

Evidence Action | NO LEAN SEASON

PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

This document gives a high level overview of the process and performance monitoring plans for the NLS program in Bangladesh (2017). Process and performance monitoring is a key part of the program delivery toolkit and can be adapted to other countries as the program expands.

1. BACKGROUND

In 2016, Evidence Action created program implementation protocols to allow our implementing partner - RDRS - to effectively deliver the program. This year, we are incorporating ‘ongoing process and performance monitoring’ into the program. Following the activities of the last two years, 2017 presents an opportunity to assess how No Lean Season would be delivered at scale: with RDRS implementing the program and Evidence Action providing strategic direction and technical assistance, mobilizing resources, and conducting independent program monitoring of RDRS. This year, Evidence Action is also conducting a randomized control trial to test No Lean Season at scale in order to answer several outstanding questions related to the impact, cost-effectiveness, and scalability of the program.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND KEY INDICATORS

The monitoring of No Lean Season is guided by the program’s Theory of Change. We have outlined the high level Theory of Change in the table below. A more detailed version can be found on the NLS Process and Performance Monitoring Framework document.

| HIGH LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| INPUTS | ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES | IMPACT |
| Funds for subsidies and tools for implementation are available | Subsidies are made available to those affected by seasonality and who may be risk averse towards migration | Targeted households have information and access available subsidies | Risks associated with migration are reduced and additional migration is induced | Migrants see improvements in HH income and consumption; likelihood to re-migrate in subsequent years is increased |

The Theory of Change informs the key indicators and the full monitoring framework for No Lean Season. The indicators are intended to track and measure program processes and performance. The full list of indicators can be found on the NLS Process and Performance Monitoring Framework document.

3. PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Process monitoring tracks the program's **activities** and **outputs**. Activities are monitored to ensure they occur efficiently while outputs are tracked to ensure they are produced as a result of the activities. With implementers being aware that program activities are closely monitored, process monitoring also provides impetus for them to carry out activities efficiently and in line with protocols.

Performance monitoring tracks the program's **outcomes** - the program's immediate influence on target beneficiaries. Performance monitoring allows for ongoing verification and validation of the program's theory of change.

Both process and performance monitoring involve the collection of two interrelated sets of data:

- **Administrative data** is collected by the RDRS in the course of implementation. This includes training attendance, household listing, offer attendance, migration compliance checks, loan recovery, etc.
- **Verification data** is collected by Evidence Action enumerators from a sample of respondents or site observations in order to confirm that various program processes have been performed effectively and in adherence to protocol. The verification surveys and sampling plan are being developed and refined this year. The details of the sampling approach to be used for verifying each phase of the program is summarized on the NLS Process and Performance Monitoring Framework document.

Key forms and scripts for data collection have been digitized and the data is collected in real time using CommCare, a mobile-based application.

3.1 PROCESS MONITORING: Process monitoring involves collecting data on the following activities:

i) Migration Organizers' Trainings. RDRS' Migration Organizers deliver the program at the last mile. They conduct village and household surveys, inform prospective migrants about the benefits and risks of migration, extend offers to eligible households and participate in loan recovery. It is critical that Migration Organizers have a strong understanding of how to conduct each of these processes. To that end, Migration Organizers undertake training prior to each phase of the program. To monitor the effectiveness of the trainings, Evidence Action conducts phone-based post-tests after each training session using a random sample of Migration Organizers. These tests enable us to measure the Migration Organizers' knowledge and to assess the knowledge

retention of Migration Officers following training. Additionally, Evidence Action enumerators observe trainings to ensure the material covered is comprehensive and covered in full.

ii) Targeting. The targeting process takes place in two stages. Village surveys are conducted first and followed by household surveys.

- a. **Village surveys:** Village surveys are used to profile and geo-locate all the prospective villages in which No Lean Season may operate. RDRS identifies the list of villages within each particular catchment area. A catchment area includes all villages located within an hour's bicycle distance from a specific RDRS branch office.

Migration Organizers then conduct a survey of a Village Elder in each village according to predefined guidelines.

This year, program delivery sites have been sampled randomly from a list of all prospective villages. At scale, we estimate that one third of the villages in any particular catchment area will participate in the program each year. The program will rotate to include different villages each year, beginning the cycle again once all villages in a catchment area have been reached.

To monitor this step in the program implementation in future years, we plan to select a random sub-sample of villages in each branch to verify the villages are correctly geo-located and labeled. This will ensure we are maintaining a working village list each year.

- b. **Household surveys:** Household surveys are conducted in all the villages that are selected to participate in the program. Household surveys are used to identify which households are eligible to receive the travel subsidies. Household surveys are conducted by RDRS Migration Organizers using the household survey tool.

To verify the quality and completeness of the data collected in the household survey, Evidence Action conducts household verification surveys using a sample of targeted households. This year, we randomly sampled 748 households in 123 randomly sampled villages for verification surveys.

iii) Offer. With a list of eligible households available from Evidence Action, RDRS Migration Organizers communicate offers to eligible households using an Offer Script. The subsidies are offered as interest-free conditional soft

loans. The condition for receiving the money is a commitment to migrating. Migration Organizers extend the offer while communicating the risks and benefits associated with migration. Eligible households who are approached with an offer are free to decline the offer. The Migration Organizers record acceptances and refusals of offers in the offer form.

To verify that households have been provided with all the relevant information necessary for making an informed decision about whether to accept the offer, Evidence Action carries out offer meeting observations for a random sample of offer meetings, and then interviews a random sub-sample of participants post-meeting.

Offer meetings were randomly sampled for the observation survey. During observations, Evidence Action enumerators collect data on whether the Migration Organizer followed protocol and covered key aspects of the script for the offer meeting, as well as collect data on attendance to ascertain who and how many people are attending offer meetings. Additionally, four eligible households were sampled per Migration Organizers for the post-meeting survey; two participants from the observed offer meeting and two other eligible households that were scheduled to attend another offer meeting, but where the offer meeting is unobserved. Evidence Action uses these surveys to assess offer recipients' understanding of key information about the subsidy and checks that they were not pressured into accepting the subsidy. In total, this year, Evidence Action randomly sampled 104 offer meetings for observation and 416 eligible households for post-meeting surveys.

iv) Loan Disbursement: Subsidies are disbursed to eligible households that are willing to take the interest-free conditional loan. Only one subsidy is issued per household. Subsidies are issued to a working age member of the eligible household. To facilitate the tracking of recipient households, Migration Organizers collect data on loan disbursement using a loan disbursement form that provides the administrative data for this step in the program.

At the time of disbursement, it is important that subsidy recipients are able to accurately recall key information about the subsidy - including the terms of loan repayment. To verify this key step, Evidence Action makes random, unannounced visits to branch offices during the disbursement process. During these visits, loan disbursement procedures are observed and verified, and loan recipients are interviewed to assess whether they have a correct understanding about the terms of the loan repayment.

Similar to the verification activities for offer meetings, Evidence Action

conducts an observation survey and a loan recipient post-survey. Both the observation and recipient surveys assess whether the proper protocols were carried out during the disbursements and whether the recipient understood the conditions of the loan. In addition, these verification activities check that only eligible households receive the loan, that each eligible household received a maximum of one stipend of the correct amount, and that the recipient matches the photo and ID in RDRS records.

This year, we randomly sampled 104 disbursement days (or 2 disbursement days per branch) and randomly sampled an estimated 416 loan recipients (or an average of 4 recipients per disbursement day). Loan disbursement verification is currently an on-going activity and will conclude December 31, 2017.

Note that as a registered microfinance institution in Bangladesh, RDRS is subject to extensive domestic regulation and compulsory auditing. This is one of the reasons that we have housed the program within their microfinance arm and not their 'development' arm, which operates as a separate entity. This provides additional scrutiny to the appropriate disbursement of loans.

3.2 PERFORMANCE MONITORING: Performance monitoring involves collecting data on the following program outcomes:

1. **Migration Compliance:** Migration Organizers make regular visits to the households that receive the subsidy to check migration compliance. They use the migration compliance survey to ascertain whether subsidy recipients actually migrate.

This key performance metric is verified by Evidence Action by visiting a sample of households and conducting a supplementary monitoring survey to assess the incidence of migration, verify loan and migrant details, and detect any coercion from Migration Organizer. In this stage, we draw a random sample from the entire set of HHs surveyed in the household targeting survey (including both eligible and ineligible households) in order to understand migration rates across the entire community. In steady state, we would also like to estimate the rate at which beneficiaries of the program re-migrate in the years following their receipt of the subsidy, even without the program intervention.

This year, a total of 748 households were randomly sampled for the migration compliance verification survey using a two-stage random sampling, similar to that of the Household Targeting verification survey. In other words, we randomly sample 123 villages and randomly select 6 households per village.

After calculating the sample size, we then create three groups from which to sample for this survey (2 households from each group in each village). These three groups are: 'Accepted Loan' (households that took out the loan); 'Eligible, Non-Loan' (households that were eligible for the loan but did not take the loan yet); and, 'Not eligible' (households that were not eligible for the loan'). This design allows us to capturing the rate of the migration in these communities, regardless of whether the household took out a No Lean Season loan.

- 2. Loan Recovery and Migration Debrief:** Migration Organizers visit households to recover the subsidy amount from households that are able to pay. Migration Organizers record their visits to beneficiary households on the loan recovery form. Loan forgiveness is considered and granted, per agreed upon criteria, for recipients who:
- a. Were unable to travel because of illness, injury, death, or other catastrophic event
 - b. Traveled and tried to find work, but were unsuccessful and would thus be worse off if they were obligated to repay the loan, and
 - c. Traveled, found work, but did not earn enough (i.e. twice as much as the loan amount) to repay the loan without incurring substantial financial hardship.

Note: This list includes common reasons, but is not meant to be exhaustive.

The terms of loan repayment are intentionally soft. It is important that households do not feel pressured into re-paying the subsidy amount. Evidence Action plans to assess loan repayment activities to verify repayment rates and to check that households were not unduly pressured into paying back the loan. The loan recovery verification survey will be conducted with a random sample of loan recipient households. Sample size calculations have not been completed as of yet, but will allow for a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error.

In addition to the loan recovery verification activities, Evidence Action plans to conduct migration debrief verification. Upon migrants' return, Migration Organizers follow-up at the household to collect loan repayments and to conduct a debriefing about the household's migration experience. This debrief survey conducted by Migration Organizers collects data on migration dates, employment, wages, and costs of migration. The migration debrief verification survey will verify the data collected by the Migration Organizers is consistent and reliable. It is planned that these activities will accompany the loan recovery verification as these two steps are implemented together by RDRS, and verification surveys should be carried out in a similar manner.