Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the ILAB Data Reporting Form (DRF)

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DRF Overview

What is the Data Reporting Form (DRF), and how is it helpful?

The DRF is an MS Excel-based form for reporting important quantitative results to ILAB in a standardized format.

- **Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs):** Grantees can input their PMPs, eliminating the need for a separate document.
- **Standardization:** Before the DRF, each ILAB grantee submitted data in different formats, making it very difficult to consistently answer basic questions such as "How many ILAB grantees are working on issues of gender equity?"

The primary use of the DRF is to enable automated aggregation of OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators across projects and to monitor the most important project outcomes that local system actors want to be sustained after the project ends.

- **Management Tool:** For many projects, the DRF is also used as a routine management tool, enabling analysis, learning and adaptation. For example, grantees can use the "Reflections" column as an opportunity for interpretation and critical thinking about how to strengthen program results.

Overall, the DRF streamlines reporting, enhances consistency, and supports management and monitoring of project outcomes.

How is the DRF different from the Technical Progress Report (TPR)?

The DRF is a companion to the TPR:

- **Primary Reporting Tool:** The TPR is the primary reporting tool used by ILAB. It allows grantees to provide rich and detailed explanations of their work and achievements.
- **Standardizing Quantitative Results:** The DRF supplements the TPR by standardizing reporting of quantitative results and is intended to remove the need for grantees to include lengthy data tables in the TPR.
- **Simplified Reporting:** Some aspects of the TPR have been simplified because grantees can now interpret results in the "Reflections" column on the "Reporting Form" sheet in the DRF.

While the DRF focuses on standardizing quantitative data to simplify reporting and its process, the TPR provides detailed reports.

How often should I submit the DRF?

The DRF should be submitted to the ILAB Grant Officer's Representative (GOR) at the same time as the TPR on the reporting schedule established by your grant agreement and the Management Procedures and Guidelines. This is usually every 6 months.

How can I tell if I am using the correct version of the DRF?

The Instructions tab of the DRF includes the version number at the top of the page.

The current version is **v1.5**. Please alert your ILAB GOR and MEL point of contact if you are using a different version.

How is this data used by ILAB?

Information reported in the standardized DRF tables is referenced by ILAB teams to quickly understand project activities and progress.

- **Automatic Compilation:** Information on the "Grant Details" sheet and some information on the "Reporting Form" sheet are automatically compiled across all programs for reference by ILAB and for reporting to stakeholders within the government, including:
    - US Congress
    - The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
    - DOL Performance Management
    - White House
    - ForeignAssistance.gov

The "Target - Total" and "Actual – Total" rows for OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators are aggregated by summing across projects and reporting periods. Aggregated data from the DRFs can also provide ILAB with useful insights for the design of future ILAB-funded projects.

Training and resources

This is my first time filling out a DRF for my project. Where can I find guidance material to help me through this process?

First, filling out the DRF should be a group activity among the project team and key implementing partners. There are several resources available to assist you:

- The DRF has helpful instructions, including in the "Instructions" tab and in the form of Tooltips that will pop up when you scroll your mouse over key column headers and cells.
- Theory of Sustained Change Guidebook has comprehensive instructions on developing indicators, with specific information on each Standard Outcome Indicator in Appendix B.
- Section 3 of the MEL Guidebook has a helpful checklist and links to other resources.
- ILAB's MEL Resource Library has additional slides and recordings (including a short, instructional video).

You can always reach out to your ILAB GOR, ILAB PM, and MEL point of contact with any questions.

DRF Indicators

Which indicators should I include in the DRF?

When deciding which indicators to include in the DRF, follow these guidelines:

- **Focus on Outcome-Level Indicators:** Include the outcome-level indicators that best summarize overall progress and those that map to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators.
- **Use Your L4A:** Your project's Learning for Action Agenda (L4A) can help you identify and prioritize indicators that can aid in making informed program decisions.
- **Executive Summary:** Many grantees capture very detailed data about their activities including in their updated workplans. They may also monitor organizational indicators for internal reporting or program improvement. Grantees generally DO NOT need to include all this data in the DRF, which is meant to be an executive summary of key data points, particularly at the outcome level.

Talk to your ILAB GOR and MEL point of contact about which data are necessary to include on the DRF.

Standard and Custom Indicators

- **Standard Indicators:** The standard version of the DRF only contains space for up to 10 indicators that map to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators. Project indicators that directly map to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators are summed across all indicators and projects for reporting to the US Congress.
- **Custom Indicators:** There are 10 Custom Project Indicators. Custom Indicators are not aggregated across projects but may be helpful to tell the story of your work to ILAB. For more information about selecting indicators for inclusion in the DRF, see the "Selecting Standard Outcome Indicators" section (p. 19-20) of the Theory of Sustained Change Guidebook for ILAB's Worker Rights Programs.

Selecting Indicators

Refer to page 19 of the ILAB TOsC Guidebook on selecting indicators:

ILAB encourages partners to prioritize, select, measure, and report on the TOsC standard indicators related to each outcome domain highlighted in the FOA.

1. **Develop a Project-Specific Theory of Change:** Grantees should develop a project-specific theory of change (TOC) and indicators the project will use to assess progress toward each outcome and impact.
2. **Hold a Workshop with Key Stakeholders:** Conduct a workshop that involves key stakeholders to undergo the indicator selection process.
3. **Ensure Indicator Relevance:** When selecting indicators, grantees must ensure that each indicator fulfills an important information need for project decision makers at ILAB and/or project management.
4. **Program Manager Input:** Program managers will influence indicator selection, prioritizing indicators and disaggregation that will provide actionable information for decisions.

5. **Align with Budget Allocations:** Please ensure that the number of indicators are in line with MEL budget allocations. Identifying the indicators appropriate for the project will be a collaborative process between the project, ILAB, and other key stakeholders during the development of the Project Document package.
6. **Review:** The MEL Plan review process is a good time to review the number of indicators and the project's overall MEL burden.

From the ILAB TOsC Guidebook, p. 19:

> *ILAB encourages partners to prioritize, select, measure, and report on the TOsC standard indicators related to each outcome domain highlighted in the FOA. Before selecting standard outcome indicators, grantees should develop a project-specific theory of change (TOC) and indicators the project will use to assess progress toward each outcome and impact. We recommend holding a workshop with key stakeholders to undergo this process. When selecting indicators, grantees must ensure that each indicator fulfills an important information need for project decision makers at ILAB and/or project management. Program managers will influence indicator selection, prioritizing indicators and disaggregation that will provide actionable information for decisions. Please ensure that the number of indicators are in line with MEL budget allocations. Identifying the indicators appropriate for the project will be a collaborative process between the project, ILAB, and other key stakeholders during the development of the Project Document package. The MEL Plan review process is a good time to review the number of indicators and the project's overall MEL burden.*

How do I define indicators to include on the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) in the DRF?

Please refer to the ILAB Theory of Sustained Change Guidebook for detailed guidance and examples of how to define indicators and, if relevant, map them to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators. These are recorded on the "PMP" sheet within the DRF. ILAB is interested in outcome indicators that capture changes and outcomes for local system actors and institutions, not project outputs or activities.

To define indicators for inclusion on the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) in the DRF:

1. **Utilize Standard Definitions:** All the key terms in the standard outcome indicators are defined in the Glossary and Standard Outcome Indicator Reference Sheets (SOIRS), found in Appendix A and B. Each term has standard definitions.
2. **Align Project Indicator Definitions:** Standard definitions are the definitions of the terms within the project indicator that aligns with the standard outcome indicator. These project indicator definitions are what will be used to ensure consistency of measurement, so it is critical that these definitions have adequate detail to allow anyone to clearly understand what is and is not included within each indicator. The grantee's project indicator definitions should align with the ILAB standard outcome indicator definitions but clarify how the broad definition will be applied within the grantee's specific context and project.

From the ILAB TOsC Guidebook, p. 22:

> *All the key terms in the standard outcome indicators are defined in the Glossary and Standard Outcome Indicator Reference Sheets (SOIRS), found in Appendix A and B. Each term has standard definitions. However, equally important to these standard definitions are the definitions of the terms within the project indicator that aligns with the standard outcome indicator. These project indicator definitions are what will be used to ensure consistency of measurement, so it is critical that these definitions have adequate detail to allow anyone to clearly understand what is and is not included within each indicator. The grantee's project indicator definitions should align with the ILAB standard outcome indicator definitions but clarify how the broad definition will be applied within the grantee's specific context and project.*

How do I select disaggregations?

Disaggregations are important dimensions and sub-categories within the overall project indicators that provide additional details. Common disaggregation categories include genders of participants, professional affiliations, types of institution, and geographic location. Not every indicator will have disaggregations. Where appropriate, projects should consider including disaggregations that are particularly helpful to tell the impact story.

Disaggregation categories do not have to be mutually exclusive, meaning that individuals and institutions may be counted toward multiple categories within the same indicator.

A list of common disaggregation categories is included in the drop-down menu of the "Reporting Form" (see list below). Grantees are encouraged to use these standard categories if relevant. Grantees may also create their own disaggregation categories if desired. When creating new disaggregation categories, please use the format "Category type-Disaggregation" so that related categories are grouped together during analysis.

Example: Custom disaggregation format

Age Group-Under 35
Age Group-35 and over

Sometimes, it may be particularly useful for a program to highlight results in a particular combination of relevant disaggregations. For example, a program that is particularly focused on building the capacity of young women workers in the textile industry may choose to highlight this particular combination of characteristics by including an intersectional disaggregation to this effect.

Example: Intersectional Disaggregation

Indicator: Number of textile workers with increased knowledge of labor rights (OTLA 2a)
Gender-Women
Gender-Men
Gender-Other
Age Group-29 years or younger
Age Group-30 years or older
Target Group- Women age 29 years or younger

Suggested disaggregation categories (available in drop-down menu)
Gender-Women
Gender-Men
Gender-Other
Affiliation-Worker/Civil Society Representatives
Affiliation-Public Sector Representatives
Affiliation-Private Sector Representatives
Inst. Type-Workers Orgs.-National
Inst. Type-Workers Orgs.-Sectoral
Inst. Type-Workers Orgs.-Enterprise
Inst. Type-Workers Orgs.-Other
Inst. Type-Employers Organizations
Inst. Type-Govt. Agencies
Inst. Type-Bipartite Groups
Inst. Type-Tripartite Groups
Inst. Type-Enterprises, farms, factories, or workplaces
Inst. Type-Intl. multi-stakeholder initiatives or coalitions
Inst. Type-Academia/Universities
Inst. Type-Media/Press

What are Custom Indicators?

Custom Indicators do not map directly to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators but may still be useful to tell the story of your project's contribution to sustained change. It is left up to grantees and their GOR and MEL point of contact to discuss which Custom Indicators are helpful to report, and ILAB does not want grantees to report every indicator that they track internally. Custom Indicators can be included on the bottom half of the "PMP" sheet of the DRF, and they are not aggregated across projects.

Note: All OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators are defined as a *whole number (#)* of individuals, institutions, or leverage points. Therefore, if a grantee chooses to report an indicator that is defined as a percentage (%) or ratio, it must be a Custom Indicator. Grantees should be aware that the results or achievements captured by such indicators may be used by the ILAB GOR for project management purposes, but in most cases they will not be used or disseminated by ILAB. Projects are advised to be judicious and practical in selecting a few custom indicators that are essential for project management, learning and adaptation. If your project has a Custom Indicator reported as a percentage, also consider whether there is a related OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator that could be reported as a whole number. For example:

Custom Indicator: Percentage of textile workers with increased knowledge of labor rights

Related OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator: Number of textile workers with increased knowledge of labor rights (OTLA 2a)

What if I have multiple project indicators that map to the same OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator?

It is OK to have multiple project indicators that map to a single OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator, as long as they do not overlap. This is common when a project has several indicators that track engagement with different groups or track increased capacity as a result of trainings on different topics.

For example, if a project has one indicator to track increased capacity as a result of trainings for textile workers and a different indicator to track increased capacity as a result of trainings for labor inspectors, then both would likely map to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator 2a.

However, if you have multiple indicators that map to the same OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator, it is VERY IMPORTANT that the definitions of the indicators are mutually exclusive. This means that the same individuals or institutions should not be counted in multiple project indicators that map to the same OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator. This will result in double counting when the data is aggregated.

Consider the following examples:

In both examples, the indicators will map to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicator 2A. In the first example, the indicators are clearly defined as separate populations (non-managers and managers), so there is no risk of overlap or double-counting indicator 2A. In the second example, both indicators deal with the same population (non-management workers) but different knowledge areas. Depending on the program design, it is highly likely that the same individuals could be trained in both topics and, therefore, be counted twice toward Indicator 2A when it is aggregated.

*Example 1: Indicators that WILL NOT result in double-counting (*ACCEPTABLE*)*
1. Number of workers in non-management roles with increased knowledge of Occupational Safety and Health rights (OTLA 2a)
2. Number of managers with increased knowledge of Occupational Safety and Health rights (OTLA 2a)

Example 2: Indicators that WILL LIKELY result in double-counting (TO BE AVOIDED; See example below under "Suggested combined indicators" for tips on how to avoid double-counting)
1. Number of workers in non-management roles with increased knowledge of Occupational Safety and Health rights (OTLA 2a)
2. Number of workers in non-management roles with increased knowledge of right to

Acceptable conditions of Work (OTLA 2a)

The DRF asks me to set indicator targets for each 6-month reporting period. Do I really need to set targets for each period?

ILAB strongly encourages grantees to set targets for each period whenever possible. However, we recognize that there are situations where this will not be feasible. For example, sometimes this is due to the frequency of data collection or because the nature of the indicator requires a longer timeframe to measure results. If you feel this applies to you, please discuss with your ILAB PM and MEL POC how to set appropriate targets. You can also reference "Setting Targets" in the Theory of Sustained Change Guidebook for additional guidance on setting targets.

My project conducts training activities, and we have many similar indicators that measure knowledge gained from each type of training. All these indicators do not fit on the reporting form!

If your project has many similar indicators to track knowledge gained from different types of trainings, consider combining them into a single indicator on the DRF and include the different topic areas as disaggregations. This can also be especially helpful to avoid double counting when the same individuals are being trained on multiple topics.

Consider the following example:

Original project indicators:

1. Number of workers with increased knowledge of Occupational Safety and Health rights (OTLA 2a)
2. Number of workers with increased knowledge on the right to Non-discrimination in hiring (OTLA 2a)
3. Number of workers with increased knowledge of the right to Acceptable Conditions of Work (OTLA 2a)
4. Number of businesses with increased capacity for addressing labor rights issues (OTLA 2b)
5. Number of national labor unions with increased capacity for addressing labor rights issues (OTLA 2b)

Suggested combined indicators:

1. Total number of workers with increased knowledge of labor rights (OTLA 2a)
    Disaggregated by:
        Labor Right-Occupational Safety and Health
        Labor Right-Non-discrimination
        Labor Right-Acceptable Conditions of Work
2. Total number of institutions with increased capacity for addressing labor rights (OTLA 2b)
    Disaggregated by:
        Inst. Type-Enterprises, farms, factories, or workplaces
        Inst. Type-Workers Orgs.-National

Data quality and accuracy

Can the same individuals or institutions be counted across multiple reporting periods for the same indicator?

Yes. Please report the total number of individuals or institutions engaged in each reporting period, even if they were included in a previous period.

For example, if your project engages with the same two government agencies in two successive periods, then report "2" during each period. If your project engaged with the same 100 workers during two periods, then report "100" in both periods.

The data reported in each period is meant to stand alone as a point-in-time snapshot of activities during that time. However, the "Project Total to Date" column must count only UNIQUE individuals or institutions engaged over the entire life of the project. In the previous examples, the "Project Total to Date" is 2 unique agencies and 100 unique workers.

If engaging with a single institution over time, grantees are also encouraged to provide more details about which levels or geographic locations of the institution they are engaging each reporting period:

- National,
- Sub-national, or
- Local affiliates for example.

Can the same individuals or institutions be included in multiple disaggregations for the same indicator in the same period?

Yes. Disaggregations do not need to be mutually exclusive. If an indicator is disaggregated by "Gender" and "Affiliation", then a woman who is also a workers' representative would be counted in both the "Gender-Woman" row and "Affiliation-Worker/Civil Society Representative" row. However, she would only count once in the "Actual - Total" row for that reporting period. If it is important to your project to report specific combinations of disaggregations to track intersectional results, then you can include important combined categories as dedicated disaggregations.

For more guidance, see the FAQ on "How do I select disaggregations?"

Why are some of the cells on the "Reporting Form" turning yellow?

Actual Totals that are less than 80% of the Target number for that period are highlighted in yellow. This serves as a reminder for grantees to provide additional information in the "Reflections" column, which is an opportunity to reflect on reasons why targets were not met and consider whether adjustments should be made to the project strategy.

Updating the DRF

What if I need to change data that I reported in previous reporting periods?

No problem! Just make sure that the next DRF that you submit has the most up-to-date information for all current and past reporting periods. Use the "Reflections" column to explain any updates or amendments to data points from past reporting periods.

My project has started tracking a new indicator or stopped tracking an old indicator. How do I report that in the DRF?

If your project has decided to report on a new indicator, include the new indicator using an empty row on the "PMP" sheet. Make sure to use the "Changes to Indicator" column to explain the change and indicate the date you started tracking. On the "Reporting Form" sheet, start tracking the new indicator from the current reporting period (or the earliest period for which data is available).

If your project has decided to stop tracking an indicator that is no longer relevant, do not delete the existing indicator or the previously reported data points. Consult with your ILAB Grant Officer's Representative (GOR) and MEL POC, and when agreed, use the "Changes to Indicator" column on the "PMP" sheet to indicate the date from which the indicator is no longer being tracked.

What if I need more rows to input additional disaggregations on the Reporting Form sheet?

By default, the DRF includes rows for up to 12 disaggregations per indicator. If you think you need to report more than 12 disaggregation categories, first speak with your ILAB GOR about whether it is necessary to include that much detail. You may discover that only a subset is helpful for reporting to ILAB. If more than 12 categories are still needed, your GOR can insert more rows for you.

I want to report more than 10 OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators or more than 10 Custom Indicators. Can I create new rows to input more indicators?

The standard DRF form includes space for up to 10 OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators and 10 Custom Indicators because grantees are encouraged to select only the most relevant indicators for reporting. Grantees and GORs cannot add rows for additional indicators to the PMP page of the DRF.

Speak to your ILAB GOR if you have questions about which indicators are most important to report on the DRF. The most relevant indicators are typically ones that map to OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators and those outcome-level Custom Indicators that are especially important to track overall progress.

ILAB does not want grantees to report all internal data or all available disaggregations. If you and the GOR decide it is still important to include more than 10 OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators or

10 Custom Indicators, the GOR can provide you with a version of the DRF that includes space for up to 30 OTLA Standard Outcome Indicators and 30 Custom Indicators.

What if I want to rearrange or move data or text around the DRF?

If you need to move or paste data on the DRF, DO NOT use the "`Cut`" function in Excel. The DRF form uses hidden formulas to link sheets and sort entries. Using the "`Cut`" function may break formulas. Instead, copy the content of cells by right clicking on the source cell and selecting "`Copy`" from the pop-up menu OR by using the `CTRL+C` shortcut. To paste data, right click the target cell and select "`Paste Options: Values (V)`" in the pop-up menu.

How often should we expect ILAB to update the DRF?

The DRF has gone through a few rounds of updates since ILAB piloted and tested the tool in 2023. Unless there is a major change in either the Theory of Sustained Change or any Excel updates that affect the functioning of the form, the DRF will be updated annually. The annual updates will likely be minor updates to fix any technical issues and/or to make the DRF more user-friendly. ILAB will alert grantees to any changes and will provide guidance and assistance in transferring data to the newest version of the form.

Can I use Google Sheets to open and edit the DRF?

Grantees should use the desktop version of MS Excel to open, edit, and save the DRF form. Files edited in Google Sheets often cause errors when datasets are aggregated.