

MEL Plan Template Worked Example

October 2026

A made-up program. All names, places, organizations and figures are invented.

Program Description

Program Summary

Item	Detail
Problem Addressed	Drought and flood shocks wipe out harvests and savings in Tamoru Region. In four of the last ten seasons, farm households lost more than 30 percent of their crop.
Location	Sabene Flats, Oruwa and Lemuri districts: 54 communities
Participants	11,400 households (about 57,000 people); 7,200 farm households trained directly
Components	Climate-smart farming; community early warning and preparedness; local adaptation finance
Duration and Budget	36 months (October 2026 to September 2029); USD 6.8 million
Design Documents	Theory of change (version 2.0, August 2026) and logframe (version 1.2, September 2026).

Theory of Change Summary

Training, demonstration plots, committee training, a district warning link and savings group support will produce the outputs. These build farmers' knowledge, give households warnings in time and show savings group members they can borrow in an emergency (the immediate outcomes). Together they will lead households to use climate-smart practices, share decisions on crop income between women and men, act on warnings and draw on local funds (the three outcomes), so that households in 54 communities keep harvests and income steady and recover faster from drought and flood shocks (the goal). The pathway rests on three assumptions: rainfall stays within the normal range in most seasons, the text-message network works in all 54 communities, and group leaders keep the trust of members. The full pathway is in the theory of change (version 2.0, August 2026).

Results Chain Summary

Result	Result Statement	Indicators
Goal	Households in 54 communities of Tamoru Region withstand and recover from drought and flood shocks	GL-1
Outcome 1	Farm households use climate-smart practices, keep harvests steady in poor seasons and share decisions on crop income between women and men.	OC-1, OC-2, OC-3
Immediate Outcome 1.1	Farmers know climate-smart practices and can apply them.	IO-1
Output 1.1.1, 1.1.2	Farmers trained in climate-smart practices; active demonstration plots	OP-1, OP-2
Outcome 2	Households act on warnings and prepare for hazards before harm occurs	OC-4
Immediate Outcome 2.1	Households receive hazard warnings in time	IO-2
Output 2.1.1, 2.1.2	Community disaster committees trained with tested plans; communities linked to the district warning system	OP-3, OP-4
Outcome 3	Households save and can draw on local funds to adapt.	OC-5
Immediate Outcome 3.1	Savings group members know they can borrow in an emergency.	IO-3
Output 3.1.1, 3.1.2	Savings groups formed and meeting; community resilience funds capitalized	OP-5, OP-6, OP-7

Purpose and Scope of This Plan

This plan sets out how the MEL team will measure progress, check the quality of its data, learn from what it finds and report to the funder. It is written for the program team, the district partners and the funder's program officer. It covers all three components in all 54 communities for the full 36 months.

The program is accountable for the outputs, the immediate outcomes and the three outcomes. It contributes to the goal, which also depends on rainfall, prices and national policy, so the plan tracks recovery from shocks without claiming that the program alone caused it. Evidence from this plan will be used to decide, at the midpoint, which farming practices to promote in the second half and whether the early warning system needs new channels.

MEL Governance

Roles and Decision Rights

Role	Owns	Decides
Program Director	Approval of the plan and of each revision	Program changes based on evidence; learning budget spending
MEL Manager	The plan, the indicator list and data quality	Indicator definitions, survey design, when a serious data problem halts reporting
MEL Officer	The database, dashboards and quarterly reports	Data cleaning rules within the agreed protocol
District MEL Assistants (3)	Routine data from communities in their district	Which communities get a data quality visit each quarter
Component Leads (3)	Results and indicators for their component	Changes to activities within the approved budget
Community Focal Persons (54)	Attendance, group and committee records in their community	When to call a community feedback meeting

How Evidence Reaches Decisions

Forum	How Often	Who	Decisions It Makes
Team Review	Monthly	Program staff, MEL team	Fix delivery problems; move staff time between districts
Quarterly Data Review	Quarterly	Leads of the three components, MEL Manager, Director	Adjust seasonal work plans; propose target changes to the Annual Plan Review; request corrective action in a district
Learning Workshop	Every 6 months	Staff, district offices, community delegates	Change an approach; answer a learning question (see the Learning Agenda)
Annual Plan Review	Once a year	Director, MEL Manager, funder focal point	Approve plan revisions and next year's targets

Accountability to Communities and Safeguarding

- Every community has a feedback box and a free text-message line. The District MEL Assistant reviews both each week and logs every comment in the feedback register.
- Complaints about staff conduct go straight to the Program Director within 24 hours, not through the Component Lead.
- Each community holds one feedback meeting a year, at which the team reports results in the local language and records what people say.
- Enumerators and monitors sign the safeguarding code of conduct before they start and receive a half-day briefing. All interviews are with adults.
- Survey respondents give oral consent after hearing a short script, and names are removed from analysis files within 14 days of each survey round.

Indicators

Indicator Summary Table

Code	Indicator	Result	Baseline	Midline Target	End Target	Source and Frequency
GL-1	Percentage of households affected by a drought or flood in the past 12 months that recovered their usual food and income within 3 months	Goal	22%	30%	45%	Household survey, each February
OC-1	Percentage of participating farm households using three or more climate-smart practices on their main plot	Outcome 1	14%	35%	60%	Household survey, each February
OC-2	Maize yield in kilograms per hectare, participating households	Outcome 1	780	900	1,100	Crop cuts on 300 plots, at harvest each year
OC-3	Percentage of women farmers deciding how main crop income gets spent	Outcome 1	29%	38%	50%	Household survey, each February
OC-4	Percentage of warned households that took a protective action	Outcome 2	41%	55%	70%	Household survey, each February
OC-5	Percentage of participating households that borrowed from a savings group or resilience fund to cope with a shock or to adapt	Outcome 3	7%	15%	30%	Household survey, each February
IO-1	Percentage of participating farmers who pass the practical knowledge check	Immediate Outcome 1.1	20%	70%	80%	Check before and after each training cycle
IO-2	Percentage of households that faced a flood or storm in the past 12 months and received a warning at least 24 hours before the last one	Immediate Outcome 2.1	18%	50%	75%	Household survey, each February
IO-3	Percentage of savings group members confident of borrowing from the group within a week in an emergency	Immediate Outcome 3.1	9%	40%	65%	Household survey, each February
OP-1	Number of farmers trained in climate-smart practices (women and men counted separately)	Output 1.1.1	0	4,500	7,200	Attendance forms, monthly
OP-2	Number of active demonstration plots	Output 1.1.2	0	80	108	Plot visit checklist, quarterly
OP-3	Number of community disaster committees with a trained team and a tested plan	Output 2.1.1	0	40	54	Committee records and drill reports, quarterly
OP-4	Number of communities linked to the district text-message warning system	Output 2.1.2	0	30	54	System delivery logs, monthly
OP-5	Number of savings groups formed and meeting regularly	Output 3.1.1	0	120	250	Savings group registers, quarterly
OP-6	Capital held in community resilience funds, in US dollars	Output 3.1.2	0	60,000	180,000	Fund ledgers, quarterly

Code	Indicator	Result	Baseline	Midline Target	End Target	Source and Frequency
OP-7	Percentage of participating households belonging to an active savings group	Output 3.1.1	12%	26%	55%	Savings group registers, quarterly

Baselines for goal and outcome indicators come from the design survey of 420 households in September 2026 and will be confirmed or replaced by the baseline survey in February 2027. Midline targets are for the February 2028 survey (month 17) or the matching date for records. Output targets follow the budget: 7,200 farmers is 63 percent of the 11,400 households; 250 savings groups of about 25 members each reach 6,250 households, which is 55 percent; the 120 groups due by the midline reach about 3,000 households, which is 26 percent.

Indicator Reference Sheets

The example below is the sheet for the indicator on households that received a warning at least 24 hours ahead. The other sheets follow the same layout and are in an annex to this plan.

Item	Detail
Indicator	IO-2 Percentage of households that faced a flood or storm in the past 12 months and received a warning at least 24 hours before the last one
Definition	A household counts as warned if an adult member says they heard a warning from the district text-message system, a committee member or a loudspeaker announcement at least 24 hours before the event. Hearsay from neighbors after the event does not count.
Unit and Formula	Percent. Households warned 24 hours or more ahead, divided by households interviewed that faced a flood or storm in the past 12 months, times 100
Disaggregation	District; household headed by a woman or a man; distance from the community center (under or over 2 km)
Source, Method and Frequency	Household survey of 900 households in 54 communities, each February; one question module with a show-card of warning sources
Responsible	MEL Manager designs; District MEL Assistants supervise; analysis by MEL Officer
Baseline and Targets	18 percent (design survey, September 2026). Targets: 50 percent in February 2028, 75 percent in February 2029
Data Quality Notes	Recall is reliable for the last event only, so the question asks about the most recent event. Back-check (a second visit to confirm answers) 10 percent of interviews.
Limits	Cannot tell whether the warning was understood. Indicator OC-4 picks that up.

Data Plan

Performance Monitoring Approach

Routine monitoring runs on monthly and quarterly records, and the household survey each February adds outcome data. Extension agents and Community Focal Persons complete attendance forms, plot visit checklists and committee records on paper, and group secretaries keep the savings registers. District MEL Assistants collect the forms each month, check them against the registers and enter them on tablets with the offline form. Data uploads each evening to the regional server, where the MEL Officer cleans it, updates the dashboard and writes the quarterly indicator report within 15 days of quarter end. The MEL Manager reviews the dashboard before each quarterly data review, and the report then goes to the Program Director and the funder.

Data Collection Methods and Calendar

Method	Indicators	Who Collects	When	Coverage
Household Survey	GL-1, OC-1, OC-3, OC-4, OC-5, IO-2, IO-3	Hired enumerators, supervised by District MEL Assistants	February 2027, 2028 and 2029	900 households in 54 communities (about 17 each)
Crop Cuts	OC-2	District MEL Assistants with trained farmer monitors	At harvest, each year	300 plots in 30 communities (10 plots each); the harvest from a marked plot is weighed.
Training, Plot and Knowledge Check Forms	IO-1, OP-1, OP-2	Extension agents; Community Focal Persons	Monthly and quarterly	All sessions and all 108 plots
Warning System Logs and Drill Reports	OP-3, OP-4	District disaster offices; MEL Officer	Monthly and after each drill	All 54 communities
Savings Group and Fund Registers	OP-5, OP-6, OP-7	Group secretaries; District MEL Assistants	Quarterly	All groups and funds
Focus Groups and Interviews	Learning questions	MEL Manager with a local facilitator	Mid-May 2027, March 2028 and March 2029	12 focus groups and 20 interviews per round

Assumptions, Risks and Context Monitoring

Assumption, Risk or Context	Warning Sign	Source and Frequency	Response
Rainfall stays in the normal range in at least three of four seasons.	Seasonal rainfall under 70 percent of the average	District weather bulletins, each season	Record rainfall beside yields; promote drought-tolerant varieties
The text-message network stays up in all 54 communities.	Delivery rate under 90 percent in a district	System delivery logs, monthly	Add loudspeaker and village messenger channels
Seed and input prices rise by less than 20 percent a year	Price rise above 20 percent in two quarters	Price check at 12 agro-dealers, quarterly	Group bulk buying through savings groups; shift demonstration plots to saved seed
Group leaders keep the trust of members.	Complaints, missed meetings, missing cash	Quarterly register check; feedback line	Leader rotation; audit of group books
Security stays stable enough for staff to reach all 54 communities.	Incidents that close a road or market, or a travel restriction, in any district	Incident reports from district offices, monthly; partner security briefing, quarterly	Move to phone check-ins; reschedule visits; use local monitors.

Three context indicators are tracked beside the program indicators: seasonal rainfall as a share of the average, the price of maize and seed at 12 agro-dealers, and security incidents by district. The MEL Officer adds them to the quarterly indicator report, so readers can see when a change in results follows a change in the setting.

Analysis and Reporting

Product	When	Audience	Owner
Quarterly Indicator Report	15 days after each quarter	Program team and funder	MEL Officer
Annual Survey Brief	April, after each survey round	Staff, district offices, communities	MEL Manager
Mid-Term Review Report	30 June 2028	Director and funder	External reviewer
Final Evaluation Report	31 August 2029	Funder, partners, public summary	External evaluator

Survey results are compared across the three rounds and by district and by sex of household head. With 900 households the margin of error (the range within which the true value probably falls) is about 3 percentage points if households were chosen simply at random, and about 4 points after allowing for the clustering of households in 54 communities (a design effect of 1.5). A change between two survey rounds needs about 6 points to be real, because each round carries its own margin of error, so differences smaller than 6 points are reported as no clear change. The two indicators that count only households hit by an event have a wider margin, so they need a larger change than 6 points, and the report states the margin for each. Crop yields are compared only with the baseline yields of the same crop, because rainfall differs each year and is recorded alongside.

Data Management and Ethics

- Survey data is collected on tablets using an offline form and uploaded each evening to a password-protected server held at the regional office.
- Only the MEL team sees names and phone numbers. Analysis files use codes, and the key is stored separately.
- Records are kept for five years after the program ends, then deleted.
- Each community receives a one-page summary of its own results and a summary for the three districts after every survey round.

Data Quality

Quality Controls by Dimension

Dimension	What We Do
Validity	Indicator wording is tested with 30 households before the baseline. Crop-cut method follows a written protocol with a weighed sample. Each month, 10 percent of entered records are compared with the paper form; the target is under 2 percent errors.
Integrity	Only the MEL Officer can edit submitted records, and every change is logged with a reason. Results are reported by the MEL team, and the Component Leads whose targets they measure cannot change them. Attendance lists are signed and photographed. Savings group figures are checked against the group's own book at every quality visit.
Precision	A sample of 900 gives a margin of error of about 3 points, and about 4 points after allowing for clustering (design effect 1.5), at the 95 percent level. A change of about 6 points between rounds can be seen across all 900 households, and every survey target moves by more than that. Two indicators (recovery after an event and early warning) count only the households hit by a flood, storm or drought in the past 12 months, so fewer households answer and their margin is wider; each survey report states the number answering and the margin. Outputs are counted in full, not sampled.
Reliability	The same questionnaire, the same enumerator training and the same season are used each round. Each enumerator is scored on a practice interview.
Timeliness	Every form issued is logged and every form returned is ticked off, so gaps show up at once; missing forms are chased within 5 days. Monthly data is entered within 7 days of month end; quarterly data within 10 days of quarter end. Late records are flagged on the dashboard.

Data Quality Assessments and Improvement

The MEL Manager runs a formal data quality assessment in months 12, 24 and 33, covering 12 communities in each round (22 percent of the 54). The team traces each reported number from the community record to the database. Any indicator with more than 5 percent error is re-checked in all communities and the cause is fixed. A 10 percent random back-check of survey interviews takes place within three days of each interview, by phone or revisit. Findings and fixes go into the data quality log, which the Program Director reviews each quarter.

Evaluation Plan

Study	Timing	Key Questions	Method	Use
Baseline Survey	February 2027	Where do households and farms stand at the start?	Household survey, 900 households	Confirm baselines and targets
Mid-Term Review	March to June 2028	Is the program on track? Which practices and warning channels work best?	February 2028 survey results, interviews, records review; external reviewer	Change course for the last 15 months
Final Evaluation	April to August 2029	Did the three outcomes change? What contributed to recovery from shocks? What will last?	February 2029 survey results, crop cuts, contribution analysis; external evaluator	Funder decisions; lessons for district plans

Both the mid-term review and final evaluation are done by outside teams chosen through competitive bids. They keep full independence over findings, and the program may comment on facts only. Their budget is in the MEL Budget section.

Learning Agenda

Learning Question	Why It Matters	Evidence	Needed By	Who Acts
Which climate-smart practices do farmers keep using after the first full season, and why do some drop them?	Decides which practices get training time in the second half	OC-1; IO-1; farmer interviews; plot visits	March 2028	Component Lead, Farming
Do warnings reach women, older people and households far from the center, and do people act on them?	Decides whether to add radio or village messengers	IO-2, OC-4 by group; 12 focus groups	June 2028	Component Lead, Preparedness
Do savings groups help households through a shock, or do the poorest stay out?	Decides on rule changes or grants aimed at the poorest	OC-5, IO-3, OP-6; group registers; interviews	September 2028	Program Director

Implementation

MEL Team

Position	Number	Level of Effort	Based
MEL Manager	1	Full time, 36 months	Regional office
MEL Officer	1	Full time, 36 months	Regional office
District MEL Assistants	3	Full time, months 4 to 36	One in each district
Enumerators and Supervisors	24 and 4	3 weeks per survey round	Hired locally
External Reviewer and Evaluator	2 teams	Mid-term (months 18 to 21) and final (months 31 to 35)	Contracted

MEL Budget

Category	Amount (USD)	What It Covers
Staff	276,000	MEL Manager, MEL Officer and three District MEL Assistants
Surveys	118,000	Three household survey rounds, crop cuts, focus groups and interviews
Evaluations	62,000	External mid-term review and final evaluation
Technology	21,500	Tablets, data server, offline forms, dashboard
Learning and Reporting	17,700	Learning workshops, community meetings, translation
Data Quality	7,800	Data quality assessments, back-checks, retraining
Total	503,000	7.4 percent of the USD 6.8 million program budget

Revision Schedule

Version	Date	Change
1.0	19 October 2026	First approved version

The MEL Manager reviews the plan each quarter, the Program Director approves changes, and the funder hears of any change to a target. A design change, a budget cut over 10 percent or a failed rain season brings an early revision.