

Safe Water India Program - MLE Framework Brief

Updated May 8, 2023

Background of Safe Water India MLE design

Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation will be an essential aspect of Evidence Action's Safe Water program in India. As the program will be implemented in multiple state contexts with different levels of capacity, program MLE will be crucial to effectively tailor and drive Evidence Action's technical assistance in terms of targets and priorities at the state-level. We will seek to: 1) independently monitor and assess the quality of government processes and data collection systems, 2) support and strengthen government data collection systems which will allow for more robust, continuous, and sustained program performance, and 3) assess the quality and performance of Evidence Action's program and technical assistance (TA). Though we are still discussing details of our program design with the government of India, this document serves as a high-level overview of monitoring and evaluation activities that will be tailored very specifically to final program design at the various state-levels. In addition, monitoring results of the ongoing pilot will be crucial to inform the final monitoring design. Therefore, we expect that various aspects within this brief will evolve, be dropped, or be added.

MLE objectives

The overall objective of the Safe Water India MLE Framework is to effectively monitor the scale-up, program processes, and program performance to ensure effective understanding of the functional program model and inform decision-making. The principle objectives of the MLE Framework are as follow:

- Monitor and evaluate government processes and performance in program scale-up, including identification, installation, community sensitization, and training
- Verify ongoing program processes, such as supply chains, maintenance, chlorine delivery, training, and dosage accuracy
- Support the government to build and maintain robust data systems for tracking program progress through scale-up and maintenance phases
- Understand the performance of the program in terms of community acceptance of chlorinated water, the scale of population covered by the program
- Evaluate program performance through comparison of monitoring data to government data, and use comparison to track and improve program outcomes
- Track government policy and implementation at the state level to ensure adherence to best practices and drive advocacy priorities
- Leverage government or shared systems to track and evaluate program progress during scale-up and maintenance
- Provide the government with recommendations for program improvement and inform data-driven government advocacy through monitoring systems

Scale-Up Process Monitoring

Scale-up process monitoring will take place during the scale-up of the program, and will seek to monitor and mitigate risks involved with water system selection, installation, device tracks, community sensitization, training, and government tendering.

Eligibility and Installation: Before installation can take place, water systems must be confirmed to be suitable for hosting a chlorination device. Government staff (Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Department staff [RWSS] in Andhra Pradesh and Public Health Engineering Department [PHED] staff in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) will be responsible for verifying the eligibility of all water systems that are proposed to have chlorination devices installed. Evidence Action Regional Coordinators will conduct observational monitoring on a random sample of these eligibility visits. At eligible water systems, RWSS and PHED will oversee chlorination device installations and may leverage private sector agencies to ensure that protocols are followed and the device is installed and functions properly. Regional coordinators will conduct observational installation monitoring and spot checks at a sample of device installations to provide information on adherence to protocol and challenges with installation.

Community Sensitization: When communities are sensitized about the chlorination device and program, including safety and water usage and storage practices, are conducted by private sector agencies in line with installation, Evidence Action Regional Coordinators (RCs) will observe a sample of community sensitization meetings to evaluate adherence to community sensitization scripts/protocols, that promoters are elected, and understand concerns or challenges that occurred during sensitization. Additionally, Evidence Action will conduct community sensitization backchecks to evaluate if community sensitization took place and the effectiveness of sensitization activities in the community.

Initial Device Dosing: Once installation occurs, initial dose checking will likely be conducted by the Gram Panchayat Maintenance Officer or Engineer Assistant. These dose checks will be done approximately two weeks post-installation and again one month post-installation to test the chlorination levels in the water and ensure the device is functioning properly. Regional Coordinators will conduct dose checks during routine visits to water systems to ensure that devices are correctly dosing the water system at early stages.

Training: For JJM and third party agency staff to be equipped to perform verification and installation activities, as well as community sensitization and any necessary contracting out to firms, Evidence Action will train these staff in a training-of-trainers (ToT) manner. Evidence Action will independently monitor a random sample of these ToT and front-line training sessions through observation and knowledge tests with the participants to evaluate effectiveness and adherence to training materials.

Government Policy and Tendering: During the initial stages of program scale-up, government policy and tendering processes will be shaped with support from the experience and input from Evidence Action. Policy implementation and development of standard tendering processes will be supported and monitored by Evidence Action through attendance and participation in state government meetings and routine tracking of both stated policy and actual outcomes.

Routine Process Monitoring

Routine process monitoring activities will begin following installation of chlorination devices. Evidence Action's primary role will be to monitor and conduct quality checks to ensure the functioning of government systems and processes, and routine process monitoring will be primarily conducted by RCs.

Device Spot Checks, Supply, and Dosing: Though the government will be responsible for monitoring the devices dosing and to check for and address any maintenance and repair issues, Regional Coordinators will conduct random checks at water systems to ensure devices are functioning properly, have chlorine supply, and check dosing. The results of all quality checks will be used to deliver recommendations to the government for improving their systems and processes.

Training: For front-line functionaries to be equipped to perform and/or supervise operational checks and maintenance, Evidence Action will train government staff, implementation support agencies, and third party support agencies. Evidence Action will independently monitor a random sample of ToT and front-line training sessions through observation and knowledge tests with the participants to evaluate effectiveness and adherence to training materials.

Supportive Supervision: To ensure that front-line functionaries and contractors are effective in implementation of the program, Evidence Action may also support the implementation of a supportive supervision system. Supportive supervision will include state-level government staff conducting ongoing supervision of on-site work with a random or targeted sample of front-line workers as they go about routine activities such as chlorine delivery, supply chain work, maintenance, and community sensitization. During these supervision activities, the JJM staff will utilize a checklist to evaluate the performance of the front-line workers, and at the end of the activity will share the results with targeted mentorship to support the worker in improvement.

Government Tendering: After installation and set-up, as devices are being operated at water systems in a "maintenance" phase, Evidence Action will support the state government to design, monitor and track the tendering process. This information will be used to suggest course corrections and advocate for government policy regarding tendering.

Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring activities seek to independently monitor and evaluate program progress against performance targets and to evaluate the accuracy of reported key performance indicators, including the population covered by the program. Performance monitoring activities will be conducted by independent enumerators and by the Evidence Action MLE teams.

Device Spot Checks and Household Testing: Performance monitoring for this program will include unannounced visits to water systems independent enumerators to evaluate the functionality of the water system and chlorination device, and test whether chlorine is being dosed at an acceptable level. At each randomly selected water system, Evidence Action will speak with promoters and/or gram panchayat engineers to ask about the functionality of the water system and the chlorination device. After speaking to stakeholders, Evidence Action will visit randomly selected households to assess chlorinated water acceptance and reach to the

household level by testing household drinking water for chlorine, interviewing household heads, as well as collecting key household demographic data.

Information collected from performance monitoring visits to representative samples of water systems will be used in two ways: 1) to internally track progress and performance of program and government activities against stated goals and recommend key areas of focus for programmatic activities, and 2) to assess the accuracy, consistency, and effectiveness of government data collection and reporting systems of program operations and coverage.

Comparative Analysis of Government Data: Results of performance monitoring will be aggregated to district and state levels to conduct comparative analysis of independent monitoring results against government reporting systems. This will include comparisons of key performance indicators such as presence of chlorination devices in communities, household chlorine acceptance, device functionality rates, chlorine supply, and population with access to chlorinated water.

Data Quality Assessment: *Pending buy-in and agreement from government partners, including access to data systems, Evidence Action may conduct data quality assessments.* If Evidence Action finds significant gaps between data from performance monitoring and government data systems on key performance indicators, a Data Quality Assessment (DQA) will be triggered. The DQA will be a targeted assessment of government data systems at various levels of the data cascade (i.e. block, district, state) whereby information reported and aggregated at various reporting levels will be reviewed to identify areas for improvement.

Key Differences and Outstanding Questions

The MLE Framework for the Safe Water program in India will differ in key ways from the model that is being employed to monitor and evaluate Safe Water programming in Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi, especially for Process Monitoring (Performance Monitoring primary data collection in India will be fairly similar to that in Africa). This is because the government will be the primary program implementer, and we want to add a layer of process monitoring focused on government systems.

Therefore, the MLE Framework for the Safe Water program in India will leverage experience from East Africa in addition to government processes, systems, and data collection to effectively and rigorously monitor the program, some of which will be created in collaboration with, or with support from, Evidence Action. Monitoring key government processes, such as training, procurement, on-site work, and data collection/aggregation will be crucial aspects of program success and therefore the key focus of scale-up and process monitoring. Performance monitoring will have similarities to that in East Africa, and will be crucial to both independently assess program progress and performance on key indicators and evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of government data systems.

In addition, there are outstanding questions that will guide our ability to tailor the MLE framework to state-specific contexts as program design is finalized and iterated upon:

- **The detailed program design is still being developed:** As mentioned at the start of this document, the final MLE Framework will rely on the program design, which is not final and is likely to be iterated upon and evolve over the coming months. Therefore, we

therefore expect that certain aspects of the MLE strategy will be adapted, added, or dropped.

- **Uncertainty of government tracking systems:** We do not yet know the details of the data and tracking systems that the government will utilize to monitor installation, device operation, supply, acceptance, program geographic and population coverage. Understanding these systems and supporting the government to build capacity in this area will clarify how we will tailor monitoring systems.
- **Access to government tracking systems:** At this stage we don't have clarity in our ability to obtain real-time access to these systems, which will be crucial for both process and performance monitoring. In particular, the ability for Evidence Action to have routine and real-time access to these systems will dictate the design of comparison and evaluation of the strength of government data and tracking systems.