



A tool to help the National Coordination Mechanism and Implementing Partners understand the changing realities of an activity on the ground—and how to adapt to keep up with those changes.

TOOL 4B Using Adaptive Management

A poster to send Implementing Partners which teaches both the idea of adaptive management, as well as a process for gathering feedback from frontline staff and using it to respond and adapt.

SOURCE: Syntegral

By quickly collecting anonymous, frontline observations, and inviting groups of frontline workers to explain trends over time, coordinators, managers, and supervisors can better make decisions and respond to issues as they arise. If all Implementing Partners practice adaptive management, scale up is likely to go more smoothly.

Using Adaptive Management

A BASIC ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT CYCLE
By quickly and frequently collecting and visualizing data through the implementation of an activity, managers and supervisors can better make decisions and respond to new issues as they arise.

LISTENING TO FRONTLINE WORKERS, ONE WAY TO MANAGE INSPIRE ACTIVITIES ADAPTIVELY

START HERE
CHOOSE WHAT YOU WILL TRACK
Select or write a set of statements about activity implementation with which frontline workers can "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." The specific statements will depend on the priorities established by managers and supervisors. Develop your own statements. Refer to the list on the next page for ideas.

IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR
Take action on your planned adaptations. Continue getting anonymous input from frontline workers throughout the implementation of the activity.

REGULARLY GATHER DATA
Collect frontline responses on the statements anonymously and frequently (at least once a quarter, but much more frequently if possible). The frequency will depend on the means of collecting information: SKS, written responses, on-line survey, etc.

MEET AND DISCUSS
Use these graphs as a focus for meetings with groups of frontline workers, ask them to explain the trends based on what they have observed. These data-based meetings bring forward implementation problems in real time as they can be addressed. This helps managers create solutions and plan for how to respond to the trends.

DOCUMENT AND SHARE!
Using an adaptive management approach, it is important to record what you are doing and why as you go along. Be sure to document the adaptations that you make, what worked, and what didn't work. Regularly share what you are adapting and learning with the National CSO others have access to what you are learning, too!

INSPIRE Scale Up Adaptation
Tool 4B Using Adaptive Management

Sample statements

Use this list for ideas. Feel free to develop your own statements. To be effective, your statements will:

- depend on priorities established by managers and supervisors
- be written in such a way that frontline workers can "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree"

TIP
You can use a simple SMS system to gather regular feedback
"[insert statement]. How do you feel?"
Reply: 1 = AGREE STRONGLY, 2 = AGREE, 3 = DISAGREE, 4 = DISAGREE STRONGLY

- I think end users are responding enthusiastically to project activities.
- I think my colleagues are doing their job correctly.
- I think my colleagues are receiving the supervision they need.
- I think [activity topic] information is understood by the people I speak with.
- I think I have been given enough resources to do my activities well.
- I have enough available time to do my activities.
- I think my colleagues and I are doing a good job of giving appropriate time to all key topics in this activity.
- I think the specific activities my colleagues and I are doing are needed in my village.
- I feel I have the support of my community when I do activities.
- I do not have the access to the target population I need to be effective.
- I know who to speak to when encountering technical problems with the program.
- I know who to speak to when encountering problems with colleagues.
- I know who can advise me about interactions with the target population.
- I have the training I need to do the job expected of me.
- Colleagues and I understand each others' distinct responsibilities, so there is no confusion.
- When problems are reported to supervisors, they are addressed quickly.
- When I have problems or questions about my job, I seek the advice of a colleague before I go to a supervisor.
- Coordination with other agencies is easy.
- Colleagues are in agreement with what our supervisors feel are the activity's priorities.
- Supervisors have a good knowledge of what is happening in the field.
- Colleagues and I are comfortable reporting on technical problems with the activity.
- My colleagues feel they are treated fairly by their supervisors.
- My colleagues understand how this activity contributes to larger goals.
- My colleagues understand how this activity works alongside other activities in the project.
- I feel I can accomplish the goals of this activity in the time expected.
- I think the effects of this activity will continue after the activity time is over.
- I think this activity is widely-known to its target population.
- I think this activity will continue with only local support (no outside support needed).
- My colleagues would continue in this job even if other jobs were available.
- My colleagues and I feel that modifications to the activity based on our feedback are successfully responding to new challenges.

INSPIRE Scale Up Adaptation
TOOL 4B Using Adaptive Management

AVAILABLE FORMATS: The worksheets included here are meant for printing at A4 size. Visit the Guide's website for downloadable interactive (fillable) PDF worksheets, alternate languages and alternative formats.

inspire-strategies.org/adaptationandscale

How to use this tool

- 1 Send the poster to Implementing Partners and explain the concept of adaptive management. Ask them to use this adaptive-management process or any similar process.
- 2 The poster will guide Implementing Partners to choose statements regarding the implementation process. Regularly gather frontline-staffs' reactions to those statements; make the data visual; and discuss if any activity or processes need to be adapted.
- 3 Ask frontline staff to interpret the aggregated, anonymous data and use those interpretations to adapt the implementation process to keep up with changes in the environment.
- 4 Encourage Implementing Partners to share changes in the environment and related adaptation with the National Coordination Mechanism.
- 5 Look across Implementing Partners' experiences and adaptations, what can you learn? Do frequent implementation issues across activities suggest that an issue needs to be addressed at a regional or national level?

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

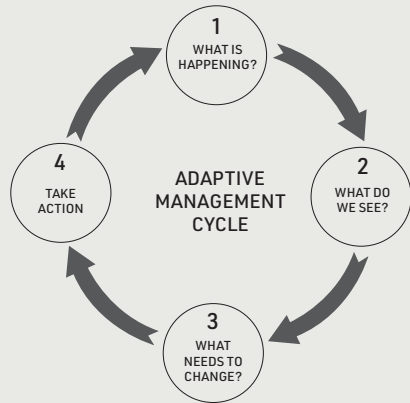
- If possible, Implementing Partners should integrate the statements into their regular monitoring practices to permit frequent reporting.
- When you receive and aggregate frontline worker responses, be sure to create simple visuals—such as charts or graphs—that give a “snapshot” of the topic for the workers to explain.
- Refrain from telling frontline workers what the data means. Ask them to tell you their interpretations; accept all interpretations as positive contributions and possible causes for adaptation.
- Record any adaptation that you make, capturing what happened; what you did; what worked; what didn't work; and why.
- Regularly share what you are adapting and learning with others in the organization and especially with the frontline workers themselves.

**REMINDER...FEEL FREE TO ADAPT THIS
TOOL IN ANY WAY THAT WORKS FOR
YOUR TEAM AND YOUR CONTEXT!**

Using Adaptive Management

A BASIC ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

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DOCUMENT AND SHARE!

Using an adaptive management approach, it is important to record what you are doing and why as you go along. Be sure to document the adaptations that you make, what worked, and what didn't work. Regularly share what you are adapting and learning with the National Coordination Mechanism so others have access to what you are learning, too!

LISTENING TO FRONTLINE WORKERS: ONE WAY TO MANAGE INSPIRE ACTIVITIES ADAPTIVELY

START HERE

CHOOSE WHAT YOU WILL TRACK

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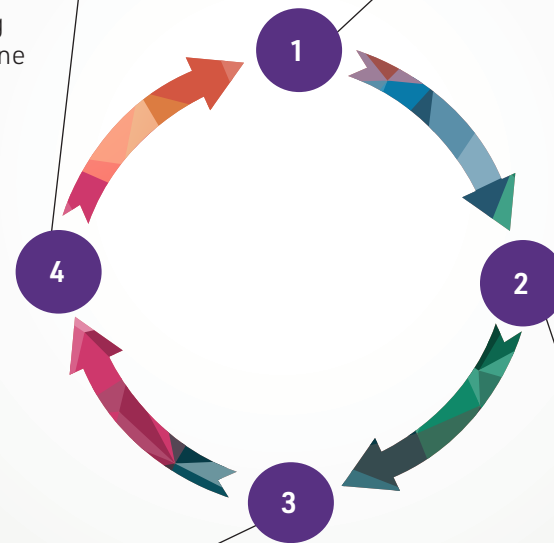
* These discussions are what is valuable for an adaptive manager.

MEET AND DISCUSS *

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REGULARLY GATHER DATA

Collect frontline responses on the statements anonymously and frequently (at least once a quarter, but much more frequently if possible). The frequency will depend on the means of collecting information: SMS, written responses, on-line survey, etc.



COMPILE AND VISUALIZE

For each statement compile responses in a pie graph each time, and make a line graph to show changes over time.

Sample statements

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- *be written in such a way that frontline workers can 'strongly agree,' 'agree,' 'disagree,' or 'strongly disagree'*

TIP

You can use a simple SMS system to gather regular feedback.

*"[insert statement]. How do you feel?
Reply: 1 = AGREE STRONGLY; 2 = AGREE;
3 = DISAGREE; 4 = DISAGREE STRONGLY"*

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17. When I have problems or questions about my job, I seek the advice of a colleague before I go to a supervisor.
18. Coordination with other agencies is easy.
19. Colleagues are in agreement with what our supervisors feel are the activity's priorities.
20. Supervisors have a good knowledge of what is happening in the field.
21. Colleagues and I are comfortable reporting on technical problems with the activity.
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27. I think this activity is widely-known to its target population.
28. I think this activity will continue with only local support (no outside support needed).
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30. My colleagues and I feel that modifications in the activity based on our feedback are successfully responding to new challenges.

Now What?

YOU SHOULD NOW HAVE...

- A few (5-15) key statements to monitor and watch for trends over time
- A system to consistently gather feedback on these statements from frontline workers
- A means of understanding the shifting reality on the ground and adapting to it

Act and apply

Does the action plan discuss the role of adaptive management in facilitating future scale? Should it?

Can the National Coordination Mechanism apply an adaptive-management approach to their own coordination by asking Implementing Partners to respond to a set of general statements on a frequent basis to highlight changes in the implementation environment?

RELATED TOOLS:

- *Tool 1E*: The "What Could Possibly Go Wrong?" Game
- *Tool 4C*: Documenting Learning
- *Tool 5B*: Adapting in Response to Stakeholder Feedback

