

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Guidance Notes

Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase 2 (SCF2)

SCF2 MEL Guidance Notes 2022-05

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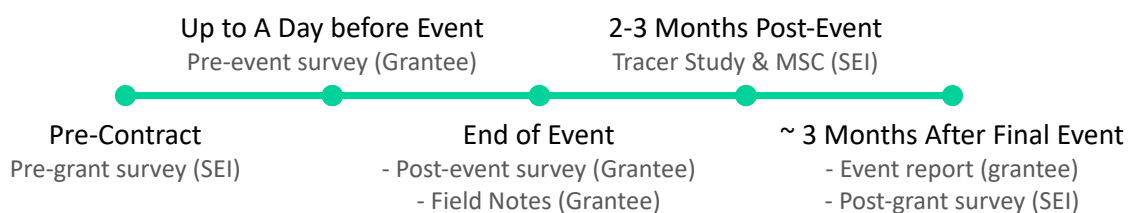
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Results Measurement Design of the Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase 2

The Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase 2 (SCF2) measures the expected outcomes of every funded event according to the concept note and terms of reference. To do so, SCF2 implements two layers of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) i.e., at the event- and programme-levels. The event-level MEL is designed and implemented by the partners, and it is tailored according to the indicators stated in the objectives of the proposed regional event(s). Data gathering tools for event-level evaluation include pre- and post-event surveys and field notes. The selection of the event-level MEL tools will depend on the type and design of the proposed event(s).

Meanwhile, programme level evaluation will be mainly performed by SEI according to the pre-defined results measurement framework and theory of change. The SCF2 programme employs pre- and post-grant surveys, tracer study, and the Most Significant Change (MSC) stories that will be managed and administered independently by SEI. To complement these datasets, the SCF2 team will perform programme-level analysis of the event surveys and field notes. The following figure provides an overview of results measurement timeline of SCF2-funded events.

Figure 1: Results Measurement Timeline of SCF2-Funded Events



SEI has developed survey templates containing potential list of questions which could be used by the partners to develop their MEL tools. It is expected that partners incorporate program level evaluation in their event level MEL and share the evaluation data to SEI with full data protection compliance.

Tools for Event-Level Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

As mentioned, event-level MEL must incorporate a combination of three data gathering tools as needed and suggested by the SCF2’s MEL focal point, namely pre-event survey, post-event survey, and field notes. Pre-event survey will provide baseline data which could be compared with the post-event survey data to reduce the bias of the claimed outcome(s) resulting from the event. Although it is optional, however, all participants are strongly encouraged to participate in the surveys. Partners shall therefore send appropriate information and reminders to nudge the participants to respond to the surveys.

SEI has provided the templates for these MEL tools that the partners can use and tailor according to the event’s topics. Note that partners must share the final questionnaires with SEI along with the survey data.

Selecting the Appropriate Tools

It is the responsibility of the partners to select, design, and implement appropriate MEL tools for their respective events, following the suggestion from the SCF2’s MEL focal point. All planned events shall be monitored and evaluated regardless of how they are conducted. In all instances, partners are advised to consult with the MEL focal point to co-design the MEL tools.

Table 1: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Tools Assessment

Event’s Type	Description	Event Surveys	Field Notes
Knowledge Sharing	Events that are designed to <u>share</u> perspectives from diverse stakeholders on the thematic topic and intersectional gender and human rights.	√	
Stakeholder Consultation or Engagement	Events that are designed to <u>understand</u> the perspective of the stakeholders on the ground e.g., community discussions, workshops with policymakers, etc.		√

The above table provides a simple assessment for the partners to determine which MEL tools are appropriate for the proposed events. Event surveys (pre- and post-event) and field notes are the minimum MEL requirements. The SCF2 team highly recommends partners to incorporate pre- and post-event surveys into at least one of their proposed events as it will make the programme-level evaluation on knowledge transfer from SCF2 events possible. The SCF2 team has a centralised online survey mechanism using Google Form as the platform, in which partners will receive invitations to these forms.

In addition, SEI will perform a tracer study and MSC stories gathering using an online form that the partners will need to distribute it to the participants.

Pre-Event Survey

SUMMARY

What	: Short survey administered before the event commences which utilises restricted and open-ended answers.
Who	: All participants who will attend the event.
Why	: To construct baseline information, accommodate participants' expectations and needs.
When	: During registration to increase response rate or up to a few days prior to the event.
How	: Online form (recommended), survey form in word document (online event) or print (offline event). Please see survey template.

Pre-event survey becomes an important first step in organising an event as it allows the organisers to obtain baseline information. Having such information prior to an event is required whenever possible as it will improve the reliability of the event evaluation results. To increase the participation rate, online survey using open source or paid platforms, such as [Google Forms](#), [Survey Monkey](#), and [Microsoft Forms](#), is advised. The SCF2 team has prepared survey templates in word and Google form formats for the partners to use. The MEL focal point of the SCF2 team will reach out with the details.

The partners are responsible for sending the survey forms to the participants prior to the event. To increase the response rate, partners may ask the participants to fill out the surveys when registering for the event. It is also useful to keep the questionnaire short, allowing the participants to complete it in less than ten minutes.

It is advised that the pre-event survey comprises of six sections, namely (i) consent form; (ii) screening questions; (iii) personal information; (iv) personal capacity; (v) organisation's capacity; and (vi) expectations.

- **Consent Form:** Always ask for consent from the participants in the beginning of the survey, which specifies the purpose of the survey and how we plan to manage and analyse the data. Please refer to Section 4.1 and Annex D2 for details.
- **Personal Information:** Basic information, such as name, affiliation, gender, and other information that are deemed relevant. Please note that personal data such as name and affiliation are only visible to organisers, but not to SEI.
- **Personal Capacity:** This should include questions that assess respondent's personal capacity or prior knowledge related to the event's topic. The partners can simply develop questions based on the session's topics using scalar answer type for simplicity purpose.
- **Expectations:** It is the opportunity to understand the expectation and the needs of the participants to the event that the organisers should consider when executing the event.

Post-Event Survey

SUMMARY

What	: Short survey administered shortly after the event concludes which utilises restricted and open-ended answers.
Who	: All participants who have attended the event.
Why	: To construct end-line information that will be compared with the baseline information.
When	: Immediately after the event concludes or shortly before the participants leave the final session.
How	: Online form (recommended), survey form in word document (online event) or in print (offline event). Please see survey template.

Post-event survey is very critical for event evaluation since it provides the end-line information required to claim the event's outcome(s). This particular data will then be compared with the baseline data obtained prior to the event. To make the data management easier, organisers are encouraged to use the same platform as pre-event survey, be it online survey, such as [Google Forms](#), [Survey Monkey](#), and [Microsoft Forms](#), or otherwise. Similar to the pre-event survey, SEI has developed survey template in word and Google form formats. The SCF2's MEL focal point will reach out to coordinate this matter.

The survey forms shall be sent out to the participants just before the event concludes or shortly afterwards. Although it is always useful to keep the questionnaire short, post-event surveys may include more open-ended questions to capture candid outcomes from the participants. It is recommended that a post-event survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

For the post-event survey, there are similar components as pre-event one which could be used for comparison, namely (i) consent form; (ii) screening questions; (iii) personal information; (iv) personal capacity; (v) organisation's capacity; and (vi) suggestions.

- **Consent Form:** Always ask for consent from the participants in the beginning of the survey, which specifies the purpose of the survey and how we plan to manage and analyse the data. Please refer to Section 4.1 and Annex D3 for details.
- **Personal Information:** Basic information, such as name, affiliation, gender, and other information that are deemed relevant. Please note that personal data such as name and affiliation are only visible to organisers, but not to SEI.
- **Personal Capacity:** This should include questions that assess respondent's personal capacity after the event based on each session's topics using scalar answer type. Note that the list of capacities assessed must be the same as the pre-event questionnaire.
- **Suggestions:** It is the opportunity to understand the areas for improvements of the event based on the participants' own experiences.

Field Notes

SUMMARY

What	: A short summary of the key messages or points of discussions from in-person community engagement events and activities
Who	: SCF2 partners to document and summarise the key discussion points
Why	: To ensure appropriate information sharing to the SCF2 team and document key discussion points required for the policy dialogues
When	: Approximately one week after each activity concludes
How	: The lead from each community activity will need to summarise the activity using the suggested reporting template and submit to SCF2 team

For events with the main goal to consult to the relevant stakeholders, such as communities and policymakers, partners shall report back to the SCF2 team using a field note. The objective of this note is to lay out the consultation processes and the key discussion points arising from the events. To ensure timely feedback and integration of the discussion points into the next event(s), partners are required to prepare and submit the note to the SCF2 team one week after the consultation concludes.

SEI provides a field note template for the partners to use when reporting the outcome of the consultation, in which each consultation event shall be summarised in one note. When multiple consultation events are held, each shall have a separate note, unless otherwise agreed with the SCF2 team.

The field note template has several sections as follows:

- **Activity Details:** Partners shall indicate the minimum details required by the SCF2 team, including to complete a basic information table, event's objective(s), stakeholder's description, gender and HRBA integration, and list of guiding or survey questions.
- **Activity Outputs:** The key discussion points should be elaborated here, ideally arranged by guiding questions. You may also add any other relevant points beyond the guiding questions in this section.
- **Key Lessons:** Based on the discussion results, what are the key overarching lessons that the partners learn and how they will inform the next steps of the SCF2 support e.g., shaping the next event(s) and producing policy and communications products.
- **Photographs:** Partners should attach at least four photographs from the event that showcase the consultation process. Note that partners should not share the photographs of children (under 18 years old) without their parents or guardians' written consent.
- **Annexes:** SEI requires three annexes, namely ethics screening, environmental assessment, and a list of participants. Partners are only required to fill in the required information listed in each annex with additional information is allowable at the discretion and needs of each partner.

Tracer Study and the Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories

Upon the completion of each event, SEI will conduct a tracer study using an online survey which will also gather the 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) stories from the participants. The online survey will be administered between two to three months after each event concludes. That said, there will be multiple email broadcasts requesting the past participants to fill out the survey for projects that have a series of events. The results of the survey will be aggregated and analysed by SEI and might be shared with SIDA in accordance with the consent given by the respondents.

There is no action required of the partners on this, except to distribute the email broadcast on behalf of the SCF2 team to all participants. In this instance, SCF2's MEL focal point will reach out to partners. Since the participants list includes those attending the stakeholder consultation events, it is crucial for the partners to collect contact information of all participants whenever possible. Please inform the participants on the use of the data and seek their consent to use it for SCF2 MEL purposes.

Data Analysis and Handling

Data Analysis

It is the responsibility of the partners to analyse the event data against the expected outcomes. The analysis will form a major part of the event report required by SEI towards the end of the grant period. In doing the analysis, partners are encouraged to compare the results between baseline and end-line survey data in which the former serves as a counterfactual. Comparing with the baseline data will help reduce bias of the outcome claimed by the event.

If the partners would like to run a simple test to see if the difference between pre- and post-event data is statistically significant, such as using a two-tail hypothesis test, they need to ensure that the sample size between pre- and post-event datasets is sufficient e.g., >30 responses in both surveys. This test can be run if the sets of questions asked in the pre- and post-event surveys are similar, such as the personal capacity questions. If no test is run, presenting the average score for these questions would be sufficient for event report purpose. Please ensure that you include only those finally attending the event and drop responses from those who do not attend it but already submit pre-event survey response.

Specifically, partners are not expected to analyse the field notes per se but are encouraged to incorporate the findings and any relevant anecdotes into the final report. Partners shall therefore provide all field notes in the annex of their event reports. As such, partners may use direct quotes from participants based on the field notes and event surveys with appropriate identifications according to the consent given.

Data Handling

SEI complies with the General Data Protection Rights (GDPR)¹ which, according to Article 4 (1), 'personal data' is defined as "any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person."

To ensure compliance with the GDPR, organisers must, at the very least, follow the following data handling protocols.

Informed Consent

To ensure smooth data management, partners are required to obtain appropriate prior informed consent from the participants for each data gathering procedure. Article 4 (11) of GDPR specifies 'consent' of data subject as "any freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous indication of the data subject's wishes by which he or she, by a statement or by a clear affirmative action, signifies agreement to the processing of personal data relating to him or her."

At the very least, the consent should cover (1) the purpose of the survey; (2) how the data will be handled e.g., anonymised analysis (for pre- and post-event surveys) or otherwise (for quotes in field notes); and (3) that the data will be shared with SEI and the principal funder, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), for reporting purposes and programme improvement. SEI has provided the sample consent statements for each data gathering method in the MEL tool templates. Please make sure that the shared data reflects the consent given by the respondents.

In addition, partners shall perform ethics planning for their respective events (see Annex 1), especially for activities that will engage human subjects, such as stakeholder consultation sessions.

Data Analysis and Publication

For programme-level MEL purposes, SEI will request partners to share the data gathered from pre- and post-event surveys and field notes. Specifically for event surveys, partners shall, at all times, anonymise the dataset before sharing it to SEI. The same practice also goes for event level analysis where partners are supposed to perform aggregated analysis. To do these, partners can simply replace the name of respondents with numbers or code and remove the organisational affiliation. This is in accordance with Article 4 (5) of GDPR's 'pseudonymisation' in which "the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information."

¹ The complete GDPR regulation is available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02016R0679-20160504&from=EN>.

Meanwhile, tracer study and MSC stories will be quoted in reports or other publications in which the information of the data subject i.e., name, affiliation, and in some cases photos, might be made visible according to the consent given during data gathering. In the event that respondents refuse to disclose their personal data, partners and SEI must always comply with the consent given, including to anonymise the quotes if SEI and/or partners decide to include them or did not quote them at all.

Queries

Should you require additional assistance and clarification on designing and implementing your event's MEL, please do not hesitate to reach out to Dimas Fauzi (dimas.fauzi@sei.org).

Annexes

Annex 1. Ethics Plans

SEI requires partners to perform a self-assessment on the ethical compliance measures, particularly for events that have direct community engagement activities, either in-person, virtually, or hybrid. The SCF2 team adopts and complies with SEI’s Ethics Protocols, adjusted specifically for the SCF2 contexts.

For events that involve human subjects, consent must be sought before commencing the activities (see Data Handling section). According to SEI’s Ethics Protocols, a human subject is “a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research.” In the SCF2 context, human subject applies not only for information gathering in research setting, but also policy engagement and stakeholder consultations.

When planning events that engage a human subject as described above, please use the following ethics plan to ensure an ethical conduct of the activity. Note that this ethics plan needs to be discussed beforehand with SEI and reported in the field notes.

Table 2: Ethics Planning Questions

Ethics Indicators	Prompts
Avoiding harm	How will you plan to reduce the risks and ensure the benefit of the activity/ event for the participants?
Participants under 18 years old and vulnerable adults	If you plan to engage participants under 18 years old and vulnerable adults, please describe their involvement and the special considerations to be taken to avoid or minimise risks?
Informed consent	What is your plan to obtain the prior and informed consent from participants? This includes consent on taking or recording any audio-visuals during the engagement.
Personal data protection	What personal data will you gather from participants and how will you use and handle them?

Annex 2. Environmental Assessment

SEI is committed to reducing its environmental footprints arising from its direct and indirect operations, including the SCF2-funded events. SEI monitors several key indicators that could have consequences to the environment and emissions, namely SCF2-funded travels, foods and waste, and accommodation used to hold the events.

Note that this environmental assessment is simplified and serves as an indication of potential contribution to climate change rather than the precise estimation of emissions. As such, SEI encourages partners to minimise the potential environmental impacts of their proposed activities and events.

At the very least, partners are expected to be more conscious about the environmental footprints from their events by monitoring some of the most visible indicators. The following information may be used to assist partners in planning environmentally conscious events.

Table 3: Environmental Assessment Decision Support Tool

Meeting and Hotel Rooms	Travel Options	Food and Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick a meeting room located nearby public transit. • Pick a hotel room for organisers and participants located at the same place as or close to the in-person events. • Set room temperature at 25-26°C. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick the lowest emission public transport options, e.g., buses and trains, before opting for flights whenever possible. • Choose economy flight whenever possible, especially for shorter trips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick non-red meat food options and use reusable utensils. • Consider digitalising all materials and use could to store and share materials. • Select catering provider with a clear waste management plan.

For the reporting and accountability purposes, SEI requires partners to report the following indicators in their field notes and final report. SEI provides the templates to standardise the reporting and assist our environmental impacts assessment.

- Number of air travels covered with SCF2 funding (round trips)
- Number of land travels covered with SCF2 funding (round trips, by travel modes)
- Number of hotel rooms covered with SCF2 funding
- Conference or meeting room capacity
- Food and waste management plan
- Paper and printing plan
- Other plans or actions to reduce environmental footprints



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