ILAB's Worker Rights Programs

<u>Technical Progress Report (TPR) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</u>

This guide of frequently asked questions is organized by TPR form sections. The initial "Q" stands for question, and the initial "A" for answer.

General Information

Q: Regarding "Modification number" (under "Field Office" field), should participants input all grant modifications and amounts, or only the latest grant modification and amount?

A: Please input all grant modifications with cost increases. It should be a running account of all modifications that added funds to the project.

Key Project Dates

Q: Regarding "Actual start date was", is this the effective date of the grant modification?

A: It means the date when staff are on board and the project starts spending money.

Q: Regarding "Expected date of evaluation is", does this refer to the independent evaluation commissioned by USDOL? If so, where can this date be found?

A: Yes, this is an external evaluation of the project, commissioned by USDOL-ILAB. This date must be agreed upon with ILAB and once it has been established or estimated, enter the month and year. If it has not yet been agreed upon, enter "TBD".

Q: Regarding "Modification date is", does this refer to grant modifications? If so, what is the grant modification date?

A: ILAB's grant office provides a Notice of Award to implementers once a modification has been approved and processed. The Federal Award Date listed is listed on the top right had corner of the Notice of Award. This is the modification date.

Budget

Q: Are "Total Actual Expenditures" and "Planned Expenditures this Reporting Period" based on the approved annual project budget?

A: Yes, but total actual expenditures should reflect what the project reported on their FFRs.

Q: Since the financial year is January-December, how should April-September and October-March be calculated for planned expenditures?

A: Fiscal years for the U.S. Government run from October through September. An alternative is to estimate monthly any special expenses for the period ahead and add them together for a six-month period (e.g., October-March or April-September).

Country Update

Q: Does this section include recommendations made to the government to improve labor rights violations? Or does this section include any initiative/delayed announcement by the government on policies or laws passed?

A: Mostly the latter. This section is not intended to include any project activities, but high-level and overarching country events and dynamics that are important to consider when reading the report. This can be either because those events and dynamics may have affected or continue affecting the project implementation and outcomes, or because such events and dynamics may become an opportunity or challenging factor for the project in the next reporting period.   Project Highlights and Optional Project Story

Q: Should the names of beneficiaries referenced in the project story be kept anonymous?

A: Yes, the names of beneficiaries should be kept anonymous.   The project may opt to use fake names to protect the identities of the beneficiaries. However, if fake names are used, that should be noted at the beginning of the stories.   The stories are optional and should only be reported when it has relevant content and the project task related to the story is at a mature stage to report the facts in a narrative.

Q: What is the difference between a project highlight and a promising practice?

A: A project highlight is an accomplishment, either intended or unintended, that the project or its stakeholders achieved during the project period. You do not necessarily have to describe the project activity(ies) that led to this accomplishment; the focus is on the accomplishment itself. A promising practice is a process, activity, task, or innovative practice that the project has done that is replicable and shows potential for leading to future accomplishments. The promising practice does not necessarily have an accomplished result. A promising practice is still being monitored. ILAB's main purpose for asking this is to learn from practices that work in certain contexts and explore adaptation for other geographies and conditions. (See Promising Practices answer below). Review of Workplan (Progress on Activities)

Q: If projects have engaged in unplanned activities (e.g., attending conferences or initiating new partnerships), where should they put that information?

A: This can be included in the "Other" section. Or if it makes sense to include it in the promising practice section, that's fine too. But note, any activity whether planned or not must be attributable to achieving project objectives.

Q: If a project's entire focus is related to equity (e.g., serving a single historically underserved community, like women), how do they fill out the Description of Equity Considerations column?

A: The grantee can simply note that in this section. There is no need to include additional text here if it is not applicable.

Q: How much detail is desired in the list of activities? (i.e., broad activity categories vs. tasks).

A: Activities should match what is in the work plan for that period of performance. If the grantee has a different way to show what has changed in the work plan, they can discuss an alternative chart with their ILAB GOR.

Q: How much detail is desired in the Description of Activity Progress column?

A: It should include basic information. No paragraphs are needed. It's text to explain where things are and why. One or two lines maximum.

Highlight 1-2 Promising Practices

Q: Can ILAB share an example of what to report in this section?

A: A promising practice is an activity, process or intervention that has not yet been formally evaluated but shows potential efficacy based on preliminary results and opinions of key actors or experts. Promising practices may eventually become evidence-based best practices if evaluation and monitoring demonstrate their effectiveness. To report a promising practice in this section, a project should describe the role the project played in the promising result (something in their sphere of control). Please provide enough information on how the project implemented the practice (who, what, where, when, how) so that other projects could replicate it (or an evaluation could evaluate it) and explain why the project sees the results as promising. A reminder that reporting one or two promising practices is optional and is only recommendable when the practice is concrete and the project has documented elements to describe it thoroughly and succinctly (i.e., the most relevant aspects of it).

Opportunities/Challenges

No questions submitted.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

Q: Can ILAB direct participants to specific resource materials on the Learning for Action Agenda (L4A) to guide the development of Learning Questions and goals?

A: Project teams can find guidelines on how to set up and organize their Learning for Action Agenda (L4A) on pages 15-17 of the MEL Guide [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/merl/MEL-Plan-Template-OTLA-ME-Services-CLEAN-2-09-24-508-3.pdf]. Project teams can also find further details in the training series materials created for *Module 1. Learning for Action* of *Session 2 – ILAB Learning for Adaptation and Accountability*. The slide deck and the webinar recordings are available on the training website [https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/grants/training-materials].

In addition, ILAB's MEL Resource Library has a "Learning and Adaptation" section at https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/grants/learning-and-adaption where project teams can find strategies and examples on how to formulate learning questions and craft a learning agenda. See the subheading "Learning Questions".

Q: Regarding "Learning Activities Conducted," does this sub-section include good practices, new strategies, or initiatives taken by implementing partners?

A: This sub-section is related to the activities that came from the process of addressing any learning questions the project has formulated as a team. This sub-section is not intended to include other evaluative activities, such as needs assessments. For guidelines on what Learning Activities Conducted mean, please refer to the third column of the table on page 17 of the MEL Guide

[https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/merl/MEL-Plan-Template-OTLA-ME-Services-CLEAN-2-09-24-508-3.pdf].

Q: How does a project fill out the Progress on Learning Questions/Goals section if they don't have a Learning for Action plan? What if an older project has learning questions but hasn't created an official Learning for Action plan?

A: If they do not yet have a Learning for Action (L4A) agenda, they can either discuss where they are in the development stage or state "not applicable". If a project is unsure if this is applicable, they should reach out to their GOR and MEL POC at ILAB.

Q: Is there a proposed format for reporting information recollected and systematized in a complexity-aware M&E approach? Are there any formatting restrictions?

A: No, a suggestion is for the project to use the logic model template on page 14 of the MEL Guide [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/merl/MEL-Plan-Template-OTLA-ME-Services-CLEAN-2-09-24-508-3.pdf] and organize the project aspects that are sensitive to complexity, according to the Theory of Sustained Change spheres classification (control, influence, and interest). The project team can also group the elements sensitive to complexity by type, for instance: contextual factors, diverse values and perspectives, changing dynamics within the project or between the project and its implementation context, and stakeholders' appreciation for the project.

Project Activities in Response to Evaluation and Audit Recommendations
No questions submitted.

Upcoming Activities for the Next Reporting Period
No questions submitted.

Other
No questions submitted.