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GUIDELINES: MEL DATA COLLECTION TOOLS FOR THE CORE PROJECT

FOR THE NCTFS AND GRANTEE AWARDEES

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Introduction

The CORE Project requires a structured and standardised approach to data collection across all participating countries to ensure that monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) processes remain consistent, credible, and useful for decision-making. Data collection tools serve as the primary mechanism to support Integrated Gender responsive (IGR) Eco-system-based Adaptation (EbA) and Circular Economy (CE) initiatives. CE are documented across the Gender Smart Facility (GSF) project activities, outputs, and outcomes are documented and analysed. When these tools are used correctly, they provide reliable evidence that supports accountability, reporting, and adaptive management.

This guideline document provides comprehensive instructions for the use of each IGR MEAL data collection tool developed under the CORE Project. It explains the purpose of each tool, outlines how it should be used, and defines all data capture points to ensure clarity and consistency. The guidelines are intended for use across all eight participating countries and are designed to strengthen the capacity of implementing partners and project staff to collect and manage data effectively.

Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines aim to ensure that all users of the CORE GSF Project's IGR data collection tools apply a consistent and standardised approach when capturing and recording data (disaggregated by gender (if self-declared), age, geographic location -country). By clearly defining each data field and its intended meaning, the guidelines reduce ambiguity and minimise errors in data entry. They also support alignment with CORE's PMF's indicators and reporting frameworks, ensuring that all data collected contributes directly to project-level and regional results.

In addition, the guidelines are intended to improve the overall quality, completeness, and reliability of the IGR MEAL data. They provide a reference for training and ongoing support to project staff and partners, enabling them to carry out their MEL responsibilities more effectively. Ultimately, the use of these guidelines will strengthen evidence-based decision-making and enhance the impact of the CORE Project.

General Data Collection Principles

All individuals responsible for data collection must apply a set of core principles to ensure that the information captured is both credible and useful. Data must be recorded accurately, reflecting exactly what was observed or reported during project implementation. Users must ensure that all required fields are completed fully, as incomplete data reduces the reliability of analysis and reporting.

Consistency is essential, and users must apply the definitions provided in this guideline document when completing each tool. Data should be entered in a timely manner, ideally immediately after activities occur, to reduce the risk of recall errors. At all times, users must respect confidentiality by safeguarding personal and sensitive information, particularly when handling beneficiary data.

Furthermore, users must ensure that data is disaggregated appropriately, especially by sex, age, and other relevant Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) variables. This disaggregation allows the project to assess equity and inclusion and ensures that no groups are overlooked in implementation or reporting.

Data Collection Tools and Guidelines

a. Activity Tracker

The Activity Tracker serves as a foundational tool for documenting all project activities and monitoring implementation progress. It captures detailed information on what activities are conducted, where and when they take place, who participates, and what immediate outputs are achieved. This tool enables project teams to track implementation against plans and ensures that all activities are clearly linked to CORE indicators.

Project staff and implementing partners are responsible for completing the Activity Tracker immediately after each activity. By maintaining up-to-date records, the tool provides a reliable source of information for reporting and performance monitoring. It also supports the identification of implementation challenges and follow-up actions, enabling teams to respond proactively and improve delivery.

Data Capture Points and Definitions

Field	Definition / What It Means
Activity ID	Unique identifier assigned to each activity
Activity Name	Title of the activity conducted
Activity Description	Summary of what the activity involved
Location	Parish/community where activity took place
Date of Activity	Actual date the activity occurred
Implementing Partner	Organisation responsible for execution
Output Delivered	Immediate result of the activity
Number of Participants	Total persons who attended
Male Participants	Number of male participants
Female Participants	Number of female participants
Youth Participants	Number of youth participants
Key Issues/Challenges	Problems encountered during implementation
Follow-up Actions	Actions required after the activity
CORE Indicator Linked	Indicator this activity contributes to
Date of Entry	Date data was recorded

b. Beneficiary Registry

The Beneficiary Registry is used to systematically record all individuals who benefit from the project. It ensures that the project maintains an accurate and comprehensive database of participants, which is essential for tracking reach, outcomes, and equity. This tool allows project teams to monitor who is being served and to assess whether interventions are reaching the intended target groups.

Project staff must update the Beneficiary Registry continuously as beneficiaries are enrolled or receive support. The information collected through this tool also supports reporting against CORE indicators, particularly those related to beneficiary reach and outcomes. By maintaining accurate records, the project can demonstrate accountability and ensure that resources are directed effectively.

Data Capture Points and Definitions

Field	Definition / What It Means
Beneficiary ID	Unique identifier for each beneficiary
Name	Full name of beneficiary

Sex	Male/Female/Other
Age	Age in years
Location	Community or parish
Type of Beneficiary	Direct or indirect beneficiary
Vulnerability Category	Category such as youth, women, persons with disabilities
Intervention Received	Type of support provided
Date Enrolled	Date beneficiary joined the project
Outcome Status	Status of beneficiary
CORE Indicator Linked	Indicator associated with support
Remarks	Additional notes

c. Site Verification & Assets Functionality Checklist (Site & Assets Checklist)

The Site and Assets Checklist is used to monitor the condition and utilisation of project sites and assets. It provides a structured way to verify whether infrastructure, equipment, and other resources are functioning as intended and contributing to project outcomes. This tool supports accountability by ensuring that project investments are properly maintained and used effectively.

Field officers and project managers complete this checklist during site visits. The information collected helps identify maintenance needs, compliance issues, and operational challenges. By documenting observations systematically, the tool supports timely corrective actions and contributes to the sustainability of project interventions.

Data Capture Points and Definitions

Field	Definition / What It Means
Site ID	Unique identifier for site
Site Name	Name of project site
Location	Geographic location
Type of Site	Type of project site
Date of Visit	Date of inspection
Asset Type	Type of equipment or infrastructure
Asset Condition	Status of asset (good, fair, poor)
Usage Status	Whether asset is used as intended
Maintenance Needs	Required repairs or servicing

Compliance Status	Adherence to project standards
Issues Identified	Problems observed
Recommended Actions	Actions required
Responsible Person	Person assigned for follow-up
Means of verification	Documents and evidence to show proof activity was completed and files uploaded to NCTF.
Date of Entry	Date recorded

d. GESI Tracker

The GESI Tracker ensures that gender equality and social inclusion remain central to project implementation. It captures data on participation and outcomes for different groups, allowing the project to assess whether interventions are equitable and inclusive. This tool is essential for identifying barriers to participation and for ensuring that vulnerable groups benefit from project activities.

M&E staff and programme officers are responsible for updating the GESI Tracker regularly, particularly after key activities. The data collected provides insights into who participates in the project and how benefits are distributed. It also supports the development of targeted strategies to address inequalities and improve inclusion.

Data Capture Points and Definitions

Field	Definition / What It Means
Activity ID	Reference to linked activity
Total Participants	Total number of persons involved
Female Participants	Number of women involved
Male Participants	Number of men involved
Youth Participants	Number of young persons
Persons with Disabilities	Number of participants with disabilities
Marginalised Groups	Participation of vulnerable groups
Leadership Participation	Representation in leadership roles
Barriers Identified	Constraints to participation
Inclusion Strategies Used	Actions taken to improve inclusion
Outcomes for GESI Groups	Benefits achieved
CORE Indicator Linked	Relevant GESI indicator

Date of Entry	Date recorded
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e. Partnership Tracker

The Partnership Tracker documents all collaborations with stakeholders and partners involved in the project. It provides a structured way to monitor the contributions, roles, and effectiveness of partnerships. Strong partnerships are critical to project success, and this tool ensures that these relationships are actively managed and evaluated.

Project managers and partnership coordinators are responsible for updating this tool as partnerships evolve. The information collected helps assess the value of partnerships, identify challenges, and guide future engagement strategies. It also supports reporting on collaboration-related indicators within the CORE framework.

Data Capture Points and Definitions

Field	Definition / What It Means
Partner Name	Name of organisation
Type of Partner	Category of partner
Role in Project	Contribution to project
Date Engagement Started	Start date of partnership
Type of Support	Nature of support provided
Activities Supported	Activities partner contributes to
Geographic Coverage	Areas of operation
Level of Engagement	Degree of involvement
Key Achievements	Results achieved
Challenges	Issues affecting collaboration
Next Steps	Planned actions
CORE Indicator Linked	Indicator supported
Date of Entry	Date recorded

f. Field Trip Tracker

The Field Visit Tracker is designed to support structured and consistent monitoring of project implementation during site visits. It enables field officers, M&E staff, and project managers to systematically document observations, verify reported results, assess progress against planned activities, and identify any challenges affecting implementation. By capturing both quantitative and qualitative data in real time, the tool strengthens data validation, supports accountability, and enhances learning. It also provides critical evidence for PMF reporting by linking field-level observations to activities and results, ensuring that reported data reflects actual project performance on the ground.

Data Capture Points and Definitions

Field	Description
Visit ID	Unique identifier assigned to each field visit
Project Name	Name of the project being monitored
Grantee Name	Name of the implementing organisation
Location	Specific site, community, or parish visited
Date of Visit	Date the field visit was conducted
Field Officer	Name of the person conducting the visit
Activity Observed	Specific activity observed during the visit
Objective of Visit	Purpose of the visit (e.g. verification, monitoring, support)
Participants Present	Total number of persons present
Male	Number of male participants present
Female	Number of female participants present
Youth	Number or indication of youth participants

Key Observations	Summary of what was observed during the visit
Progress Against Plan	Assessment of whether implementation is on track
Challenges Identified	Issues or constraints affecting implementation
Recommendations	Suggested actions to address challenges
Follow-up Actions	Agreed next steps and actions required
Photos/Documentation Collected (Y/N)	Whether supporting evidence was collected
Means of Verification	Source of evidence (e.g. attendance sheet, photos)
Next Visit Date	Planned date for follow-up visit
Date of Entry	Date the data was recorded

Data Quality Assurance

Ensuring data quality is a continuous process that requires active oversight and regular verification. Supervisors must review completed tools monthly to identify errors or inconsistencies. M&E officers must conduct periodic data quality assessments to validate the accuracy and completeness of the data collected.

Where errors are identified, project staff must correct them promptly to maintain the integrity of the dataset. Teams should also triangulate data across different tools to ensure consistency and reliability. By applying these practices, the project can maintain a high standard of data quality that supports credible reporting and decision-making.

Reporting and Use of Data

The data collected through these tools feeds directly into the CORE Project's Performance Management Framework and reporting systems. It supports the preparation of quarterly and annual reports, enabling stakeholders to assess progress and performance. In addition, the data provides a foundation for learning and adaptive management, allowing project teams to refine strategies based on evidence.

By systematically collecting and analysing data, the project can demonstrate results, identify trends, and respond to emerging challenges. This ensures that the project remains responsive and effective throughout its implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Effective data collection and management require clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Project staff are responsible for collecting and entering data accurately and in a timely manner. M&E officers play a critical role in validating and analysing data, ensuring that it meets quality standards.

Project managers use the data to inform decision-making and guide implementation. At the regional level, CORE coordinators ensure that all data aligns with reporting requirements and contributes to the overall project framework. This collaborative approach ensures that data is used effectively at all levels of the project.

Conclusion

The data collection tools outlined in this document are essential components of the CORE Project's MEL system. When used consistently and correctly, they provide a strong evidence base for tracking progress, demonstrating results, and supporting learning across all participating countries.

Adherence to these guidelines will ensure that data remains accurate, comparable, and aligned with CORE reporting standards. By strengthening data collection practices, the project will enhance accountability, improve performance, and maximise its impact across the region.