Transition plan for transferring durability monitoring studies to a different implementing partner

Durability monitoring (DM) requires a total of approximately 40 months of activity, starting from identifying monitoring sites and preparing IRB and study activities, to analyzing and writing up the final round of data collection and closing out the study.

Given the 40-month timeframe, DM activities may run across the ending dates of bilateral or global projects, depending on when they are initiated relative to the project’s lifespan. When this is the case, it requires early planning to effectively and smoothly transition the activities from one implementing partner to another.

In Table 1, we illustrate a case in which a project’s end-of-project date is September 30th 2019. Given that the last three months of bilateral and global projects are generally times when activities are stopped in order to wrap up financial and technical reports, “ideal last-case” timing and “worst-case” timing are presented.

Table 1: Sample Timeline for being able to complete full Durability Monitoring before EOP

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data activity** | **Ideal last-case** | **Worst-case** |
| Campaign distribution | April 2016 | June 2017 |
| Baseline fieldwork | October 2016 | Dec 2016 |
| 12M fieldwork | April 2017 | June 2017 |
| 24M fieldwork | April 2018 | June 2018 |
| 36M fieldwork | April 2019 | June 2019 |
| Wrap up/Reports | By Sept 2019 | By Sept 2019 |

Since capacity building among the local organization is an integral part of the DM activity, including fieldwork planning and data analysis, it’s possible, if funding is not interrupted, for the 36M fieldwork and final wrap up to be done by the local research organization entirely.

For clarity, the following terminology will be used to describe each actor in the DM activities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Funding/Administrative flow** | **Responsibility/Role** |
| USAID | Donor |
| Awardee/Contractor | Implementation lead under USAID-awarded mechanism |
| Sub-awardee/sub-contractor | Partner organization in implementation mechanism, under lead organization |
| Local Research Organization | In-country organization contracted to perform data collection |

# Key considerations for the transfer process

1. **Technical considerations**: In order to handover 36M fieldwork to another Awardee, all datasets, fieldwork materials, training materials, would be transferred to the new Awardee. Ideally the new Awardee would maintain the same local research organization for consistency, although this is not required under USAID cooperative agreements.
2. **IRB considerations**: In most circumstances, the new Awardee’s IRB can defer to the original IRB. In situations where the new Awardee’s IRB requires review of the whole activity, having the original ethical approvals already in place usually makes this process very rapid.
3. **Administrative/contractual considerations**: There are several scenarios to consider.
   1. The starting Awardee is able to continue the activity under a different USAID mechanism. For example – if the Awardee has a malaria grant in Country X, or is a sub-awardee on a different USAID malaria mechanism in Country X, the Awardee could continue as the implementing partner under a different malaria mechanism. This requires planning ahead regarding timeframes of possible other USAID funding mechanisms in each country that are underway.
   2. The starting Awardee has no other USAID funding mechanism in place; the activity needs to be transferred to a new Awardee under some other USAID funding mechanism. For example, an Awardee begins the activity in Country Y, but at the end of their project (EOP), they have no other funding mechanism in country Y.
      1. One solution is for USAID to transfer the remaining DM activities directly to the local research organization which may be partnering with the starting Awardee;
      2. The other is for a new Awardee under a different USAID funding mechanism to take over the activity. For years prior to the EOP, this would require having in mind which other USAID funding mechanism could take this on and programming funding accordingly, using the normal MOP and reprogramming processes. If the new Awardee will be setting up any subawards itself to manage the activity (e.g. to a local research firm), keep in mind that subawards take about 6 months or more to set up.
   3. Thirdly, PMI may choose to transfer the activity directly to the local research organization, through an existing USAID malaria funding mechanism. For example, the local National Institute of Health or University of CapitalCity may be implementing the actual fieldwork, and could be funded directly by USAID, or by whatever USAID-funded bilateral malaria project is in place.
4. **Timing considerations**: Keep in mind that reprogramming, transfer or set up of new subawards or subcontracts, and workplan modifications and approval processes can take 6-12 months depending on the circumstances. The starting Awardee will need at least 3 months to conduct financial closeout. Therefore, the process of transferring DM activities should begin immediately following the final round of data collection that the starting Awardee is capable of conducting.

Below in Table 2 we present additional examples in a case where the EOP is September 30th 2019, and where data collection activities fall in the final quarter or outside of the project’s lifespan (in red).

Table 2: Project EOP of September 2019 - DM activities that will or will not fall into that timeframe, and implications.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2016 | Mission initiates request for durability monitoring in 1st half of 2016 | 6M Nov 2016  12M April 2017  24M April 2018  36M April 2019 | All rounds of fieldwork and final write up can be completed before the EOP. |
| Mission initiates request for durability monitoring in 2nd half of 2016 | 6M Feb 2017  12M Oct 2017  24M Oct 2018  36M Oct 2019 | Two options:   1. Field the 36M data collection at 32-34M, which still provides enough data points for the median survival estimate. 2. Immediately following the 24M data collection, process of transferring the activity to a new mechanism would begin. |
| 2017 | Mission initiates request for durability monitoring in 1st half of 2017 | 6M – July 2017  12M Jan 2018  24M Jan 2019  36M Jan 2020 | Immediately following the 24M data collection, process of transferring the activity to a new mechanism would begin through USAID. |
| Mission initiates request for durability monitoring in 2nd half of 2017 | 6M Jan 2018  12M July 2018  24M July 2019  36M July 2020 | Would recommend to USAID initiating this activity entirely under a different mechanism, unless significant TA is preferred from a starting Awardee. |

# Calendar of events

To further illustrate how the transfer of activities would happen over the course of 12 months, a sample sequence of steps is described below, following final data collection by the starting Awardee.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| October | Final data collection by starting Awardee. Mission begins to prepare funding switch through reprogramming mechanisms to a new partner. New partner is identified at this stage. |
| November | Immediately following final data collection, starting Awardee should complete analysis and reporting. |
| December | Starting Awardee transfers all study files to the new partner   * Previous reports * Datasets * Do-files * Latest round reports and do-files * Study documentation * ITN samples * SOW documents for any subpartners (e.g. labs doing bioassays) |
| January-March | Mission advances the reprogramming process and new Awardee begins drafting a workplan and budget. Starting awardee can provide insights as needed. New awardee initiates any necessary IRB approvals or updates. New awardee initiates subaward/subcontract process with any necessary partners. |
| April-June | Obligations and workplan approvals and subaward/subcontract approvals are finalized by Mission and new Awardee. New awardee hires any additional staff that may be needed. |
| July-September | New Awardee begins planning process for next round of data collection; label preparation, fieldworker selection, familiarity with fieldwork and analysis tools and resources. |
| October | New Awardee conducts data collection |