

# ISAF OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

## MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS

### Introduction

The Operational Guidelines have **3 major objectives**, to:

1. Formally set minimum quality standards of practice to foster greater alignment around best practices identified over time by implementing partners.
2. Establish minimum monitoring and evaluation (M&E) standards to facilitate a more intentional approach to learning and evidence generation across all implementing partners.
3. Strengthen inclusion ensuring the voices and participation of marginalized groups are included and represented in the social accountability processes of I-SAF.

I-SAF has **5 main components**:

- **Component 1** (access to information and open budgets) makes provisions to provide citizens with information about policies, standards, budgets, and performance data related to a core set of public services – communes, health centres and primary schools – on an annual basis.
- **Component 2** (citizen monitoring) introduces annual facilitated citizen monitoring of these services with a view to promoting citizen voice, productive dialogue between citizens and public officials/service providers, and collective actions for improvement.

**Component 3:** Joint Accountability Action Plans (JAAP) support the follow up and actioning of the joint action plans emerging from the interface meetings. It is concerned with building public support for the JAAPs and ensuring that responsible persons (community members and commune officials) execute the plans that have been assigned and agreed.

- **Component 4** (training and capacity building) supports the successful implementation of Components 1 and 2 by training local actors in I-SAF-related themes and building the capacity of a critical mass of CAFs and community representatives to act as a bridge between citizens and state actors.
- **Component 5** (Management, Monitoring and Evaluation) A strong focus on M&E across I-SAF facilitates a certain degree of consistency in practice and allows for the generation of common data. This builds up a picture of the impact and effectiveness of the programme and enhances the comparability of data across implementers and, consequently, its policy relevance.

## Component 1: Information for Citizens

- 1.1 Implementing partners use a robust social mapping tool to identify community stakeholders, especially including Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that include and represent people from marginalized and excluded groups (e.g. people with disabilities, indigenous people, or ID poor cardholders).
- 1.2 Using this mapping, implementing partners work with relevant CBOs and CSOs to support the participation of members of marginalized and excluded groups.
- 1.3 CAFs take part in the district level meeting to review and validate I4C post-on information before it is published.
- 1.4 I4C materials are displayed in all relevant service delivery facilities and disseminated widely in a way that is inclusive and accessible. Channels for dissemination must include:
  - Targeted focus groups for marginalized people, such as people with disabilities, indigenous people, or people who are ID poor cardholders,
  - Home visits for people with highly constrained access to the I-SAF process.
- 1.5 In addition, further channels for I4C dissemination should be pursued, such as:
  - Large citizen forums,
  - Traditional media such as local radio,
  - Press releases and/or interviews with the press,
  - Use of loud-speakers, mobile kiosks stands at local fairs and other public events,
  - The development and dissemination of videos and relevant material on social media.
- 1.6 When disseminating information for citizens, and for all kind of activities, implementing partners use (or adapt, aligning as much as possible,) the most up-to-date version of the official posters and the content of the Information For Citizens Booklet.
- 1.7 Implementing partners ensure that the information shared by CAFs with community members includes information on the specific service delivery entitlements of different people, including marginalized groups (where possible).
- 1.8 All key materials should be available in at least 2 different forms (posters, audio, video, etc.) to increase accessibility for people with disabilities.

### **M&E Minimum Standards: Access to Information and Budgets**

I-SAF implementers will collect data on citizen participation in I4C awareness-raising events, including data on the total number of citizens who participate in each commune and how many participated in each type of I4C awareness-raising event.

➤ **% of people of different types participating in I4C awareness-raising events, by type of I4C event**

Participant numbers shall be disaggregated by the following diversity characteristics (understanding that the categories are not mutually exclusive):

- sex (women, men, other)
- age group (youth, elderly)
- disability (binary yes/no)
- indigenous (binary yes/no)
- ID poor cardholders (binary yes/no)

Implementing partners systematically measure the understanding of citizens reached to assess how much they have understood and how much they remember of the information presented. This measurement likely involves pre- and post-test for a significant sample of citizens participating.

## **Component 2: Citizens Monitoring – Minimum standards for Scorecard**

- 2.1 Citizen scoring sessions should be conducted through general service user forums (with a mixed group of citizens).
- 2.2 Implementing partners should also conduct citizen monitoring, including scoring, using approaches and methodologies that will ensure the participation and feedback of marginalized people such as targeted focus groups, home visits and/or others.
- 2.3 Implementing partners are also encouraged to consider the organization of a scoring session for student representatives from primary schools that are being covered by I-SAF.
- 2.4 As far as possible, participants in scoring sessions should be service users who have participated in previous I4C awareness-raising sessions, and should be those who have used the relevant service personally or have helped someone else do so, ideally in the recent past.
- 2.5 I4C information for the service being scored is reviewed at the beginning of scoring sessions, using the official posters and I4C booklet, ensuring that participants understand how the current performance and resources of the service(s) compare with established standards and entitlements.

- 2.6 Citizens generate the assessment criteria they want to score, based on their own priorities (5 for each facility).
- 2.7 Voting occurs behind a curtain or screen, around a corner, or in a separate room (depending on the set up of the meeting venue) to ensure the anonymity of voting.
- 2.8 Implementing partners are encouraged to develop a voting methodology allowing to disaggregate the votes based on diversity characteristics. This is mandatory for the implementing partners using digital tools to capture the votes during the scorecard meeting.
- 2.9 All implementing partners should follow the methodology of the Operational guidelines related to the scoring to allow to calculate and capture satisfaction scores in a similar way.
- 2.10 During the scorecard meeting, citizens will generate a list of 4-6 actions that will be integrated into the JAAPs and should be implemented by service providers, community members and authorities at the district/provincial levels.
- 2.11 Several representatives will be selected to attend the subsequent single facility interface meeting, where they will present the outcomes of the scoring sessions and the actions proposed by different groups of citizens and by service providers.

## **Component 2: Citizen Monitoring - Minimum standards for Service Provider Self- Assessment**

- 2.12 The head of the relevant service (e.g. the commune chief, the health center chief, and the school director) and a representative group of frontline staff (and councilors in the case of the commune) are invited to the self-assessment sessions for service providers.
- 2.13 I4C information for the service being scored in the self-assessment session is reviewed at the beginning, ensuring that participants understand how the current performance and resources of the service(s) compare with established standards and entitlements.
- 2.14 Voting occurs behind a curtain or screen, around a corner, or in a separate room (depending on the set up of the meeting venue) to ensure the anonymity of the voting.
- 2.15 Service providers use a system of coloured stickers to allow CAFs/implementing partners to disaggregate the votes based on gender.
- 2.16 Service providers generate a list of 4 – 6 actions that can be taken by service providers, community members and authorities at the district/provincial levels.

- 2.17 Service providers agree on several representatives to attend the subsequent single facility interface meetings, where they present the self-assessment, including: the scoring criteria selected, the median scores and key gender differences within the group; reasons for the scores; and proposed actions for different actors.

#### **M&E Minimum Standards: Citizen Scoring and Service Provider Self-assessment**

I-SAF implementers should collect data on citizen participation in citizen scoring events, including on the total number of citizens who participate in each commune and how many participated in each type of citizen scoring event

The following example indicator can be used:

**% of people of different types participating in citizen scoring events, by type of scoring event** (disaggregated as above)

I-SAF implementers should record all assessment criteria prioritized by citizen groups, by category.

I-SAF implementers should record the scores provided by citizens and service providers, from each scoring group. If possible, along with total median scores per assessment criterium, scores should be tracked by diversity characteristics.

### **Component 2: Citizen Monitoring - Minimum standards for Single Facility and Multi-sectoral Interface Meetings**

- 2.18 Invitees to interface meetings include representatives from general service user forums, targeted focus groups for marginalized people, those reached through home visits; service providers who participated in the self-assessment scoring sessions; the head or delegated focal point for the relevant service for the commune; and representatives from relevant CBOs/CSOs.
- 2.19 Citizen and service provider representatives present the outcomes of scoring sessions. Depending on the sensitivity of the issues, the CAFs may need to present scorecard information on behalf of citizen groups in some cases.
- 2.20 During multi-sectoral interface meetings, Commune Investment Plans (CIPs) and previous JAAPs are reviewed. JAAP-C members can decide to add to the new JAAP actions from the previous year that have not been implemented yet.
- 2.21 The Operational Guidelines include a methodology to ensure that at least few actions prioritized by marginalized people are included in the final JAAPs.

- 2.22 Actions suggested by citizens and services providers are reviewed during the Interface meetings and improved if needed, to ensure that they are practical, precise and realistic, following the SMART model table.
- 2.23 Actions are organized according to whether they require collaboration and/or external resources or if they can be undertaken at the service facility level without additional resources.
- 2.24 As far as possible, the interface meetings must take place before or during the development of the CIP, allowing the commune council the opportunity to incorporate the JAAP actions into the CIP. CAFs liaise with commune officials to agree this and schedule accordingly.

### **M&E Minimum Standards: Citizen Monitoring – JAAP Development**

I-SAF implementers should record all actions included in JAAPs, categorizing them by:

- actions that require external resources and actions that do not;
- within these 2 main categories, actions should be categorized by whether they were originally suggested by citizens or by service providers; and
- Within the actions originally suggested by citizens, actions should be categorized by the diversity characteristics in the list above.

## **Component 3: JAAP Implementation**

- 3.1 The JAAP committee comprises at least four women and one youth representative, community representatives (selected among the village cluster representatives), government officials/service providers (including the Commune or deputy commune chief; additional commune representatives; the Chief or Deputy Chief of the health center; and the School Director or Deputy School Director and a representative from the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC).
- 3.2 CAFs, in collaboration with the JAAP Committee and CBOs, conduct awareness-raising activities in each village cluster to inform community members of the final content of the JAAP and encourage their involvement in implementation measures.
- 3.3 The CAFs mentors and coaches citizen representatives to champion and promote the JAAP in the Health Centre Management Committee, in the School Support Committee group and in the CIP development process.
- 3.4 CAFs support the development of a one-page JAAP summary and its posting at the commune hall and is shareable on social media.

- 3.5 The JAAP Committee meets quarterly over a one-year period to review implementation efforts and initiate support actions.
- 3.6 IPs, commune officials and JAAP Committees present the JAAP at district level media events and at the District Integration Workshop.
- 3.7 IPs commune officials and JAAP Committees presents the JAAP at district level media events and at the District Integration Workshop.
- 3.8 Service providers, community members and relevant officials jointly implement the JAAP, with the support and guidance of the JAAP Committee.
- 3.9 The IP and CAFs provides advice and technical support to the JAAP Committee as required during this process and follows up with service providers, commune officials and higher-level officials to support their efforts to implement actions prioritized in the JAAP.
- 3.10 CAFs, in collaboration with CBOs/CSOs assist in mobilizing and organizing community support as possible and as required.
- 3.11 The JAAP Committee undertakes relevant field visits when feasible.
- 3.12 IPs document and report findings and lessons learned.

#### **M&E Minimum Standards: JAAP Implementation**

1. I-SAF implementers should collect data on the status of implementation of JAAP actions, including:
  - a. how many are completed,
  - b. how many are ongoing, and
  - c. how many have not been started.

Within these categories, actions should be broken down by:

- a. actions that require external resources and actions that do not;
- b. within these 2 main categories, actions should be categorized by whether they were originally suggested by citizens or by service providers; and
- c. within the actions originally suggested by citizens, actions should be categorized by the following diversity characteristics (understanding that the categories are not mutually exclusive):
  - sex (women, men, other)
  - age group (youth, elderly)
  - disability (binary yes/no)
  - indigenous (binary yes/no)
  - ID poor cardholders (binary yes/no)

The following example indicators can be used:

**% of JAAP activities completed, ongoing, or not yet started in target communes (by citizen and by service provider)**

**% of JAAP actions completed or ongoing that were suggested by vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, indigenous people, ID poor cardholders)**

2. I-SAF implementers should collect data on the number and percentage of JAAP actions that are included in the final published version of the CIP in each commune. These actions should be analyzed by the diversity characteristics listed above.

The following example indicators can be used:

**% of JAAP actions that are included in the final published CIP**

**% of JAAP actions that are included in the final published CIP that were suggested by vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, indigenous people, and ID poor cardholders)**

3. I-SAF implementers should collect data on the number and percentage of JAAP actions that receive external funding, and from which source.

The following example indicator can be used:

**% of JAAP actions requiring financial support that have been allocated resources (by source of resource)**

## **Component 4: Training and capacity building**

- 4.1 Each implementing partner conducts a capacity self-assessment and develops a supplementary capacity building plan to address the gaps identified.
- 4.2 All implementing partners should align the curriculum they are using for the training of their staff and of the CAFs with the recommendations of the Operational Guidelines, especially the minimum standards mentioned below.
- 4.3 Implementing partner staff should be trained in the core I-SAF processes and in mentorship, coaching and reflective practice to support CAF's' and CBOs' effective engagement in the I-SAF process.
- 4.4 CAFs should be trained in the core I-SAF processes that build their competence to fulfil the I-SAF requirements (Introduction to I-SAF) and includes:
  - Managing the I4C dissemination and validation process (I4Cs, Open Budgets and Awareness-Raising)
  - Facilitating the generation, mapping prioritization and scoring of assessment criteria from diverse citizen groups and individuals in an inclusive and accessible manner (Community Monitoring)
  - Coordinating the JAAP development process ensuring it is aligned with the commune integrated planning process
  - Soft skills with a focus on facilitation, mentoring inclusion, communication and reflective practice.

- 4.5 CAFs are trained in decentralization and commune administrative systems to enable them to navigate the complex dynamics of policy and service delivery at the local level.
- 4.6 Each CAF is assigned a mentor from an implementing partner and participate in pre- and post-activity debriefing sessions in each district, 'learning by doing activities' and periodic learning events.
- 4.7 CAF's train, mentor and coach, as appropriate, community representatives from the key services being addressed.
- 4.8 All partners share their training resources in a central repository which include hardcopies as well electronic resources such as videos and clips that can be accessed on social media on the go.

## **Component 5: Management, Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 5.1 Each implementing partner have a feedback and complaint mechanism in place that allows citizens to complain about and/or provide feedback about the way I-SAF has been implemented in their community.
- 5.2 Implementing partners will align their results and M&E frameworks for their I-SAF programming, including collecting data according to the minimum data standards discussed in the M&E minimum standards boxes provided in Components 1, 2 and 3 above. These key data standards are summarized again below in this section, and Annex V provides a full description of how to collect data for the suggested indicators.
- 5.3 In order to ensure data is sufficient to respond to the minimum standards and relevant indicators, especially including the required social inclusion data that is a key focus in I-SAF Phase II, implementing partners will develop adequate tools for data collection, designed to respond to the minimum standards.
- 5.4 Implementing partners will also train staff and CAFs accordingly, and provide ongoing support to ensure data quality.
- 5.5 Implementing partners will provide data quality control throughout the project cycle, including cleaning, assessing, verifying, and gap-filling data, such that final datasets are complete and reliable.
- 5.6 Implementing partners will also ensure secure and long-term data storage, respecting the need for participant anonymity, but also keeping in view the long-term policy relevance of I-SAF data.

- 5.7 Implementing partners commit to sharing their implementation data, including data meeting all minimum standards, with the PSC and all its members at least annually. Implementing partners agree for this data to be used for accountability, learning, advocacy, and policy development purposes;
- 5.8 Implementing partners will support and take an active part in efforts to consolidate and analyze data, including a regular annual analysis process;
- 5.9 All implementing partners will engage in efforts to improve M&E, including data collection and analysis, as I-SAF evolves, as policy needs become clearer, and as learning from implementation strengthens the collective understanding of M&E needs and best fit approaches.