Collaborating, Learning & Adapting (CLA)
Self-Assessment and Action Planning Worksheet

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mission/Office/Team/Unit: **USAID/East Tambu - Program Office**	Date: **May 21, 2020**	Facilitator/Co-Facilitator/Note-taker: **Jane Doe - Lead Facilitator; John Doe - Note-taker**

Overview and Subcomponent Topic Selection

On May 21, eight members of the USAID/East Tambu Program Office used the CLA Framework and CLA Maturity Tool to discuss what CLA looks like in practice, at various levels of maturity, in their work together.

For each of the subcomponents in the CLA Framework, the tool describes a spectrum of maturity, from 'Not Yet Present' to 'Institutionalized,' with each stage described on a card. Working through the cards catalyzed conversations about how the office is currently incorporating CLA into its work, and how the office can strengthen these efforts in the areas they prioritized.

The participants chose to discuss the following subcomponents: Technical Evidence Base, Adaptive Management, and Relationships and Networks. They also expressed interest in discussing External Collaboration, Decision-Making, and M&E for Learning, but there was not sufficient time to cover the additional topics.

Based on their self-assessment conversation, they generated a number of ideas about how they could incorporate CLA approaches into their work more systematically. They selected a few priority ideas for action planning, and developed a targeted and feasible approach to help guide their work over the next 12 months, at which point there will be a leadership change at the Mission and the team will take stock and reassess its CLA efforts.

USAID/East Tambu can also find tools, resources, and examples the CLA Toolkit.
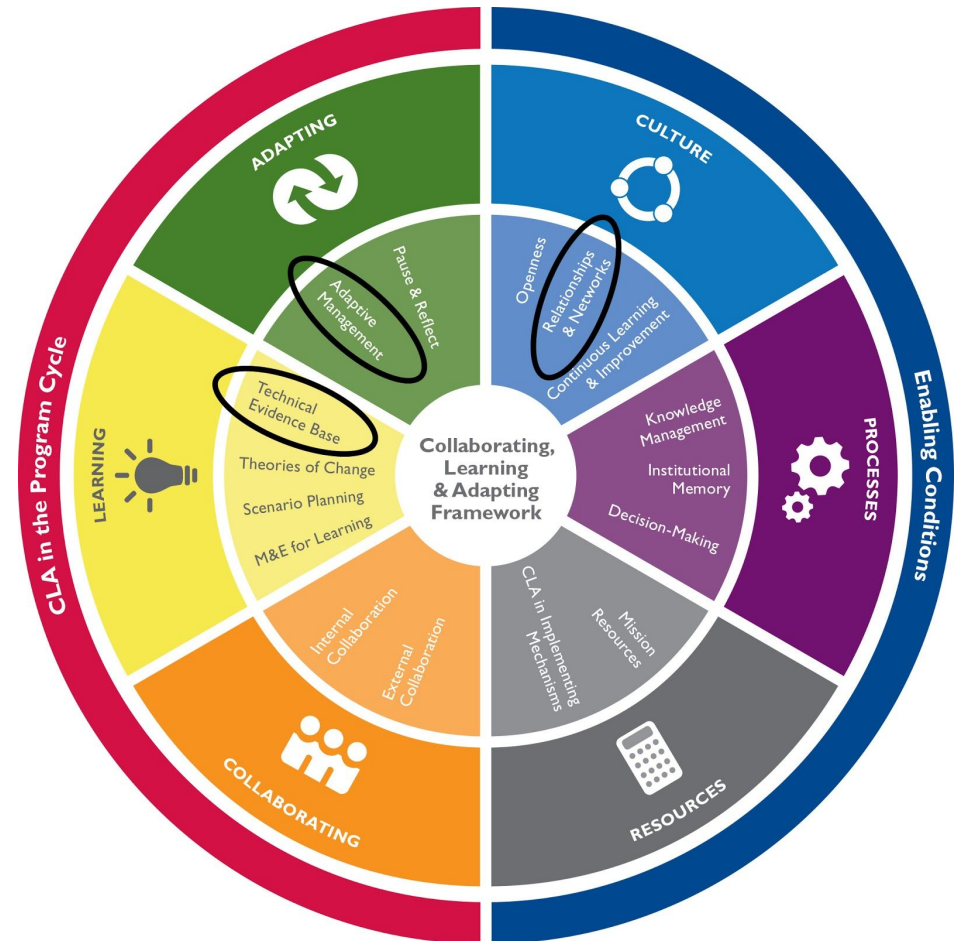
Technical Evidence Base - Discussion Notes

	NOT YET PRESENT	EMERGENT	EXPANDING	ADVANCED	INSTITUTIONALIZED
LEARNING	We are not familiar with the technical evidence base.	● We **informally** track the existing technical evidence base. ● We have identified **some knowledge gaps**.	● We primarily track and use **previous evaluation reports** to identify implications for programming. ● We fill knowledge gaps using **informal or ad hoc approaches**.	We **usually**: ● Track the existing technical evidence base, including **up-to-date research and subject matter expertise** generated by USAID and others. ● Use a **mix of relevant knowledge** types and sources to identify implications and inform strategy, projects, and/or activities. ● Fill gaps and **contribute new knowledge** to the evidence base through a mix of knowledge synthesis, research, piloting/experimentation, and evaluation.	We **consistently and systematically**: ● Track the existing technical evidence base, including up-to-date research and subject matter expertise generated by USAID and others. ● Use a mix of relevant knowledge types and sources to identify implications and inform strategy, projects, and/or activities. ● Fill gaps and contribute new knowledge to the evidence base through a mix of knowledge synthesis, research, piloting/experimentation, and evaluation.
Current State:		XXXX	XXXX		
Aspirational State (12 months):			X XXXXX	XX	

The group discussed Technical Evidence Base on two levels: working with East Tambu's technical teams to strengthen the technical evidence base in which their activities are grounded; and draw on the evidence base around best M&E practices to inform the M&E practices of mission staff and IPs.

Helping technical teams fill gaps in their technical evidence base:
- We fill knowledge gaps on an informal/ad hoc basis; we're not yet structured about this.
- Our ad hoc approach is okay when it means we can seize emergent opportunities; but being more structured would also be good – we don't have a clear strategy to spread technical evidence and increase its use across the mission.
- We do a little but not much to help people track the evidence base.
- We've made progress on evaluation quality and utilization at the activity-level, but expanding engagement with the broader mission and other stakeholders on evaluation evidence isn't something we do very much.
- We know what some of the knowledge gaps are that need to be filled in order to support decision making in implementation, but we're in between informal and formal in tracking the evidence base [which would help us fill the gaps]. Time is a major factor.

Helping mission staff and IPs apply good practice in their own M&E work:
- We have knowledge and expertise in M&E that we use, but we don't contribute M&E knowledge to the field in a structured way. We're not that mature in helping mission staff and IPs apply knowledge [about M&E practices] to their M&E work.
- Our engagement with IPs on M&E is standardized but not systemic – we've made a lot of progress in getting IPs up to speed on USAID approaches, but our method for doing this is to work with one partner at a time, when they're starting a new activity, or at their request. We've found this to be more effective than when we try to systematize our support through templates, etc.
- Our approach remains traditional/somewhat narrow. We struggle with "going out on a limb" to embrace non-traditional M&E practice, even those suggested by

the new ADS. We're more comfortable with what we know.
- Generating new evidence on M&E practices isn't a primary function of the office, so our contributions to the evidence base will necessarily be short of systematic.
- Mainly we help identify knowledge gaps/learning questions and raise questions about problematic indicators, etc.
- IPs have access to M&E expertise via relationships with organizations in East Tambu's broader M&E community.
- There are some AORs/CORS with whom we haven't yet established collegial relationships in order to advise on MEL.

Opportunity: We could do more mission socialization on M&E practices, especially learning-focused M&E, and to support the development of Project MEL Plans. We've focused on meeting demand; perhaps we should be a bit more proactive in pushing out our more systematic internal thinking/approaches.

CLA ACTION BRAINSTORMING AND PRIORITIZATION

Priority Action Ideas Through a group brainstorming exercise, the Office developed this list of ideas. They then voted on these ideas to determine which should be explored further through the action-planning process. The detailed action plan is listed below this table.	Impact	Effort	Votes

1. Work with technical teams to strengthen their evidence base and evidence utilization
   a. Participate in quarterly reviews with technical teams and their IPs (by sector) and provide data-based analyses or questions
   b. Sectoral Community of Practice sessions to share knowledge and ID shared evidence gaps around main intervention themes
	High	Medium-High	6

2. Work with technical teams to generate and help answer emerging learning questions for Projects, as part of Learning Agenda for Project MEL Plan)
   a. Conduct systematic review to identify performance improvement needs
   b. Agree on achievable priorities
   c. Develop approaches to address (b)
	High	High	1

3. Provide training opportunities for mission staff on causal logic & CLA to fill some M&E knowledge gaps	Medium-High	Medium-Low	1
4. Institutionalize pause & reflect practice to review and apply evidence to adapt a. Restructure monthly progress meetings to include knowledge sharing and action planning in addition to updates & operations	Medium	Medium	4

5. Contribute to expanding technical evidence base with sessions on
   a. Analysis
   b. Context monitoring
   c. Complexity aware monitoring
	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	4

INITIAL PLANNING ON PRIORITY ACTIONS

Within 12 months

Action Item	Expected Outcome(s)	Next Steps	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources
Regular convening of stakeholders (Program Office, COR/AORs, MEL Support Contract, IPs) to share knowledge and technical evidence	- Facilitate Pause & Reflect to look at evidence - Look at larger perspective and break silos - Time for analysis/sense-making - Peer learning	1. Determine which sectors to pilot and who will participate 2. Determine roles & responsibilities in evidence review and synthesis 3. Identify learning questions and prioritize based on need and feasibility 4. Mine DevResults, quarterly reports, and portfolio review notes 5. Develop a timeline for planning and holding the event 6. Program Office and MEL Support Contract help with agenda setting and preparations 7. Plan and host event	October(ish) for the pilot event *Note: could possibly be a good precursor to the EDE Competitiveness Assessment*	Tomas Dalia	- DevResults - Quarterly Reports - Technical teams from USAID and IPs - SMEs - Leadership support from mission management, including advance messaging and participation - Buy-in from technical office leadership