



STAR-Ghana
Strengthening Transparency, Accountability
and Responsiveness in Ghana

STAR-Ghana MEL Manual (Final Draft)

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Acronyms

CS	- Civil Society
CSO	- Civil Society Organisations
DANIDA	- Danish International Development Agency
DFID	- Department for International Development
EU	- European Union
GESI	- Gender and Social Inclusion
M&E	- Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MIS	- Management Information System
NGOs	- Non Governmental Organisations
NO	- National Organisation
ODI	- Overseas Development Institute
PE	- Political Economy
PEA	- Political Economy Analysis
PLWHIV/AIDS	- People living with HIV/AIDS
PMT	- Programme Management Team
PWD	- Persons with Disabilities
SC	- Steering Committee
SDD	- Social Development Direct
TOC	- Theory of Change
VfM	- Value for Money

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Section 1. Introduction

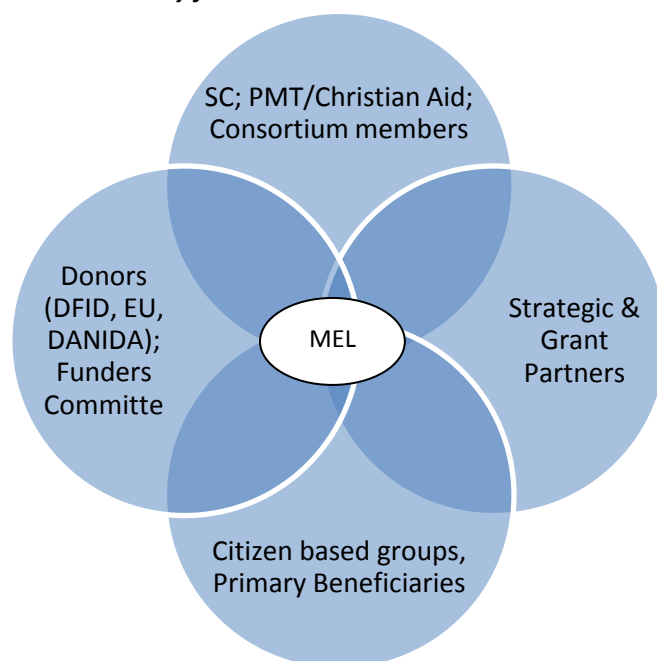
1.1. What is the STAR-Ghana MEL Manual?

This manual outlines the programme approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning, which is oriented towards informing STAR-GHANA's needs for learning, improved performance and evidence. It aims to provide concise guidance as well as promote a common understanding on processes, standards, principles and requirements of monitoring, evaluation and learning within STAR-Ghana programme context.

1.2. Who is this manual for?

The manual is directed to the Steering Committee (SC), which has oversight responsibility for programme development and implementation; the Programme Management Team (PMT), which is the implementing unit of Christian Aid, the Contractor; programme staff, including overseeing partner projects; and the partners with who STAR-Ghana is developing and implementing initiatives towards achieving its goal and purpose. It is most relevant to the Head of Programmes, Senior M&E Manager, M&E Officers and the Programme Director. Through the life of the programme, SC and PMT will carefully consider the M&E needs and benefits for each stakeholder (see Table 1) and integrate them throughout M&E processes to reflect the programmes ethos - an accountable and learning organisation – forwards to partners and primary beneficiaries, and backwards to donors and funders.

Figure 1: STAR-Ghana Accountability for MEL



The M&E system is subject to changes as the programme progresses, as such the manual will be revisited regularly to update or make revisions to reflect those changes.

1.3. What is the purpose of the manual?

The manual is a central management tool that aims to support the SC, PMT, and partners; to achieve programme objectives; and maximise impact, through review and learning with key stakeholders including targeted citizen based groups and primary beneficiaries. Its aims are outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Aims of the manual

	Area	Aim
1	Performance monitoring	Support internal performance monitoring, particularly on progress and achievements in the four strategic roles (Convener, Catalysis, Coordinator, and Learning).
2	Ongoing programme improvement	Support data collection and analysis that provides real-time performance information with direct feedback into programmatic decision loops.
3	Internal learning	Support internal learning and evidencing of key influencing approaches so that STAR-Ghana can learn from ‘what works’, ‘what doesn’t work’ and ‘for whom’.
4	Adaptive management	Adopt a proactive ‘fail fast’ learning strategy through regular testing and validation of the TOC and Political Economy PEA for continued relevance.
5	Rigorous reflection on effectiveness	Support rigorous reflection on programme effectiveness, demonstrating how STAR-Ghana is advancing towards the achievement of results from 2016 – 2018, up to 2020 and beyond.
6	Evidence generation	Support building a body of evidence demonstrating successful strategies for citizen (women, men, girls, boys, PWD and sub-groups) participation and influencing, CSO/ parliamentary engagement, and policy change.
7	Learning, Knowledge Management and Communications	Support the Learning, Knowledge Management and Communication roles by demonstrating STAR-Ghana’s contribution to change to external audiences and building programme credibility and reputation – particularly among institutional donors and the general public.
8	Guide for grant making component	Serve as a guiding framework for developing MEL systems and processes for the programme’s grant making component.

1.4. What will you find in the manual?

This manual provides guidance on what STAR-Ghana seeks to change and how; the programme M&E Framework, including evidence and learning needs, M&E approaches, and plan, as well as M&E levels and roles. Additionally, it outlines the approach to gender and social inclusion (GESI) and value for money (VfM) from the M&E perspective, and provides guidance on M&E resources and the process for engaging with partners around M&E.

Section 2: What does STAR-Ghana seek to change and how?

This section provides clarity on what STAR-Ghana seeks to change and how, how change is expected to happen, what indicators will be used for measuring change and what the evaluation and learning questions are.

2.1. Context

Ghana has achieved economic progress in recent years, and made significant strides in consolidating democracy. However, there are challenges with macroeconomic stability, growing geographic and social inequalities, and concerns about the quality of and access to public services. Poorly structured institutions and a culture of patronage contribute to excessive executive dominance, whilst responsiveness of the executive and state institutions to citizens' demands and concerns is weak. Although civil society (CS) is active, its efforts are constrained by challenges of credibility, legitimacy, funding and effectiveness in engaging with critical national issues.

Previous governance programmes including STAR- Ghana have achieved good results, primarily through supporting the work of civil society organizations (CSOs). However, there is need to increase efforts towards achieving strategic and systemic level impact, as well as supporting citizens' movements. Additionally, the PEA scoping study undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) highlights, among others, CSO sustainability and lack of joined up working between CSOs due to competing interests as critical issues to be addressed.

2.2 Vision

The vision of change of STAR-Ghana is an active and engaged society capable of articulating citizens' demands and an effective state that is responsive and accountable to its citizens. STAR-Ghana aims to develop a vibrant, well-informed and assertive civil society, and to catalyse active citizenship, to advance systemic, transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality and inclusive citizen access to high quality, accountable, public services. STAR-Ghana aims to bring changes in three key domains (base) for longer term change in civil society (top), as shown on figure 2.



Figure 2: STAR-Ghana domains of change

The domains are represented as a pyramid with three building blocks at the base. The arrows represent the interactions between the three domains. The fourth building block represents impact expected to be achieved as a result of change in the three domains. Additionally, STAR has a strategic objective to develop a national organization (NO) that would facilitate the transition of the programme to local ownership and develop a sustainable source of funding for CS efforts beyond the end of the programme. Changes delivered in the three base domains would be crucial to the transition into a body corporate.

2.3. Strategies for change

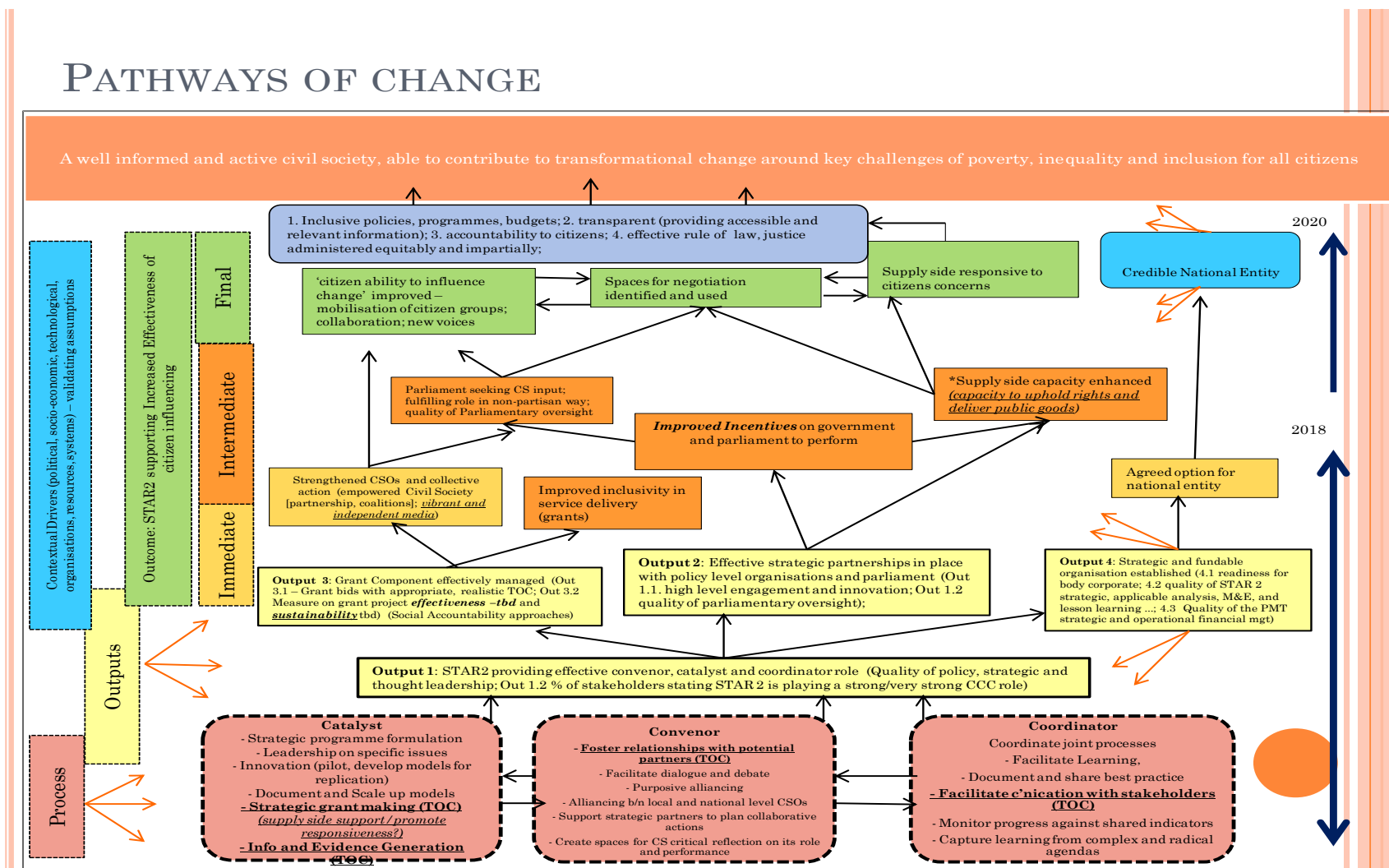
To achieve the above vision, STAR-Ghana will act as:

- Convener: support the creation, utilization and institutionalization of spaces for collective CS engagement in order to increase responsiveness of the executive and key state institutions at both local and national levels; and
- Coordinator: support the implementation of strategies by CS and Parliament itself to enhance the effectiveness of the latter in exercising its oversight role over executive action and to be more responsive to citizen demands and concerns.
- Catalyst: support the growth of citizen-based groups and their linkages with CSOs in order to strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of the CS voice on national issues;

2.4. Pathways of Change

Figure 3 explores the pathways to change through linkages with the current DFID logframe and theory of change, slightly amended for the proposal.

Figure 3: STAR's pathways of change



2.5. How will change happen?

2.5.1. Programme theory of change

The theory of change, outlined in the Business case, was designed based on lessons and evidence from DFID's overall empowerment and accountability framework. The core strategic lesson was that a better funded civil society is necessary, but insufficient on its own, in terms of driving societal change. STAR-Ghana will therefore focus on playing a strategic, analytical, convenor, coordinator and catalyst role backed up by a small number of long-term partnerships (2-5) and competitive/managed calls for proposals, leading ultimately to the establishment of STAR as a self-sustaining, wholly Ghanaian institution.

Figure 4 presents an organic approach to interpreting the theory of change.

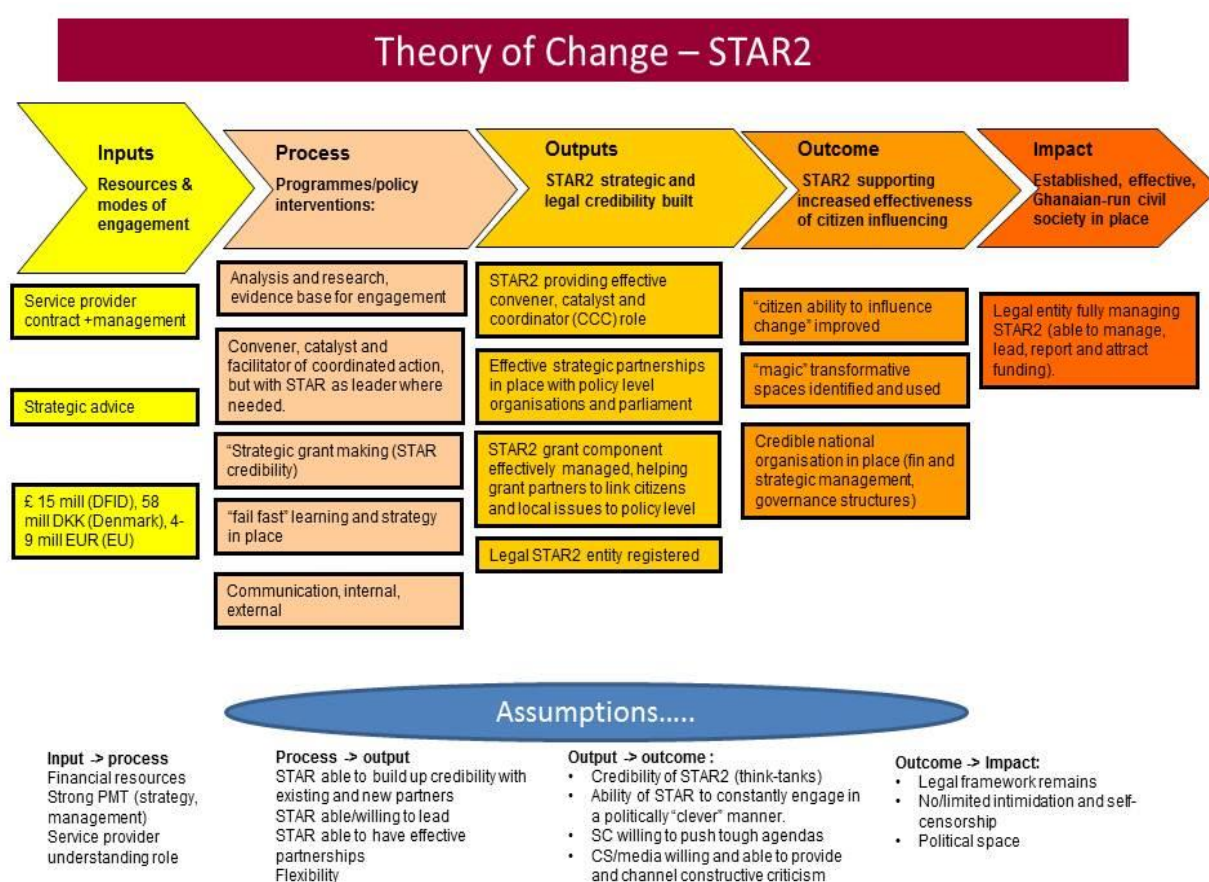


Figure 4: STAR-Ghana Theory of Change¹

¹ From Christian Aid document "presentation ideas"

Within the programme theory are multiple levels of change, with their own hypotheses and assumptions. They include 1) strategies and internal processes (Outputs 1, 4 and 5); 2) strategic partnerships (Output 2); 3) grant component (Output 3); 4) citizens influencing change as well as establishment of a national mechanism (Outcome). These require unpacking further for a clearer understanding of how change will happen, both in terms of breadth and depth.

The TOC will be the founding block of the M&E system. The role of the M&E system will be to the extent to which the ToC assumptions and causal pathways hold true and determine if STAR-Ghana's intervention model contribute to the impact and in which conditions. The role will not be only to demonstrate results, but also provide the building blocks for capturing and documenting learning to enable the programme to adapt. The TOC narrative is currently being refined and will be used to update this section of the manual when completed.

2.5.2. Joint initiatives and grant partner theories of change

Additionally, the PMT will work with strategic partners to develop theories of change for specific initiatives, and facilitate development of grant/fund specific ones with grants partners to ensure they contribute to call specific theories of change.

2.5.3. Assumptions underpinning the theory of change

Outcome -> Impact

The assumptions at this level are mainly around the absence of intimidation; availability of legal frameworks for political engagement; 'spaces' for dialogue and negotiation identified, created and used; political space remaining stable; political will (Supply/Demand sides); capacity of citizens to redress /overcome demand side barriers holding them back from participation and voice; and parliament proactively seeking input from CS in submissions to the House. To an extent, STAR-Ghana itself can influence these assumptions. As such these assumptions are realistic. That said there is currently a trend in a number of other countries towards limiting space for civil society, so these assumptions have to be monitored carefully.

Output -> Outcome

The main assumptions for this step are around continued:

Output 1: STAR credibility; Capacity of SC to undertake their new roles; the ability/willingness of the SC to be politically astute and opportunistic; SC willing to push tough agendas; SC ability to effect change; SC is able to strike the right balance between being proactive and reactive; Civil Society buys into STAR-Ghana vision; CS/media willing and able to provide and channel constructive criticism to SC/PMT; STAR-Ghana brand clearly distinguished from existing 'STAR' brands. These are all relatively different and new types of assumptions with limited historical experiences. As such, this link in the Theory of Change is the most risky and will require the most careful monitoring.

Output 2: Potential strategic partners are willing to engage with STAR –GHANA; Parliament has the capacity (political) to effectively play its role in effecting change in the lives of citizens; Citizens are willing to engage with parliament; Citizens have the capacity to engage with parliament

Output 3: Grant partners have capacity to deliver on projects; CSO and citizen based groups have the appetite for collective action; Target service providers have the capacity (technical/human/financial) to provide quality services; Citizens are willing to engage with CSO; CSOs are interested in driving citizen-led agendas forward; CSOs have the capacity to continue support citizen influencing activities after STAR-Ghana funding ends; management of risks identified by grant partners are within their control.

Output 4: SC's ability to change and perform the new roles at a strategic level; SC's ability to incentivise learning (from both what works and what does not work); PMT's ability to be innovative, flexible and adaptive; PMT's ability to incentivise learning (from both what works and what doesn't work); Christian Aid and the Consortiums ability to provide quality technical oversight, input and support; willingness of SC, PMT, Christian Aid and Consortium members to work collaboratively; willingness of donors to incentivize flexibility and adaptive management; Commitment of donors to funding STAR-Ghana until 2020

Output 5: Continued STAR-Ghana credibility; ability and willingness of the SC to engage with relevant decision makers, CSOs, citizen-based groups and beneficiaries; SC is politically astute; ability of the body corporate to attract different sources of funding; ability of the SC to demonstrate its added value to the CSO sector; demand and interest of CS for the body corporate; body corporate will be sustained into medium-long term

Process -> Output

This step has a set of assumptions around STAR's – and especially the PMT's - ability to change and perform the new roles at a strategic level, create opportunities for engagement and be opportunistic, as well as flexible and adaptive. The change is significant and thus carries risks, but at the same time much of the change has been driven from within STAR and has already started during the last year of STAR1. Others are outlined under Outputs 3 and 4.

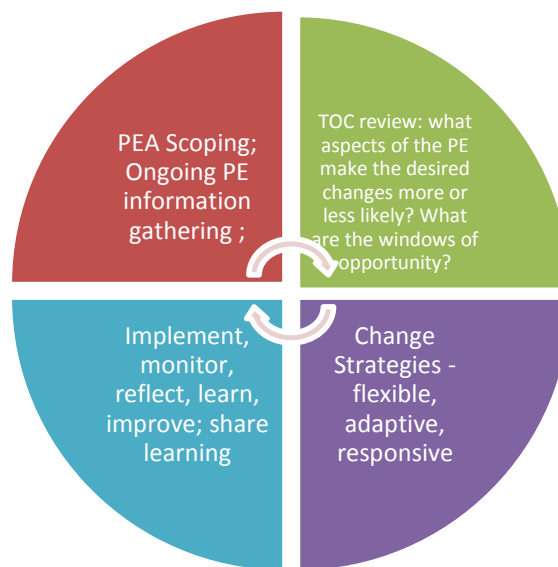
2.5.4 How does STAR ensure continued relevance?

The PEA scoping study at inception will support review of the programme design, grounding it on a) the political needs and interests of Ghanaian Citizens and Civil Society, b) solid evidence of how change happens, c) appropriate strategies and tools for bringing about change, and d) a clear description of the theory of change. In practice, this means the political economy approach will become a way of thinking and working in the programme. The PMT will conduct regular 'light touch' analysis and regular reviews of the theory of change to test assumptions and update planned strategies and activities, to ensure continued relevance to the operational context. During these reviews hypotheses at all levels of change and the assumptions underpinning them will be tested to determine if they hold true.

Contextual knowledge will inform day to day programming decisions, and the development of the underlying theory of change, to understand how change happens in practice and to incorporate strong evidence gathering to inform subsequent actions. PE knowledge will also contribute to the programme baseline, and to monitoring and evaluation. Drawing on the learning from the first phase, the focus will be on the strategic use of contextual knowledge to inform day to day programming decisions, to inform monitoring and development of the underlying theory of change, to understand how change happens in practice and to incorporate strong evidence gathering into planning, implementation and monitoring processes. The key shift in emphasis from phase 1 is the new strategic focus on *facilitating*, *supporting* and *influencing* processes and interventions which aim at achieving systemic change in socio-economic and political institutions and structures

Figure 5 shows the links between PE and TOC reviews.

Fig 5: PEA/TOC review cycle



Adapted from Duncan Green's Promoting Active Citizenship, April 2013

Section 2. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

2.1. What are the key indicators for measuring change?

The logframe is the main reference document on strategic level indicators. It has been revised following recommendations following development of the M&E framework and discussions with the PMT, donors, SC and Consortium members. Major changes include:

1. Impact level: statement and indicator changed to focus on citizens instead of the national entity.
2. Outcome level: unpacking 'citizen's ability to influence change' to distinguish between enhanced capacities, participation and supply side responsiveness.
3. Output level: rewording a number of indicators and suggesting others as outlined in the table below:

The logframe will be reviewed at key stages of the programme cycle to reflect changes in the political economy and theory of change, in consultation with the Steering Committee, donors and Consortium members

Table 2: STAR -GHANA – Strategic level indicators for measuring change

Statements	Indicators	
Impact: A well informed and active civil society, able to contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality and inclusion for all citizens	Impact Indicator 1: Level of human development in Ghana	
	Impact Indicator 2: Level of safety and rule of law in Ghana	
Outcome: Increased Effectiveness of citizen influencing	Outcome Indicator 1: Citizen ability to influence change	Outcome Indicator 1.1: Citizen groups/CSO's and projects influencing public policy; holding state and non-state duty bearers accountable; empowering citizens and facilitating access to services.
		Outcome Indicator 1.2: Level of citizen's participation and human rights.
		Outcome Indicator 1.3: % of citizen groups/CSOs supported by STAR-Ghana who demonstrate improved ability to influence change.
	Outcome Indicator 2: Credible national mechanism in place (financial and strategic management; governance structures)	
Output 1: STAR-Ghana providing effective convenor, coordinator, catalyst and learning role	Output 1.1: Quality of policy, strategic and thought leadership	
	Output 1.2: % stakeholders stating STAR is playing a strong/very strong	Convener role
		Catalyst role
		Coordinator role
	Output 1.3: % of stakeholders stating STAR is playing a strong/very strong learning role	
Output 2: Effective strategic partnerships in place with government institutions, policy level organisations, and parliament	Output 2.1: Measure on effectiveness of high-policy engagement and innovation	
	Output 2.2: Quality of Parliamentary oversight and engagement with citizens	
	Output 2.3: Quality of interactions between a) high policy institutions; b) Parliament, and relevant state actors	
Output 3: STAR-Ghana funding mechanisms effectively managed, helping partners to link citizens and	Output 3.1 % projects/programmes with evidence of contributing to call-specific theories of change (focus on empowerment)	
	Output 3.2: % of projects/programmes evaluated as meeting set goals (with a strong focus on embedding GESI)	

local issues to policy/decision makers and their representatives.	Output 3.3: % of partners with systems in place for identifying and mitigating risks
	Output 3.4: Measure of sustainability of partner organisations (CSO sector sustainability)
Output 4: Ghanaian owned, strategic and sustainable organisation established	Output 4.1: Readiness for body corporate (quality of options, ownership by SC)
	Output 4.2: Measure of SC's self-assessment of strategic direction and oversight
	Output 4.3: Measure of PMT's self-assessment of influence on SC processes and outputs (embedding learning, GESI, adaptive programming, etc.)
	Output 4.4: Quality of PMT management systems and processes
	Output 4.5: Quality of SC/PMT organisational learning culture
Output 5: Communities of Practice established, functioning effectively and learning for change	Output 5.1: No. (and themes, including GESI) of communities of practice established
	Output 5.1: No. of communities of practice meetings held
	Output 5.3: No. of models a) documented; and b) shared nationally and internationally by communities of practice
	Output 5.4: No. of changes resulting from communities of practice learning

2.1.1 What other indicators will STAR-Ghana measure?

For a programme with high level outputs, outcomes and multiple processes, logframe indicators alone will not suffice to tell the story of change. All logframe indicators are therefore disaggregated into change areas and further into lower level indicators as appropriate, to provide the fine grain for measuring programme performance, determining the breadth and depth of achievement, and facilitating judgements about these. Together with high level indicators, these will constitute STAR-Ghana's 'complement of indicators', emphasizing the need for multiple indicators to really tell the story of change. They will be a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators and include process indicators for delivering on the Convenor, Catalyst, Coordinator and Learning roles, which will play a major role in the 'fail fast' learning strategy.

2.2. What is STAR-Ghana Evaluation Approach?

STAR GHANA's overall approach to evidencing change will focus on understanding how the programme and the sum of joint initiatives and partner projects contribute to change, explaining and demonstrating elements that generate change and key success factors, plus how internal and external factors make that change process possible. Originally articulated by John Mayne,² contribution analysis is an approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in real-life program evaluations. It offers a step-by-step approach designed to help managers, researchers, and policymakers arrive at conclusions about the contribution their program has made (or is currently making) to particular outcomes (Better Evaluation), as illustrated in figure 6.

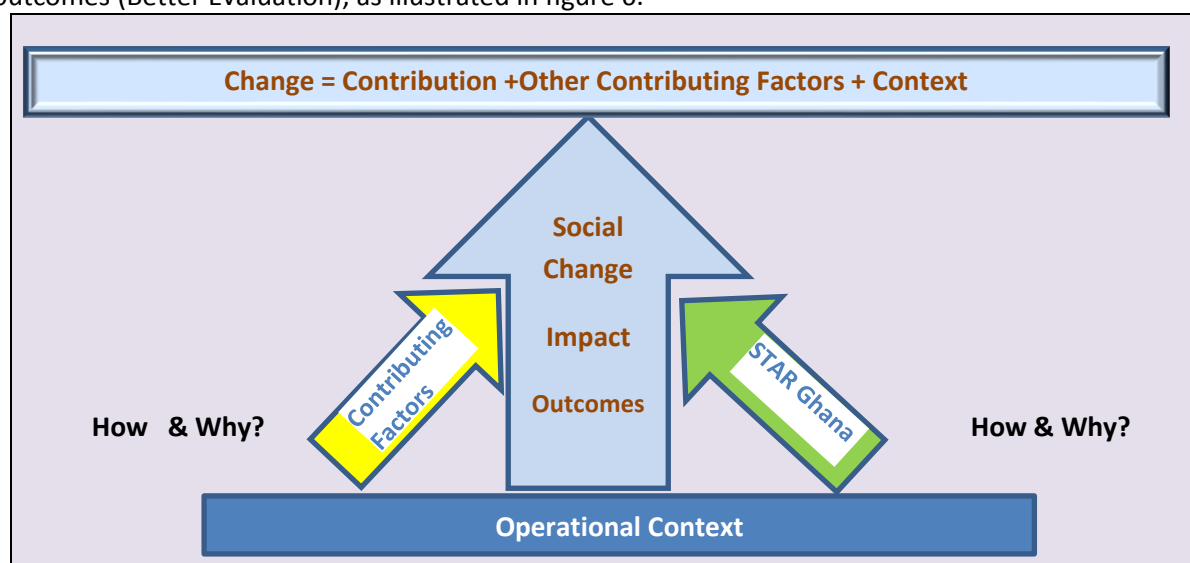


Figure 6: Approach to evidence change

Contribution analysis helps to confirm or revise a theory of change; it is not intended to be used to surface or uncover and display a hitherto implicit or inexplicit theory of change. The report from a contribution analysis is not definitive proof, but rather provides evidence and a line of reasoning from which we can draw a plausible conclusion that, within some level of confidence, the program has made an important contribution to the documented results (Better Evaluation).

2.2.1. What are STAR's evaluation questions?

Table 3 below outlines evaluation and learning questions. These will be developed further through the life of the programme and at key evaluative stages.

Table 3: evaluation and learning questions

	Evaluation and Learning Questions	Stakeholder
Impact	Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the level of access (physical, financial, quality) of Ghanaian citizens to services (education, health, social protection) What is the status of safety and rule of law? Do all Ghanaians have equal access to justice? Etc. Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the programme (STAR-Ghana) done what it said it would do? Did STAR-Ghana make a difference? 	Internal (Donors, SC, PMT, Consortium Members, Programme Staff, Partners) External (Ghanaian citizens, CS, International audience)
Outcomes	Accountability What changed as a result of the programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational: What is the level of credibility of STAR-Ghana? Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has citizen ability to influence change improved? To what extent have spaces of dialogue been created/used innovatively? To what extent has the quality parliamentary oversight improved To what extent has the supply side been responsive to citizen concerns and demands? Sustainability To what extent will the benefits of the programme continue after the programme is phased out? Learning TBD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What worked and why? What didn't work so well and why? What could be done differently? (long term structures that have been put in place to facilitate learning?) 	Internal (Donors, SC, PMT, Consortium Members, Programme Staff, Partners) External (Ghanaian citizens, CS, International audience)
Outputs	Accountability Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have we delivered? Has the programme done the right things? Did we achieve what we intended in a timely and cost effective manner? What factors contributed to achieving outcomes? What have we learned? What changes should be made to the programme? Relevance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were the programme's objectives consistent with beneficiaries' needs Learning TBD	Internal (Donors, SC, PMT, Consortium Members, Programme Staff)
Processes	Accountability Efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were finance, personnel and materials available on time and in the right quantities and quality? Were activities implemented on schedule and within budget? Learning	Internal (Donors, SC, PMT, Consortium Members, Programme Staff)
Vfm	To what extent is this an effective intervention' and 'does that level of effectiveness justify the resources invested'?	

2.3. What is the Methodology for evidence gathering?

STAR-Ghana will be monitored and evaluated at impact, outcome, output and process levels. The M&E approach and methodology aims in principle to be adaptive and learning oriented; GESI responsive; evidence based; participatory; coordinated, collaborative and supportive.

The participation of men and women, boys and girls including those from excluded groups will be engaged directly in gathering primary data (perception surveys; stories of change) as well as indirectly (their voice drawn out in analysis and documentation as well as through observation of partner activities and events), as well as through evaluations and grant monitoring visits. Methods of consultation and data collection will be sensitive to lived realities and hence selected and customised to the needs, constraints and aptitudes of groups of women and women, men, girls and boys that belong to excluded groups. This could include single sex or age based groups, adaptation of the timing and location of consultations, use of vernacular, and use of non-literacy based tools, use of focus group discussions etc.

2.3.1. Impact level

At impact level there will be two areas of focus: the level of Human Development and Security and Rule of Law of Ghana. This will be established through review of the most recent Mo Ibrahim Index, a semi-structured citizen survey and a longitudinal impact panel review.

2.3.2 Outcome and Output levels

For outcome indicator 1, the baseline status of 1) citizens' and civil society organisations' awareness and understanding of social accountability processes and tolos, as well as their capacity to engage with duty bearers and influence change; 2) the nature of collective action and participation, as well as 3) the extent to which civil society actions, including holding duty bearers to account, lead to real change in public policy, empowerment of citizens and access to quality public services will be established. This will be done through review of the Mo Ibrahim Index on Participation and Human Rights and STAR phase 1 programme documents and triangulated with stakeholder interviews and partner capacity assessments, which will be conducted on a rolling basis as new partnerships are formed. The baseline for Outcome indicator 2 will be established through review of STAR phase 1 final programme evaluation report on the programme's focus and how it might have changed in the course of implementation.

In order to evidence changes delivered through citizen groups and CSOs engagement with duty bearers, STAR-Ghana will adopt a two pronged longitudinal approach of **process tracing and ranking**. Process tracing will be on two levels; partners and primary beneficiaries. At the partner level, 'moments of change' will be diarised on an on-going basis in what is referred to as '**outcome journals**'. Periodically, partners will be brought together to rank change in terms of success to help validate what has been tracked. This will ensure that evidence of change is being captured beyond output level. **Anecdotal evidence** captured by partners through outcome journals will then be **coded and aggregated** to identify broader trends and create a strong evidence base. The second level will involve working with a representative selection of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries will record their '**stories of change**' in relation to the project in a medium they feel most comfortable with i.e. using videos, symbols, writing, pictures, drawings etc. The Senior M&E manager and M&E officers will conduct **meetings every 6 months** with the partners and the selected beneficiaries to reflect on their 'stories of change' thus incorporating **the voice of citizens** in the on-going monitoring process.

The longitudinal nature of this approach will give rich data for learning and communicating programme impacts. In order to make this representative, STAR will use a Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology, whereby 'stories of change' will be ranked in order of significance by partners and beneficiaries. The stories that are selected as most significant will then be mapped onto the log frame

thus providing an MSC story for each output and/or outcome, this will then inform programming, M&E and VfM. Results and findings will be shared and discussed with a variety of stakeholders to validate and give legitimacy to the findings. This approach will help build the capacity of partners and beneficiaries in M&E thus supporting an active and independent citizenry with the ability to carry out M&E, and in doing so building the M&E skills needed to help with the transition towards a Ghanaian run and owned entity.

Alongside this, **scorecards** will be used to help the Senior M&E manager and M&E officers to assess how far progress has been made against indicators in the Logframe. Narrative scales will be established in a participatory way with relevant stakeholders, outlining what 'good' and 'not so good' looks like in relation to output indicators. This will be carried out on a yearly basis as part of the regular internal monitoring by STAR-Ghana, and by STAR-Ghana staff to partners.

The PMT and SC will conduct a rolling programme of field visits to partners on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and challenges in achieving outputs, outcomes and overall objectives, changes in the context and solutions to any problems encountered. There will also be a particular focus on discussing and reviewing VfM, equity, gender, social inclusion and progress towards output 4. Monitoring visits will also be used to assess and discuss capacity building needs with the partners, and identify similar issues across projects within the same regions, which will feed into the capacity building plans of grant partners. It is anticipated that CSO capacity building will be around: 1) raising awareness and enhancing knowledge about accountability processes and mechanisms; 2) equipping partners with accountability skills and tools; and 3) building capacity around business planning cycles; processes of engagement with power holders; advocacy planning and implementation; political awareness; development of proposals with compelling evidence (capacity to gather evidence; community based analysis; etc.).

2.3.3 Output and process levels

The baseline and changes for outputs 4 and 5 will be established through internal discussions, interviews, self-assessments and audits; outputs 1 and 2 through stakeholder interviews and output 3 through projects/grants/initiatives appraisals, and ongoing monitoring as noted earlier. Baselines will also be established for processes related to the the Convener, Catalyst, Coordinator and Learning roles as well as the Communities of Practice and changes in these areas will also be monitored frequently (see M&E framework. Through the learning strategy, challenges and gaps will be addressed to strengthen programme quality and implementation.

2.4. What are the tools for MEL?

STAR-Ghana M&E tools are listed in table 4 below, and detailed in the annex with a description of the purpose of the tool, who uses the tool, where the tool is used and which follow up actions are expected to be undertaken after using the tool.

Table 4: STAR-Ghana M&E Tools

Quantitative Tools		Focus of Tool
1	Mo Ibrahim Index	human development; safety and rule of law (Impact Indicator 1); citizen participation and human rights (Outcome Indicator 1.2)
2	Stakeholder survey	National mechanism effectiveness and credibility (Outcome Indicator 2; Output 4.1) Perception on CCC roles – (Output Indicator 1.2) Perception on Learning role – (Output Indicator 1.3) Effectiveness of high level policy engagement (Output 2.1) Quality of interactions between high level policy institutions/parliament and relevant state actors (Output 2.3)
3	Score cards	Thought Leadership (Output 1.1)

		Effectiveness of high level policy engagement (Output 2.1)
		Quality of Parliamentary Oversight (Output 2.2)
		Quality of interactions between high level policy institutions/parliament and relevant state actors (Output 2.3)
4	Semi structured interview guide	Citizen survey - A well informed and active civil society contributing to inclusive transformational development (Impact)
		Citizen survey - Citizen influencing change (Outcome Indicator 1.1)
		Partners – Output 3.2; 3.3; 3.4
		Primary beneficiaries – Outcome Indicator 1; Output 3.2
5	Activity monitoring tool	Partner activities - Output 3
6	MIS guidance (coding and aggregating moments/stories of change)	Programme level
		Partner level
7	Grant bid appraisal scoring guide – Outputs 3.1; 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 (project design; results, risk mitigation; sustainability)	
8	Partner Financial monitoring checklist	Output 3.2
9	Audits	Programme Quality Audits, Operational and Financial Audits, Gender Audits, Organisational Learning Audits (Output 4.4; Output 5)
Qualitative Tools		Purpose of Tool (Sections to develop)
10	SMS Voices	Citizen participation etc. Outcome Indicator 1.1; 1.2; Outputs 2.2, 3.2
11	Outcome journal template and guidance	Moments of change ranking - Outcome Indicator 1.1
		Process tracing – moments of change -Output indicator 3.2
12	Stories of change guidance	Programme - Outcome Indicator 1 (guidance for aggregation and mapping unto logframe indicators)
		Partners – Output 3.2 (facilitation guide with primary beneficiaries; recording and reporting)
13	Capacity Assessment tools	SC, PMT (Outputs 4.2, 4.3);
		Partners (Output 3.3, 3.4)
14	Post event feedback forms	Outputs 1, 2, 3, 5
15	Media review checklist	Credible and effective national mechanism (Outcome Indicator 2)
16	Primary beneficiary FGD guide	Output 3.2
17	Citizen testimonials	Parliamentary engagement with CS (Output 2.2); Citizen influencing change [supply side responsiveness] (Outcome Indicator 1.1)

2.5. What will constitute good quality data?

STAR will adopt BOND's quality of evidence principles³

- **Voice and Inclusion:** STAR will ensure that the perceptions, beliefs and explanations by beneficiaries are included in the data to provide a clear picture of who is affected by the programme and how.
- **Appropriateness:** STAR will ensure that the right methods are used to collect different types of data.
- **Triangulation:** STAR will ensure that data is collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as primary and secondary sources of data to check whether the information provided is a true reflection of reality.

³ See www.bond.org.uk

- **Contribution:** STAR will develop questions that will elicit responses on how change happens, the contribution of the programme to bringing about change, and the factors influencing or contributing to change.
- **Transparency:** STAR will ensure transparency in dealings with partners and communities, for example transparency around project budgets and the use of project resources.

2.6. How will STAR analyse data?

Analytical frameworks for assessing the extent to which STAR-Ghana is delivering on change, the extent to which external and internal drivers influence change, and the extent to which assumptions hold true will include the pathways of change, the theory of change, logframe and complement of indicators. Data will go through a process of sorting, storing (in the MIS), analysis, validation, and then using. Once the data is analysed it will go through an iterative process of learning, being used to test and validate TOC, assumptions, and PE reviews to inform the programme going forward. Anecdotal evidence on 'moments of change' from partners' outcome journals will be aggregated and analysed by gender, different groups of women and excluded groups identifying significant changes and trends. The following diagram outlines steps for analyzing data gathered through monthly, quarterly and annual M&E processes (See annex for additional questions for the theory of change review).

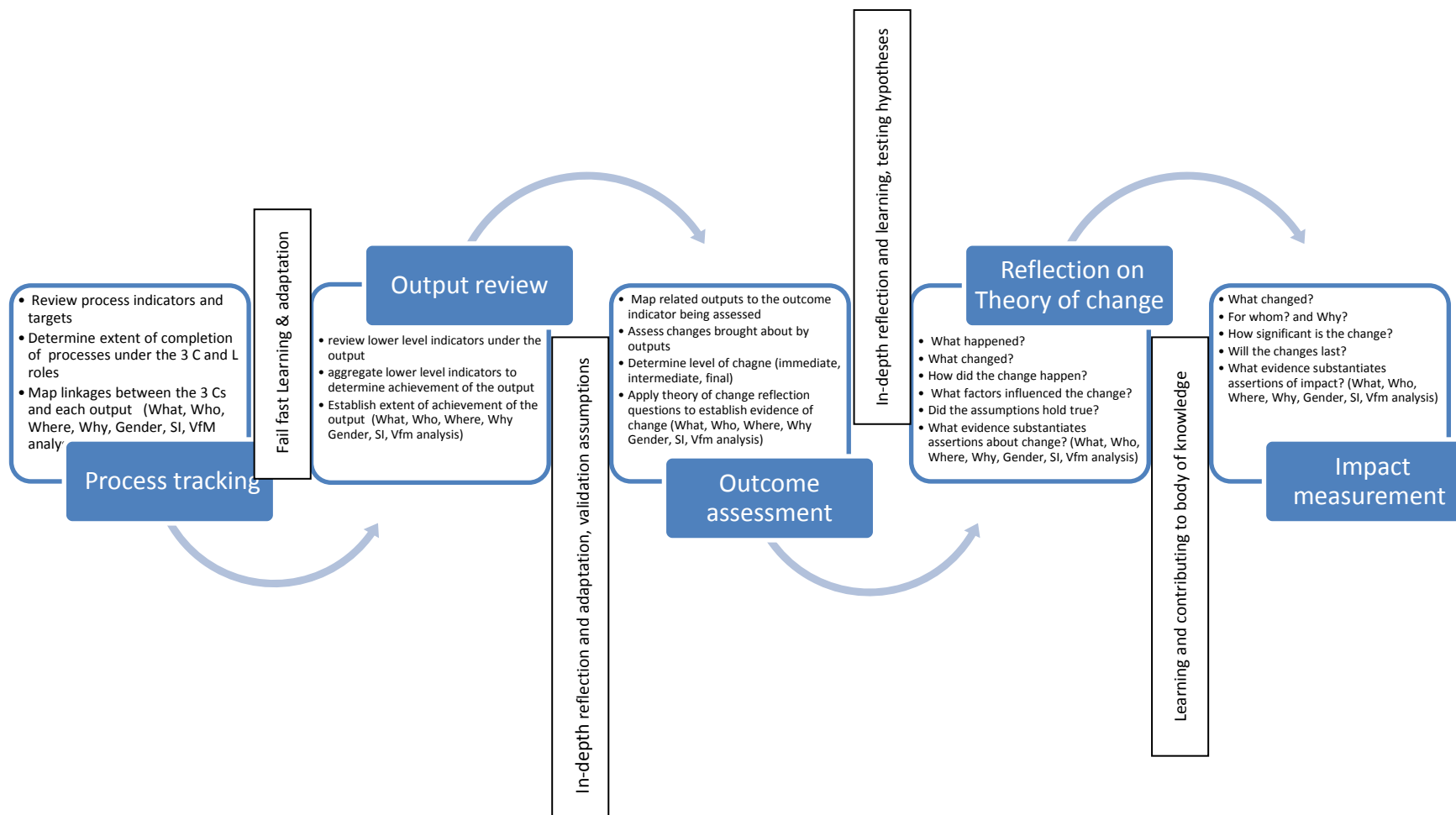


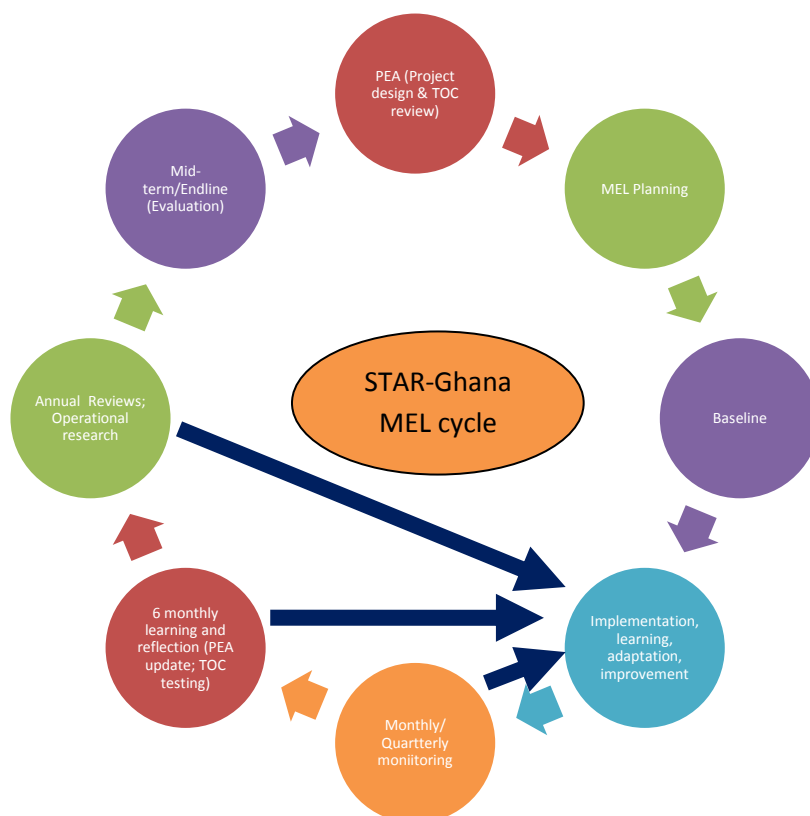
Figure 7: Integrating monitoring and learning

Data collection and its documentation will disaggregate evidence by sex, age where appropriate (children, youth, and adults, aged) and excluded groups and other relevant features – e.g. economic or education level. Through the documentation and analysis processes, the M&E Team and all those supporting monitoring and evaluation processes will explicitly analyse and present a) gender and social relations between women and men boys and girls belonging to different social/economic groups as well as regions (North /South) and location (rural and urban) will be analyzed explicitly and disparities and inequalities between them acknowledged; b) differences and inequalities between women and men will be analysed and explicitly presented; and c) examine the ways in which project outcomes benefit men and women, boys and girls and the socially and economically excluded groups differently. Finally, findings from these analyses will feed into appropriate learning and feedback loops with the evidence generated used to improve gender and social inclusion outcomes.

2.7. What is the MEL plan?

As shown on the MEL cycle below, STAR-Ghana will undertake a PEA at inception, reviewing and updating it, and adapting the programme in response, on an ongoing basis; establish a baseline, informed by the PEA; undertake monthly and quarterly process, outputs and outcomes monitoring; six monthly learning, reflection and analyses; and implement annual programme reviews, a mid-line and an end of programme evaluation. The baseline will be conducted at the inception phase to establish the pre-programme status of indicators. On-going monitoring will assess the extent of achievement of processes and outputs. Annual reviews will assess the extent of achievement of outcomes (immediate to intermediate to final), including a review of the programme MIS and monitoring data, management effectiveness, value for money, GESI, and progress on programme implementation; a mid-term evaluation at the end of year 3 (2018); and an end of programme evaluation at the end of year 5 (2020) to establish programme impact and the extent to which it met its goals and objectives.

Fig 8: STAR-Ghana MEL cycle



STAR will adopt a 'fail fast' learning strategy, through regular testing and validation of the TOC and Political Economy enabling the SC and PMT to promptly address issues arising to build a solid base for achieving results, generate and learn from evidence as well as immediately apply learning for continued relevance. This will include assessing types of strategic partnerships, joint initiatives and results arising; comparing results between initiatives and partnerships; identifying models that work best in influencing, policy change and implementation; reviewing and refining models, outcome journals, stories of change and the MIS. The programme learning agenda will include:

- PEA Scoping at inception – review of TOC, strategising, adapting etc.
- Operational research (piloting, testing, refining and documenting).
- 6 monthly reflections on outcome journals and stories of change.
- PEA updates/TOC reviews.
- Etc.

Learning will be guided by the Knowledge Management framework.

Section 3. M&E Levels, Focus and Responsibilities

3.1. What are the M&E levels and who should be involved?

There will be four levels of M&E within the STAR-Ghana: organisational, programme, joint initiative and grants.

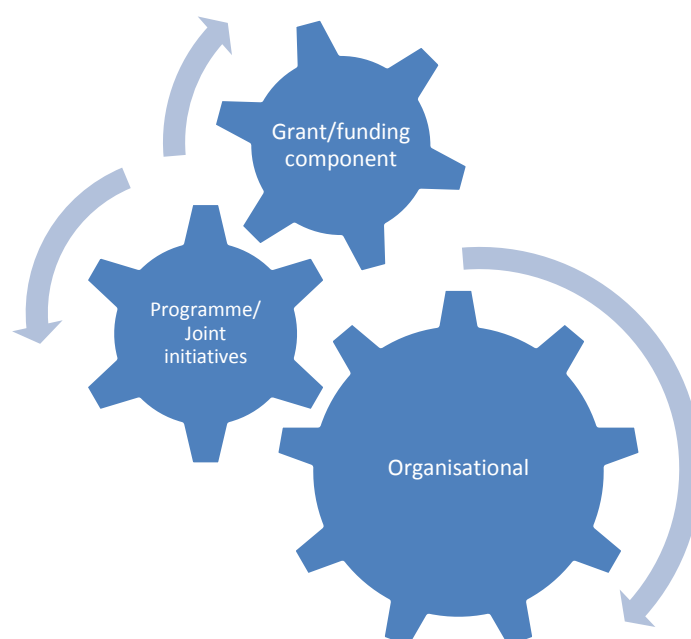


Figure 9: MEL level, focus and roles

Table 5: MEL levels, focus and roles

MEL levels, focus and roles							
Levels		Focus		Roles			
Organisational		Processes & outputs		Learning	DFID DANIDA, EU, SC, PMT, M&E Team		
Programme		Inputs,		Learning	SC, PMT, M&E Team, (Consortium members?)		
		Processes,					
		Outputs,					
		Outcomes					
Initiative		Inputs,		Learning	SC, PMT, M&E Team & <i>Strategic Partner reps?</i>		
		Processes,					
		Outputs					
		Outcomes					
Grant project		GP Capacity		Inputs		Learning	SC, HoP, M&E Team; Finance and Operations Teams; partner M&E Officers
				Processes			
				Outputs			
				Outcomes			
		GP Projects		Inputs,		Learning	SC, Finance and Operations Teams, HoP/M&E Team, Grant partner M&E Officers
				Processes			
				Outputs,			
				Outcomes			

The M&E planning process at inception has involved a number of internal stakeholders including the Steering Committee, donors, Christian Aid and Consortium members, as well as the PMT setting a

participatory tone right from the beginning. A core MEL planning group (HoP, SME Manager, Grants Manager) will be set up to facilitate key processes, sharing information and roping others in as appropriate. It is also recommended that an impact panel, comprising representatives of all stakeholders, from the SC to primary beneficiaries, is set up to serve as a sounding board for review and analysis of impact.

Table 5 above broadly specifies who should be involved in monitoring processes at organisational, programme, joint initiative and grant partner level. Responsibilities for monitoring inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts will be allocated to specific stakeholders with participatory analysis and reflection points planned to capture different internal perspectives. This approach will strengthen internal stakeholder triangulation as well as strengthen the evidence base for making judgements about changes, evidence etc.

3.2. What are STAR's feedback mechanisms?

For proactive adaptation of strategies and processes, monitoring, evaluation and learning will be closely linked to decision making processes at organisational, programme, joint initiatives and grant partner levels. Feedback will both be formal – through reporting processes ensuring that all stakeholders are sufficiently informed and empowered to take appropriate decisions; and informal, through:

- Annual conventions;
- Funders committee;
- SC;
- Reflection meetings;
- Learning events;
- Review of processes;
- Self- assessments;
- Anonymous feedback systems;
- Quality assurance visits; and
- Grant partner reports (more relevant to election call at this stage).

3.3. The reporting schedule

Table 6: Programme reporting schedule

From	To	Reporting Timeline
Grant Partners	STAR-Ghana	2 weeks after the end of Quarter
Review and Feedback		2 weeks after Grant Partners' submission
Final Compilation		1 week after review and feedback
STAR-Ghana	DFID(Donor)	5 weeks after end of Quarter

* This schedule is pending an approval from DFID

Table 6 above indicates when programme reports would be received from Grant partners, reviewed by STAR Ghana and finally compiled and submitted to DFID.

Section 4. Gender, Social Inclusion and VfM

4.1 How does the programme ensure that MEL is GESI responsive?

STAR's approach to **organisational development** adopts a gender and social justice orientation, modelled on the approach taken by Christian Aid. Made up of three complementary processes and implemented simultaneously, attention is given to:

- STAR's systems, regulations, contracts and other procedures;
- STAR's organisational culture – informed by the attitudes and behaviours of staff, PMT and SC members to gender equality and social inclusion and;
- STAR's commitment to relationships with grantee partners that facilitates and support the uptake of a gender and social justice orientation.

GESI mainstreaming into STAR programs provides the opportunity to introduce gender and social analysis into all programmatic work. This includes grant funds and other initiatives. It also includes the generation of disaggregated data enriching the detailed monitoring and evaluation of GESI, a GESI thematic focus within the PEA process as well as the use of a GESI lens in all learning platforms, documentation and reporting. This emphasis allows STAR-Ghana to reflect on the utility and effect of the 3 C's approach from the perspective of GESI and imprint the importance of GESI in all its mainstream initiatives.

4.2. How will value for money be measured?

STAR- Ghana's approach to value for money (VfM) is taken from Christian Aid's understanding of VfM which is about achieving the best results we can with the money and resources we have. In defining the 'best' results, we are concerned with **scale** (numbers of people benefiting), **depth** (addressing the root causes not just the symptoms of problems) lasting (the sustainability of change) and **inclusion** (in other words, a change has greater impact if it benefits people who are more excluded and marginalised).

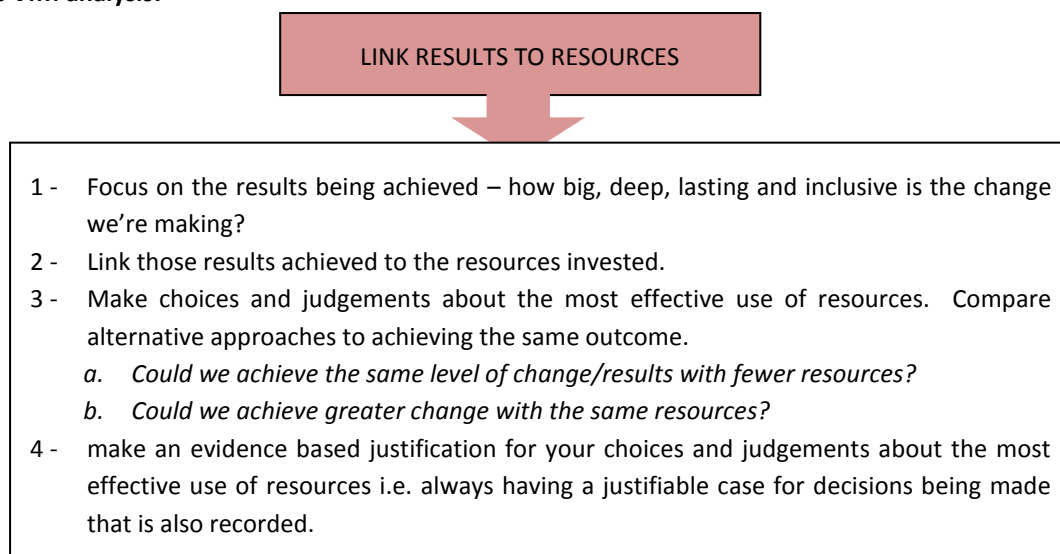
The paper on VfM produced by the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) presented the usual three 'Es' of *economy*, *efficiency* and *effectiveness*, and added a fourth 'E' of '*equity*'. In that framework, STAR- Ghana's approach is weighted towards **effectiveness** (the results achieved for a given investment) and **equity** (who is included/who benefits from these results), rather than economy (the total cost of an activity) or efficiency (the cost per 'unit' of activity).

Table 7: Definition of VfM components

	Definition
Economy	Best value inputs
	Spending less money, keeping costs down
Efficiency	Maximising the outputs for a given level of inputs
	Spending less money per unit
Effectiveness	Ensuring that the outputs deliver the desired outcome
	Getting results that are worth the money
Equity	Ensuring that the benefits are distributed fairly

An assessment of VfM is simply a formal process of asking the questions ‘to what extent is this an effective intervention’ and ‘does that level of effectiveness justify the resources invested’.

Figure 8 VfM analysis.



This section will be revised as appropriate to reflect the VfM approach being developed by the programme.

Section 5. MEL resources

5.1. Who will oversee MEL processes?

The Head of Programmes will have oversight for implementing and updating the MEL manual. The Senior M&E Manager and M&E Officers will have joint responsibility for implementing the MEL system and plan. Similar to GESI, PEA Scoping, Strategic Learning and VfM, MEL will be integrated into all programme roles and will become a way of thinking and working, with capacity built appropriately to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

5.2. MEL capacity

Partner MEL workshops will be conducted as appropriate to ensure there is common understanding of programme objectives and results as well as partners' project contribution to achieving them. Tailor made hand holding support will also be provided to partners by the M&E team as required. Regular mentoring/coaching of partners will also be undertaken through monitoring visits. Additionally, on-going mentoring and support will be provided by Christian Aid to STAR-Ghana M&E officers. As required, external consultants will also be drawn upon to support coaching and mentoring processes.

5.3. MEL budget

STAR will allocate sufficient funds (at least 10% of programme budget) to ensure that all MEL processes are undertaken and adds real value to the programme. It is recommended that grant partners allocate 10% of project budget to MEL processes at project level.

Section 6. M&E Guidance for partners

Partners will be supported to develop MEL systems which mirror the programme's MEL processes. This will entail:

1. Clearly identifying the project's vision of change and anticipated results (in response to politically relevant issues); mapping the pathways of change; developing a theory of change and specifying the indicators for measurement.
2. Specifying the approaches and tools to use for monitoring and evaluation, as well as when and how data will be collected, analysed and reported on;
3. Clearly allocating roles and responsibilities;
4. Allocating sufficient budget for MEL; and
5. Implementing planned MEL activities.

The size of projects (budget, stakeholders etc.) will be taken into account when facilitating development of partner MEL systems to make them useful.

It is recommended that the M&E Team adapts and builds on phase 1 M&E guidance for grant partners to take into consideration the programme's MEL processes. This should then be incorporated into grant agreements with partners to ensure adherence, identify capacity gaps and build capacity as appropriate.

Section 7. Annexes

1. M&E framework
2. Revised Logframe
3. Complement of indicators
4. List of Tools
5. Toolkit (to be developed)
6. DFID reporting templates
7. M&E work plan (to be developed)
8. Definition of concepts (to be developed)

Section 8. References

1. Business Case
2. SC Design Framework
3. Christian Aid Technical Proposal
4. GESI Strategy
5. M&E Framework
6. PEA Scoping Study