CBLD-9

Target Setting Guidance

This resource provides USAID OUs with guidance on setting targets for the CBLD-9 indicator. Performance indicator targets are useful to determine whether progress is being made according to expectations originally envisioned. Reflecting on progress toward and deviations from targets contributes to learning and adaptation to improve programming. ADS 201 states that targets should be "ambitious but achievable," and this guide provides practical guidance to strike that balance in target setting. This resource, which provides guidance on setting activity-level targets, may be most helpful when used in conjunction with the CBLD-9 Workbook for Missions, which helps aggregate activity-level targets into higher-level OU targets for PPR reporting.

The CBLD-9 Indicator

CBLD-9 is a Standard Foreign Assistance Indicator that measures whether USG-funded capacity development efforts at the organizational level have led to improved organizational performance. *Stated differently, CBLD-9 does not measure unexercised capacity, but rather improved performance that advances an organization's achievement of its own mission.* Engagement with assisted organizations must meet specific criteria to be counted under this indicator. These criteria include consulting stakeholders on performance improvement priorities, designing solutions to fill the identified gaps, and systematically measuring changes in performance. OUs should review the CBLD-9 Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) for details on the indicator's requirements.

Setting OU-Wide Targets

This target setting guidance requires consideration of individual activities. In the annual PPR, OUs should report targets for the OU as a whole. If your OU has more than one activity working toward organizational performance improvement, you should consider each activity in turn. Set numerator and denominator targets for each applicable activity, then sum the numerators for all activities, and the denominators for all activities, to report overall OU-wide targets for numerator, denominator and parent indicator (numerator/denominator) in the PPR. The CBLD-9 Worksheet for Missions may be helpful in aggregating activity-level targets to generate an OU-wide target.

To illustrate, suppose your Mission has three activities working on organizational performance improvement.

- You determine that the first activity, which works to strengthen farmer cooperatives, will assist 30 cooperatives according to the CBLD-9 process, and 10 will demonstrate improved performance within the fiscal year. The numerator is 10 and the denominator is 30.

- You determine that the second activity, which aims to equip CSOs for advocacy activities, will assist 15 CSOs according to the CBLD-9 process, and two will show improved performance within the fiscal year. The numerator is 2 and the denominator is 15.
- You determine that the third activity, which works with the Ministry of Health to streamline administrative processes according to the CBLD-9 process, will achieve measured improvement in Ministry of Health processes within the fiscal year. The numerator is 1 and the denominator is 1.

Tallying the numerators and denominators for each activity, the OU-wide numerator is 13 organizations (10 + 2 + 1) and the OU-wide denominator is 46 (30 + 15 + 1). The OU-wide parent indicator target is therefore 13 divided by 46, or 28.3%. The CBLD-9 Worksheet for Missions will generate this figure automatically based on your inputs for each assisted organization!

Considerations for Target-Setting at the Activity Level

Target setting should be informed by thoughtful consideration of program logic, resource levels, context and past performance of related programming. The table below provides questions and considerations for informing activity targets, as well as potential data sources. Keep in mind that new or in-depth analyses are usually not required. Rather, you should draw on available data and knowledgeable stakeholders to think through various factors that may impact implementation and achievement of outcomes.

	CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION	POTENTIAL DATA SOURCES
PROGRAM LOGIC	Start with the theory of change. What are the steps involved from intervention to outcome (i.e. improved performance)? What assumptions could deter the activity from achieving its intended outcome of improved organizational performance? If you don't yet have a theory of change, consider the implicit program logic and discuss with partners the pathway through which you expect your activity to result in improved organizational performance.	- Activity theory of change (including logic model or results framework) - Solicitation scope of work
CONTEXT	Consider the context. You might discuss: - Demand for organizational performance improvement support among organizations that may participate in the activity - Buy-in or competing interests of important stakeholders, both within and outside USAID - Other priorities (within USAID, among government counterparts) competing for attention - Political or economic realities that may interfere Consider bringing in local stakeholders for these discussions, as they can likely illuminate additional contextual factors that may affect implementation. This can be done in a variety of formats, from informal interviews to structured workshops.	- CDCS - Project and activity design documents - Sector assessments - Gender assessments, youth assessments, etc - Consultations with local stakeholders (e.g. partner CSOs, local training providers, and possibly the organizations receiving assistance)

	CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION	POTENTIAL DATA SOURCES
RESOURCES	In light of your program logic (or theory of change), consider the activity timeline and resources, including budget and personnel. ● How many organizations is it possible to assist within these constraints? How will this vary over the life of the activity? ● What level of performance improvement support will be possible within these constraints? Is longer-term, in-depth support to organizations feasible within these resource constraints? The denominator under CBLD-9 is a count of the number of organizations receiving performance improvement support. Resource constraints (along with local demand for assistance) are key factors in determining how many organizations your OU is likely to support. The numerator under CBLD-9 is a count of organizations with improved performance. Consider how the depth of engagement with assisted organizations will impact the likelihood that they demonstrate improved performance, keeping in mind that more intensive engagement often demands more resources.	● Work plan ● Activity budget ● Cost Analyses (see Cost Analysis guidance from USAID's Office of Education to dig deeper!) ● Work plans and budgets of other, similar activities (current or from the recent past) ● Mission staffing patterns
PAST PERFORMANCE	Consider the performance of similar, past activities in your country of work. Examine the timeframes within which they achieved results, and note challenges they faced that may also affect your activity. ***Important:*** A past activity does not have to be identical to current activities to offer useful lessons. However, you should pay special attention to differences in contexts, target groups, Mission staff, activity designs and objectives, budget, and other factors that may lead your activity to have different results. Remember that this indicator measures organizational performance improvement (not unused capacity), so activity objectives may be distinct from past capacity development activities.	Documents from past, similar activities in country, including: ● Performance reports (quarterly, annual, final) ● Evaluations ● MEL plans/ performance indicator data You may also consider documentation from similar activities from different country contexts, being careful to consider their results in the context of your operating environment. IPs may be able to advise on the achievements from their past programs.
DATA VALIDITY	Consider whether your targets are realistic in light of the process required to count organizations toward the CBLD-9 indicator (as listed in the PIRS). Consult with experts who can advise on the feasibility of targets based on theory or experience. Such consultation should complement, not replace, consideration of program logic, context, implementation plans and resources, and review of past, similar activities. These experts can serve a helpful "validation" or "fine tuning" role.	Structured or informal discussions with individuals who understand your program or context. This may include: ● Partner institutions in-country (e.g. host government ministry personnel) ● Mission or Washington-based sector technical officers ● Washington-based CBLD-9 resource group (email CBLDSupport@usaid.gov) ● Implementing partner staff

Additional Considerations

- Involve local stakeholders to the extent possible. A collaborative target setting process will not only help with setting ambitious-yet-achievable targets - it will also help build buy-in so that the targets are useful! You might consider including partner government representatives, local CSOs, or organizations receiving assistance. Do note that engaging stakeholders takes time. Whether you opt to schedule informal interviews, or pursue a more involved method such as a full-day workshop for multiple stakeholders, it is important to plan early.
- Don't assume that all assisted organizations will show improved performance immediately, or at the same time. Progress in organizational performance improvement is not always linear. Moving backward during a period of growth is extremely common as new ways of working are adopted. Thinking through your program logic - that is, the changes required to move from intervention to outcome - can help you estimate when you expect an assisted organization to demonstrate improved performance.
- An organization may not complete the full CBLD-9 required process within the fiscal year. That's okay! In this case, simply omit the organization from both numerator and denominator.
- Involve implementing partners in target setting. These partners usually have access to useful data and have in-depth knowledge of the planned activities. If tasking IPs with suggesting initial targets, consider asking for documentation of their activities to engage other stakeholders in the target setting process.
- Throughout the year, compare quarterly data to your targets to assess whether you're on track. This can help you identify new issues affecting implementation early, rather than waiting for the next annual reporting period.
- Meeting targets is not the only way to measure performance. While they are a helpful starting point for assessing progress, they should prompt deeper examination of programmatic and contextual factors that contributed to achieving - or missing - the target. Such inquiries contribute to learning about best practices and pitfalls in capacity strengthening work! To read more about why targets are important, check out the Program Cycle Monitoring Toolkit resource on Performance Indicator Targets.

The CBLD-9 Resource Group is available for any questions. Email CBLDSupport@usaid.gov.

Additional Resources

Program Cycle Monitoring Toolkit: Performance Indicator Targets (USAID Learning Lab)
Webinar: Setting Performance Monitoring Targets (ProgramNet)