarterly report	—	—	📄	—	—	📄	—	—	📄			
End of contract report	—	📄	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The ministries or agencies at the national level that implement Seila program activities, prepare a ministry/agency Seila program annual workplan and budget. This is a contract between the ministry or the agency and the Seila Task Force.

If the ministries or agencies manage their Seila program finances independently of the Seila Task Force Secretariat, they prepare monthly finance reports for STFS.

Each quarter, a quarterly report is prepared, and at the end of the year an end-of-contract report.

7.3.4 Seila Task Force

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Seila program annual workplan and budget	📄	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Monthly financial report (to STF)	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄
Quarterly financial report (to Seila program donors)	—	—	📄	—	—	📄	—	—	📄	—	—	📄
Quarterly report	—	—	📄	—	—	📄	—	—	📄			
Six-monthly report (to the Council of Ministers)	—	—	—	—	—	📄	—	—	—	—	—	📄
Annual report	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	📄

The Seila Task Force – through its Secretariat – prepares the overall Seila program annual workplan and budget. This document describes what the Seila program will do in the coming year to move towards the achievement of its objectives, and how the provinces and the Seila program implementers at the national level take part in this.

Every month, STFS prepares a financial report for the STF, and every quarter a financial progress report is submitted to the Seila program donors.

A more descriptive account of progress in Seila program implementation is given in the quarterly reports, with a general overview in the annual report. The Seila Program 2001-2005 document also foresees a six-monthly report to the Council of Ministers.

7.3.5 Frequency of Reporting for Seila Program Indicators

In Section 3 and Section 4, the key indicators to monitor the performance of the Seila program at national and provincial level have been listed. Reporting on changes for these indicators is done periodically, but the frequency of such reporting is not the same for all indicators. The table on the next page indicates for which indicators the reporting is done quarterly, and for which ones annually. The table also indicates the frequency with which the data gets collected or updated at national and/or provincial level.

Frequency of Data Collection and Reporting for Seila Program Indicators

Key Indicators	Level: Nat	Level: Prov	Specified Means of Verification	Frequency of data collection	Frequency of reporting for Seila program
Goal: Contributed to poverty alleviation through good governance					
1 Reduction of national poverty level 2 Decreased disparity between poverty levels of men and women			The program will not attempt to specifically monitor or evaluate its' contribution to poverty alleviation. Reduction of poverty levels in Cambodia will be monitored and evaluated by other parties.		
Objective: To institute decentralized and deconcentrated systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development					
1 Seila program experience in decentralisation and deconcentration reflected in legal instruments			Laws, Prakas, Decrees, Subdecrees, Guidelines, etc	Continuous	Quarterly
2 Systems for decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation of Commune Fund projects, and reporting are operational in all communes			National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	Monthly update	Quarterly
			Commune monitoring spreadsheet in each province	Monthly update	
3 Systems and structures in support of decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and reporting are operational in all provinces			Reports from ministries on implementation of decentralisation	Monthly, quarterly, annual	Quarterly
			Reports from provincial agencies	Monthly, quarterly, annual	
4 Annual increase in demand responsiveness from Temporary Agreements to priorities identified in the Commune Development Plans			National level summary of district integration results	Once a year, Nov-Dec	Annual
			District integration results	Once a year, Nov-Dec	
5 Increase in number of Temporary Agreements signed by departments and NGOs with communes at District Integration Workshops			National level summary of district integration results	Once a year, Nov-Dec	Annual
			District integration results	Once a year, Nov-Dec	

Key Indicators	Level		Specified Means of Verification	Frequency of data collection	Frequency of reporting for Seila program
	Nat	Prov			
6 Increase in number of women in leadership positions at commune and provincial level			National level summary of women commune councilors and PBC members	Yearly, in commune annual report	Annual
			Summary of women in management structure at national and provincial levels	Yearly, in annual PRDC report	
			Number of women commune councilors and PBC members	Yearly, in commune annual report	
			Number of women in management structure at provincial levels	Yearly, in annual PRDC report	
7 National budget resources allocated to the Commune Fund			MEF decision on RGC contribution to Commune Fund	Yearly	Annual
8 Average per-capita transfers through the Commune Fund			Commune Fund allocation and commune population figures	Yearly	Annual
9 National budget resources allocated to the provinces for capital and recurrent budgets to implement decentralisation and deconcentration			MEF decision on RGC contribution in support of provincial investments through deconcentration	If approved, yearly	Annual
10 Average per-capita transfers through the PIF, by province			PIF allocation and provincial population figures	Yearly	Annual
11 Amount of resources managed annually by provincial authorities using deconcentrated management systems designed by the Seila program			Reports from MEF and donors	Yearly	Annual
			Reports from provincial authorities	Yearly	
12 Amount of own-source revenue generated by communes and provinces			MEF records and national level summary of annual finance reports of provinces and communes	Yearly	Annual
			Annual finance reports from communes and provinces	Yearly	

Key Indicators	Level		Specified Means of Verification	Frequency of data collection	Frequency of reporting for Seila program
	Nat	Prov			
Output 1: Related institutions at all levels strengthened and effectively implementing the decentralized and deconcentrated systems					
1 CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets prepared in all communes by the last quarter of each year			National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	Monthly update	Annual
			Commune monitoring spreadsheet in each province	Monthly update	
2 Percentage of CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets that pass legality checks by provincial Governor			National level summary of provincial assessment reports of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets	Yearly	Annual
			Provincial assessment reports of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets	Yearly	
3. All provinces produce 5 year PDP and 3 year rolling PIP			PDP and PIP documents	PDP every 5 years, PIP updated every year	Annual
4. Number of commune councilors / staff trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training			National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	Monthly update	Quarterly
			Training reports	Occasional	
			Commune monitoring spreadsheet in each province	Monthly update	
			Commune reports	Monthly	
			Training reports	Occasional	
5. Number of men and women at district and provincial level, trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training			Seila Contracts Database	Monthly update	Quarterly
			Training reports	Occasional	
			Seila Contracts Database	Monthly update	
			Training reports	Occasional	
6 Number of men and women at provincial and district levels providing support to communes			National level summary of provincial support staffing levels	Annual update	Annual
			Provincial support staffing levels	Quarterly update	

Key Indicators	Level		Specified Means of Verification	Frequency of data collection	Frequency of reporting for Seila program
	Nat	Prov			
7 Frequency of sub-national support provided to communes			Summary of POLA annual reports	Yearly	Annual
			POLA annual report and commune monthly and annual reports	Monthly (commune), annual (province)	
			Records of visits and support activities by PRDC ExCom Unit staff	Monthly	
8 Resources for gender mainstreaming mobilized at national, provincial and commune level			Seila annual workplan and budget	Yearly	Annual
			Project Information Database	Quarterly update	
			Provincial Seila annual workplans and budgets	Yearly	
			Project Information Database	Monthly update	
9 Resources for NREM mobilized at national, provincial and commune level			Seila annual workplan and budget	Yearly	Annual
			Project Information Database	Quarterly update	
			Provincial Seila annual workplans and budgets	Yearly	
			Project Information Database	Monthly update	
10 Number and status of ministry contracts under implementation			Seila Contracts Database	Quarterly update	Quarterly
Output 2: Efficient and effective services and investments provided for local development					
1. Number and status of Commune Fund contracts/projects under implementation, in accordance with CDPs			Project Information Database	Quarterly update	Quarterly
			Project Information Database	Monthly update	
2 Percentage of final payments to contractors for Commune Fund projects within 12 months of commune budget approval			Project Information Database	Quaerterly update	Annual
			Project Information Database	Monthly update	
3 Impact assessment of a sample of Commune Fund projects			Socio-economic baseline + follow-up surveys	2003 2004, 2006	Annual
4 Impact assessment of decentralisation on livelihoods, gender and vulnerability			Socio-economic baseline + follow-up surveys	2003 2004, 2006	When implemented

Key Indicators	Level		Specified Means of Verification	Frequency of data collection	Frequency of reporting for Seila program
	Nat	Prov			
5 Percentage of Commune Fund projects of satisfactory technical quality standards			Technical audit	Yearly	Annual
			Technical audit	Yearly	
6 Increased perception of appropriateness, relevance and quality of services and investments for Commune Fund and PIF funded projects (for both men and women)			Client satisfaction survey	2004, 2005	Annual
			Implementing Agency - PRDC contract evaluations	Yearly	
7 Number and status of provincial contracts under implementation			Seila Contracts Database	Quarterly update	Quarterly
			Seila Contracts Database	Monthly update	
Output 3: Contributed to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation					
1 Effectiveness of systems, structures and procedures continuously improved through reviews and evaluations			Periodic in-depth review of the planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and management systems	At least once a year	Annual
2 National level workshops focusing on periodic reviews of RGC systems for decentralization and deconcentration, and Seila program systems			Workshop reports	At least once a year	Annual
3 Lessons from the Seila program for decentralisation and deconcentration contributes to national policy making			Analysis of reports, announcements, ministry records and policy statements, government officials' speeches	Continuous	Annual
4. Seila program experience with cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, NREM and gender mainstreaming) reflected in policy and practices			Statements, meeting reports, evaluation studies	Occasional	Annual
5. Strategic dialogue on decentralization and deconcentration informed by Seila program experience			Strategic study reports	2003, 2004, 2005	Annual
			Seila Forum reports	At least once a year	
6 Knowledge, attitudes, practices and belief regarding good local governance improved			KAP & beliefs survey	2004, 2006	When implemented

7.4 Use of Information and Decision-Making

A last, and very important step, is to use the information from monitoring and evaluation to improve the performance of projects and of the Seila program overall. Based on the information, decisions have to be made about meeting the targets specified in the plan, or how to deal with issues that have arisen. There may have been delays in implementation, some objectives may not be as relevant as considered when the plans were made, or there are other problems.

In each case, someone will have to make a decision which may affect impact and effectiveness of the project or the Seila program. What can be done to solve the identified problem(s)? What recommendations should be made for the continuation of the project? Making decisions is not always easy, but there are certain things one can do that can help with this:

- clearly identify the problem and its causes
- collect and organize all relevant information in a systematic way
- identify alternative solutions to solve the problem(s)
- evaluate the alternative solutions to solve the problem(s)

Making good quality decisions is a ***process***, a series of stages that leads to the final point of making a choice out of possible options. The basic steps in the process are outlined in the table on the next page. Each stage is described at the top; main questions to guide the process, and tools to help are listed below each stage.

1. **Checking data against evaluation criteria.** When carrying out an evaluation, the data that has been collected should allow to answer (at least) the following questions:

   - Is the project effective? (did it do what it said it would do?)
   - Is the project efficient? (did it produce its outputs at a reasonable cost?)
   - Is the project sustainable?
   - Were there any unforeseen effects? (positive or negative)
   - Are the initial design considerations (assumptions) still valid?
   - Is the current project the best way to proceed?
   - What was the impact on the environment?
   - Was it sensitive to issues related to gender?

   In monitoring, this step is often much easier to complete. Monitoring reports will indicate immediate problems with the implementation of activities, and one may be able to go straight to step 2 (or even step 3).

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Purpose	Check data against criteria	Identify key issues, and determine cause	Generate alternative solutions	Identify criteria Make a choice	Implement the solution Evaluate result
Key Questions	Is it… • effective? • efficient? • sustainable? • gender sensitive? What are… • Impacts on the environment? • unforeseen effects?	WHY?? (What is the cause of the issues?)	What are the options?	• Costs • Feasibility • Effectiveness • Time • Participation • … (other criteria)	Does this solve the problem?
Tools	• SWOT Analysis • Trend Analysis • KAP & Beliefs Analysis • Ranking/Scoring • Cost/Benefit Analysis	• Problem Tree • "But Why?" Exercise	• Brainstorm	• Brainstorm • Scoring • Ranking	• Monitoring • Data Collection

2. **Identify key issues and determine probable causes.** Having checked the data against a number of clear criteria often leads to a better insight about particular issues. Decide which issues are the real important ones and analyze them further. Failing to identify the true cause of any key issues often leads to poor decisions about a solution, or even to inappropriate conclusions.

   Finding the cause sometimes means collecting more information. Some problems will have a very clear cause. Other problems will not be so easy to pin down, and one may have to formulate further questions, or collect further facts, ideas and opinions from project staff and other people. Creating a 'problem tree' can be a helpful tool in analyzing the cause of certain issues.

   The result of steps 1 and 2 should be reported in the evaluation report, in the chapter with 'Conclusions'.

3. **Generate alternative solutions.** Once the cause of an issue is established, explore alternative solutions or choices. Have a true overview of the available information and how the different pieces relate to each other, and use experience, creativity, and insight to generate a list of (all possible) options, for example by brainstorming.

   Taking the time to analyze the problem, and thinking of different solutions, increases the chances of finding a good solution that really solves the problem once and for all. This is much more effective and efficient in the long run.

4. **Identify criteria and make a choice.** Of the possible choices, find out which is the best one. List what is good and bad about each possible option, based on a number of criteria that are the same for each option, such as costs, ease of implementation or degree to which project beneficiaries can participate in it. Be consistent for each option.

   Check technical solutions on their feasibility (in addition to other criteria which may be important). In evaluation, rating the usefulness of recommendations is often (but not always) left to the project implementer, not the evaluator. In monitoring, it is important to follow the process to its end, so decisions are made about immediate improvements to project implementation.

   Both steps 3 and 4 can be done very well with a larger team of people. Following a participatory process does not only lead to solutions that everyone supports, but can also lead to much better solutions (although this depends on the nature of the problem). Two people know more than one, and ten know more than two. So it is often a good idea to ask team members to participate if there is an important decision to make. Generating ideas by brainstorming can be a great way to identify possible options and selection criteria.

   The results of steps 3 and 4 form the recommendations for the project. They should be reported in the last chapter of the evaluation report. After completing step 4, the evaluation is complete.

5. **Implement and evaluate the decision.** Checking whether the recommendations were effective in solving the problem is done through the normal monitoring process (and is not part of the project evaluation).

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Annex 1

Seila Program Hierarchy of Objectives, Indicators and Means of Verification

Hierarchy of Objectives	Key Indicators	Level		Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
		Nat	Prov			
Goal: Contributed to poverty alleviation through good governance	1 Reduction of national poverty level			The program will not attempt to specifically monitor or evaluate its' contribution to poverty alleviation. Reduction of poverty levels in Cambodia will be monitored and evaluated by other parties.		
	2 Decreased disparity between poverty levels of men and women					
Objective: To institute decentralized and deconcentrated systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development	1 Seila program experience in decentralisation and deconcentration reflected in legal instruments			Laws, Prakas, Decrees, Subdecrees, Guidelines, etc	STFS	Collect and document Seila involvement
	2 Systems for decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation of Commune Fund projects, and reporting are operational in all communes			National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet by each province. National summary through linked spreadsheets.
				Commune monitoring spreadsheet in each province	POLA	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet in each province
	3 Systems and structures in support of decentralized planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and reporting are operational in all provinces			Reports from ministries on implementation of decentralisation	PMEU (based on inputs from MoP, MEF, MoI, MRD, NCSC)	Annual reports, occasional reports.
				Reports from provincial agencies	Provincial departments and ExCom units	Assessments and reports
	4 Annual increase in demand responsiveness from Temporary Agreements to priorities identified in the Commune Development Plans			National level summary of district integration results	PMEU	Compilation of district integration results of all provinces
				District integration results	Department of Planning	Percentage of commune requests that receive a positive respons
	5 Increase in number of Temporary Agreements signed by departments and NGOs with communes at District Integration Workshops			National level summary of district integration results	PMEU	Compilation of district integration results of all provinces
				District integration results	Department of Planning	Number of TAs signed with the communes
	6 Increase in number of women in leadership positions at commune and provincial level			National level summary of women commune councilors and PBC members	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Compilation of data collected in all provinces
				Summary of women in management structure at national and provincial levels	POU	Seila program staffing records
				Number of women commune councilors and PBC members	POLA	From commune reports and information gathered by DFTs
				Number of women in management structure at provincial levels	PRDC ExCom CAU and FU	Seila program staffing records

Hierarchy of Objectives	Key Indicators	Level		Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
		Nat	Prov			
	7 National budget resources allocated to the Commune Fund			MEF decision on RGC contribution to Commune Fund	MEF, Commune Fund Board	Annual announcement of RGC contribution to Commune Fund
	8 Average per-capita transfers through the Commune Fund			Commune Fund allocation and commune population figures	MEF and MoP	Ratio of total Commune Fund allocation and total population
	9 National budget resources allocated to the provinces for capital and recurrent budgets to implement decentralisation and deconcentration			MEF decision on RGC contribution in support of provincial investments through deconcentration	MEF	Announcement by MEF
	10 Average per-capita transfers through the PIF, by province			PIF allocation and provincial population figures	POU	Ratio of PIF and population per province
	11 Amount of resources managed annually by provincial authorities using deconcentrated management systems designed by the Seila program			Reports from MEF and donors	MEF, donors	Announcements, records and communications
				Reports from provincial authorities	Provincial departments	Announcements, records and communications
	12 Amount of own-source revenue generated by communes and provinces			MEF records and national level summary of annual finance reports of provinces and communes	MEF, provincial authorities	Announcements, records and communications
				Annual finance reports from communes and provinces	Treasury, provincial departments	Annual reports, announce-ments, records and communications
Output 1: Related institutions at all levels strengthened and effectively implementing the decentralized and deconcentrated systems	1 CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets prepared in all communes by the last quarter of each year			National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet by each province. National summary through linked spreadsheets.
				Commune monitoring spreadsheet in each province	POLA	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet in each province
	2 Percentage of CDPs and/or CIPs and annual budgets that pass legality checks by provincial Governor			National level summary of provincial assessment reports of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	Assessment of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets
				Provincial assessment reports of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets	POLA, PDoEF	Assessment of CDPs/CIPs and commune budgets
	3. All provinces produce 5 year PDP and 3 year rolling PIP			PDP and PIP documents	PDoP	Assessment of planning documents

Hierarchy of Objectives	Key Indicators	Level		Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
		Nat	Prov			
	4. Number of commune councilors / staff trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training			National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	National level summary of commune monitoring spreadsheets	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)
				Training reports	Training reports	POU (based on inputs from MoP, MEF, MoI, MRD, NCSC)
				Commune monitoring spreadsheet in each province	POLA	Data is collected and entered into a spreadsheet in each province
				Commune reports	POLA	Section on capacity building in monthly and annual commune reports
				Training reports	POLA, provincial departments, PRDC ExCom units	Reports
	5. Number of men and women at district and provincial level, trained in concepts, systems and procedures, and extent of the training			Seila Contracts Database	POU	See SCD manual
				Training reports	POU (based on inputs from MoP, MEF, MoI, MRD, NCSC)	Reports
				Seila Contracts Database	PRDC ExCom CAU	See SCD manual
				Training reports	POLA, provincial departments, PRDC ExCom units	Reports
	6 Number of men and women at provincial and district levels providing support to communes			National level summary of provincial support staffing levels	POU	Staffing records
				Provincial support staffing levels	ExCom Units	Staffing records
	7 Frequency of sub-national support provided to communes			Summary of POLA annual reports	DoLA (based on inputs from POLA)	POLA annual reports
				POLA annual report and commune monthly and annual reports	POLA	Section on supporting visits to communes
				Records of visits and support activities by PRDC ExCom Unit staff	PRDC ExCom Units	Activity reports

Hierarchy of Objectives	Key Indicators	Level		Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
		Nat	Prov			
	8 Resources for gender mainstreaming mobilized at national, provincial and commune level			Seila annual workplan and budget	POU	Prepared as per STF process and format
				Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
				Provincial Seila annual workplans and budgets	PRDC	Prepared as per STF process and format
				Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
	9 Resources for NREM mobilized at national, provincial and commune level			Seila annual workplan and budget	POU	Prepared as per STF process and format
				Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
				Provincial Seila annual workplans and budgets	PRDC	Prepared as per STF process and format
				Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
	10 Number and status of ministry contracts under implementation			Seila Contracts Database	POU	See SCD manual
Output 2: Efficient and effective services and investments provided for local development	1. Number and status of Commune Fund contracts/projects under implementation, in accordance with CDPs			Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
				Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
	2 Percentage of final payments to contractors for Commune Fund projects within 12 months of commune budget approval			Project Information Database	POU (based on data provided by Commune Councils, and data entered into PID by ExCom TSU)	See PID manual
				Project Information Database	PRDC ExCom TSU	See PID manual
	3 Impact assessment of a sample of Commune Fund projects			Socio-economic baseline + follow-up surveys	PMEU	Reports of surveys

Hierarchy of Objectives	Key Indicators	Level Nat	Level Prov	Specified MoV	Who Responsible	Method
	4 Impact assessment of decentralisation on livelihoods, gender and vulnerability			Socio-economic baseline + follow-up surveys	PMEU	Reports of surveys
	5 Percentage of Commune Fund projects of satisfactory technical quality standards			Technical audit	STFS	See project implementation manual
				Technical audit	PRDC ExCom TSU	See project implementation manual
	6 Increased perception of appropriateness, relevance and quality of services and investments for Commune Fund and PIF funded projects (for both			Client satisfaction survey	PMEU	To be determined
				Implementing Agency - PRDC contract evaluations	Implementing agencies and PRDC ExCom CAU	End-of-contract evaluations
	7 Number and status of provincial contracts under implementation			Seila Contracts Database	POU	See SCD manual
				Seila Contracts Database	PRDC ExCom CAU	See SCD manual
Output 3: Contributed to the improvement of policy and regulations for decentralization, deconcentration and poverty alleviation	1 Effectiveness of systems, structures and procedures continuously improved through reviews and evaluations			Periodic in-depth review of the planning, budgeting, procurement and implementation, and management systems	STFS	Assessment and analysis of systems
	2 National level workshops focusing on periodic reviews of RGC systems for decentralization and deconcentration, and Seila program systems			Workshop reports	STFS	Analysis of reports
	3 Lessons from the Seila program for decentralisation and deconcentration contributes to national policy making			Analysis of reports, announcements, ministry records and policy statements, government officials' speeches	PMEU	Analysis of documents
	4. Seila program experience with cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, NREM and gender mainstreaming) reflected in policy and practices			Statements, meeting reports, evaluation studies	PMEU	Reviews
	5. Strategic dialogue on decentralization and deconcentration informed by Seila			Strategic study reports	PMEU	Analysis of reports
				Seila Forum reports	STFS	Analysis of reports
	6 Knowledge, attitudes, practices and belief regarding good local governance improved			KAP & beliefs survey	PMEU	Study/survey