

MEAL Guide

Guide for Monitoring, Evaluation,
Accountability and Learning
in AVSF Cooperation Projects



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Acronyms and abbreviations

CAHW	Community Animal Health Workers (known as APPSA in Madagascar)
AFD	French Development Agency
ARC	AVSF's Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate Change Division
PO	Programme Officer (head office based)
FFS	Farmer Field School
NC	National Coordination or National Coordinator
MPA	Multi-Year Partnership Agreement (signed between AVSF and the AFD)
DPO	Diagnosis of Producer Organizations
AH	Agricultural Holding (Farms)
LAVD	AVSF's Livestock, Animal Health and Veterinary Public Health Division
CCOI	AVSF Cross-Cutting Outcome Indicators
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
AFD-OVI	OVI included in the MPA signed with AFD.
CBI	Capacity Building Index
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP	Producer Organisation
POM	AVSF's Producer Organisations and Markets Programme
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
PM	Project Manager
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
SYSE	Monitoring and Evaluation System (Excel file)

INTRODUCTION

Background and rationale

This guide to the AVSF policy on monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL⁽¹⁾) reflects an institutional commitment to ensuring the quality of our cooperation. It is based on our ability to demonstrate the results and impact of the actions we have taken with our partners and to integrate them into the continuous improvement of our strategies.

For AVSF, the main objectives of an effective monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system are as follows:

1. To ensure proper management of implemented projects by collecting and analysing relevant quantitative and qualitative information, through the monitoring of activities undertaken, the results achieved, and the evaluation of outcomes and impact.

This information collection must enable the timely design and implementation, in coordination with partners and beneficiaries, of adjustments to the project's intervention strategy and the implementation of the various scheduled activities, in order to achieve the set objectives and expected results. Therefore, it must help to improve the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of projects.

2. To provide accurate, objective and timely information to our technical and financial partners regarding our activities, the results and outcomes achieved, as well as the long-term impact of our actions and our cooperation in Global South countries.
3. "Making data speak": to enable its integration and aggregation from the local level up to the national, regional and global levels, in order to:
 - make the association's work and its impact visible, particularly – though not exclusively – for communication purposes
 - continuously improve AVSF's intervention tools and methodologies
 - support advocacy actions in both the Global North and Global South

- strengthen capitalisation and learning processes
- support the demonstration of the "AVSF postulate" – the promotion of smallholder farming as a pathway forward toward sustainable and equitable development – across the various documents produced (position papers, articles, activity reports, etc.)

Guide Objectives

This Guide has been produced to provide a coherent quality management framework through MEAL practices.

Its objective is to harmonise approaches and strengthen the ability of AVSF teams to use data in managing cooperation activities and in decision-making. The document builds upon AVSF's 2020 Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, offering an updated and expanded version.

This guide provides practical advice and guidelines for planning, implementing and monitoring MEAL activities across all AVSF projects throughout the project cycle, from design through to final evaluation.

Target Audience

This guide is intended for all AVSF staff involved in project planning, implementation or monitoring, both at head office and in cooperation countries, particularly project teams and monitoring and evaluation coordinators. It has also been designed to be used by and shared with people outside AVSF, such as our co-implementing partners and our funding bodies.

¹ In this document, we will systematically use the acronym MEAL as it is the term most commonly used by international cooperation stakeholders.



01

Core Principles and Definition of MEAL Components

The MEAL system is based on recognised standards and frameworks, as set out in Annex 2. It forms part of a human rights-based approach that seeks to ensure equity, prevent all forms of discrimination and promote the inclusion of all stakeholders. This approach helps to develop fairer, more inclusive and sustainable programmes.

The four pillars of the MEAL system are: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning.

As a reminder:

Monitoring involves a continuous and systematic process of gathering information on project activities throughout their implementation. Monitoring provides information on progress by analysing the activities carried out, the expected outputs and results, as well as their direct outcomes for the target group. It enables the identification of day-to-day issues by monitoring processes and providing timely information to AVSF teams and the stakeholders involved, allowing them to make informed decisions and adjust their approach where necessary.

Evaluation is a one-off assessment (quantitative or qualitative) that measures the achievement of the project's specific and overall objectives. It analyses both the impact of the project and the way in which it is developed, evaluating whether its implementation facilitates or, conversely, hinders the achievement of a positive impact. The aim is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the actions taken in order to understand their actual effects and identify areas for improvement.

Accountability involves a commitment to beneficiaries, project stakeholders and funding bodies, through feedback and transparency mechanisms.

Learning helps to generate knowledge, disseminate information and support the teams and stakeholders involved in planning future projects and strategies. It includes the capitalisation process.

Each component must work together seamlessly to be effective:

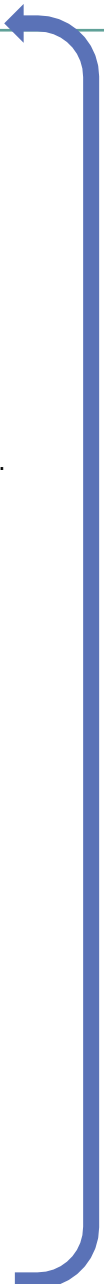
All of these components are essential and complement one another, providing useful information and lessons learned to improve projects:

Monitoring provides the necessary data for the **evaluation** team to conduct its work. Evaluation uses the monitoring data as input.

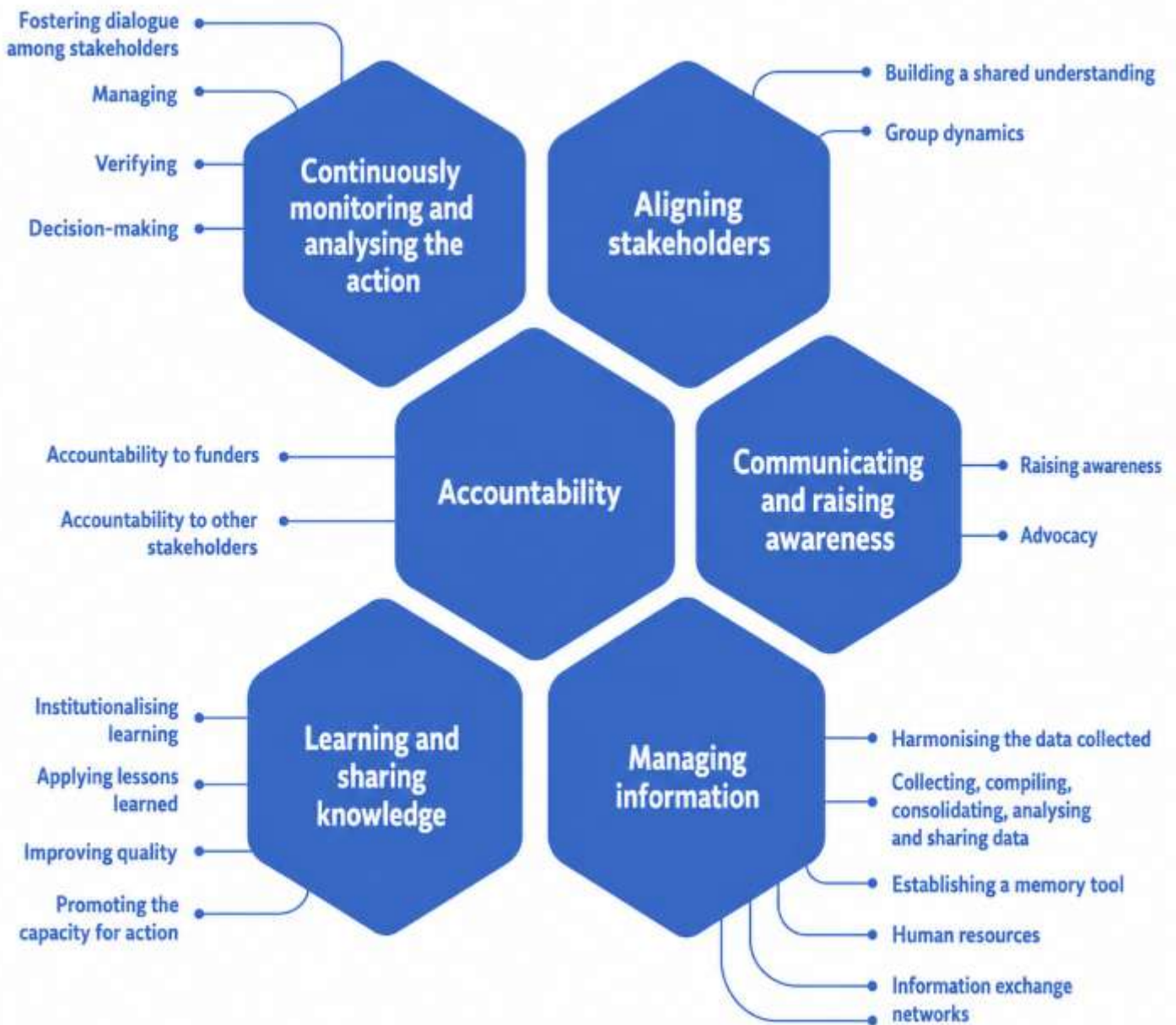
Evaluation strengthens **accountability** by demonstrating the project's effectiveness to funders, technical partners and communities.

Accountability requires an effective **monitoring** system to gather information on project progress and meet the needs of the stakeholders involved.

Monitoring and **evaluation** promote **learning** by providing teams with data to analyse, prompting them to ask structured questions and develop responses in order to make better decisions for the project.



Keys to a MEAL system



Source: [F3E FichesDSE clefs-du-suivi-evaluation.pdf](#) (in French)

02

Governance and Key Stages of MEAL at AVSF

MEAL is a shared responsibility among all individuals involved in project design, planning and implementation. The MEAL team is responsible for the methodological framework, while programme teams are responsible for putting the tools into practice. The two complement each other.

2.1 Organisational Structure

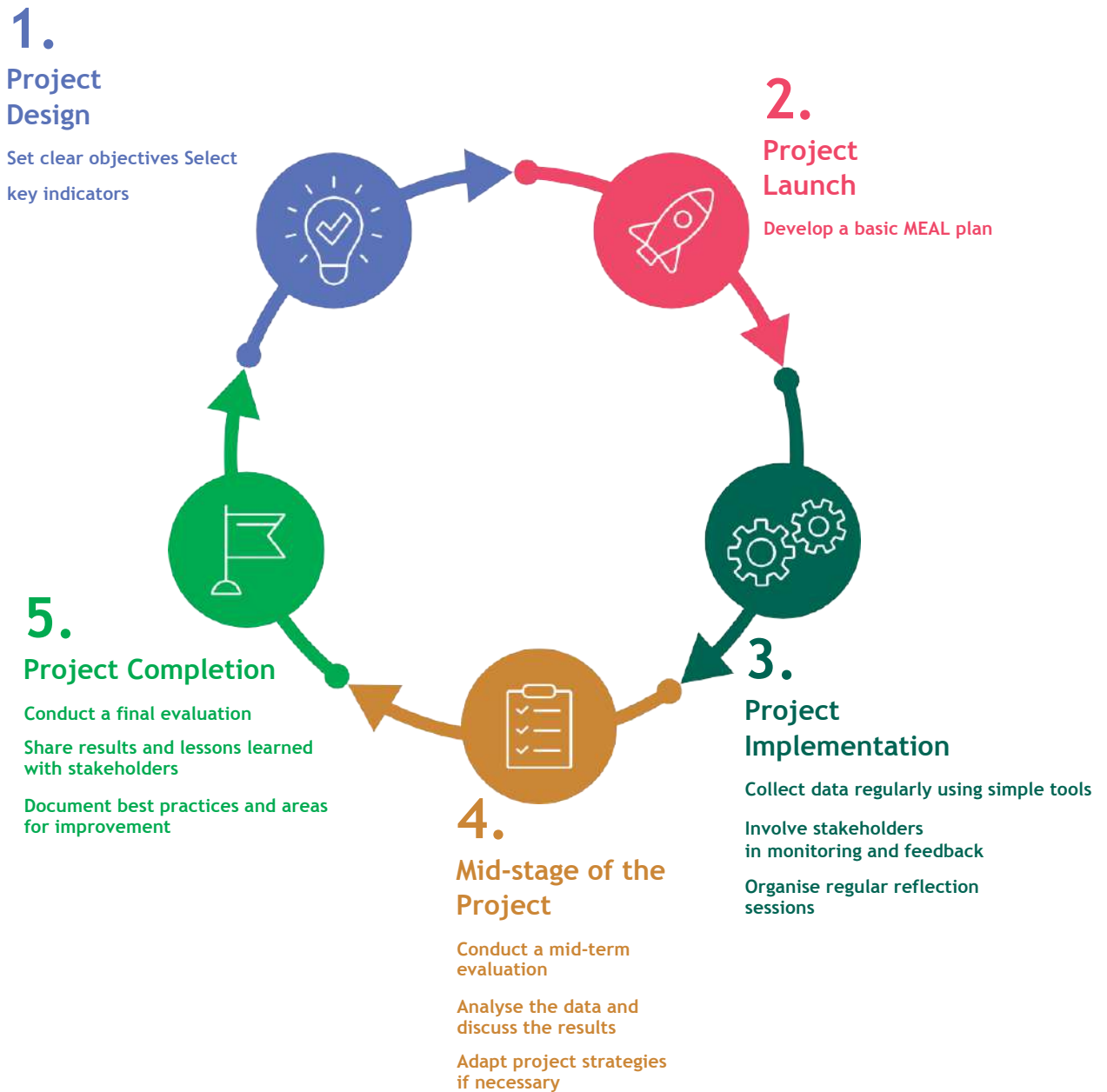
Responsibilities must be clearly assigned and assumed throughout the entire information-sharing chain between head office and the project teams in cooperation countries, in line with AVSF's internal organisation.

Who	Responsibilities
In cooperation countries	
Project Manager (PM) or Project Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	Coordinates the implementation of the MEAL system tailored to the project's activities: • Defines the MEAL system • Completes the indicators, including the baseline situation, together with the project teams (AVSF, local partners) • Completes the SYSE and submits it to the National Coordinator • Relies on MEAL data to guide project management, draft narrative reports for funding bodies, and enrich internal discussions and reflections with partners on adapting intervention strategies.
National Coordinator or Country Representative	Ensures and oversees the implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities within appropriate time frames: • Supports project managers in managing MEAL systems • Verifies the consistency of the systems and the relevance of indicators • Validates and submits the project/country SYSE to head office (programme officers and MEAL leads) • Uses the data generated to guide country strategies and advocacy actions • Strengthens teams' MEAL capacities (needs assessment and mobilisation of internal or external technical support)
MEAL Lead at the National Coordination Level (if the post exists)	The NC may delegate all or part of their MEAL missions to a national M&E lead. • Manages the improvement of country-level systems (e.g. the development of digital tools, the definition of common indicators at country level) • Serves as the direct point of contact for the head office regarding MEAL
At the head office	
Geographical Programme Officer	• Supports project design, specifically reviewing overall coherence (logical framework and indicators) • Provides support, remotely and during field missions, for the implementation and quality of the MEAL system. • Uses the data to enhance and tailor project and country strategies.
Thematic Programme Officer	• Uses data to inform thematic strategies, communications and advocacy work (preparing summaries, infographics, etc.).
MEAL management (Programmes Director and Head of Mission)	• Collects and archives annually (in January of year N) all developed and completed MEAL systems (only the CCOI and AFD-OVI in the SYSE Excel file). • Provides remote methodological support for a project or a geographical area. • Conducts field support and training missions. • Coordinates improvement processes for the global MEAL system.

2.2 MEAL Planning in the Project Cycle

A key idea is that MEAL is not a process external to the project. On the contrary, it is an integral part of the process and serves as a key management tool.

Therefore, MEAL must be considered at all key stages of the project cycle, including the design/formulation phase, as shown in the following diagram:



STAGE 1: PROJECT DESIGN

MEAL should be planned and taken into account from the project design phase onwards.

Within the Logical Framework

Building a coherent and inclusive logical framework is a key step in ensuring the consistency and clarity of the intervention. It must be supported by participatory and analytical tools that help clarify the project's rationale, its objectives, the expected results and the means of verification.

Recommended tools include:

- **The problem tree and the solution tree:** these enable the root causes of issues to be identified and proposed responses to be structured. For example, in a land tenure security project, the problem tree may highlight the lack of recognition of customary rights as the root cause, thereby guiding actions towards advocacy.
- **The theory of change:** this approach, which focuses on the stakeholders and their vision of change, helps to visualise the relationships between activities, intermediate outcomes and intended impacts/changes, whilst also integrating assumptions and risks. It is particularly useful for complex or multi-sectoral projects, as it allows the intervention logic to be explicitly set out (see example in Annex 3).

- **SMART indicators** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) must be formulated in a clear and verifiable manner, consistent with the objectives, expected results and available resources.
- **Disaggregation of indicators:** indicators must be disaggregated, whenever possible and relevant, by sex, age, disability status, socio-economic status or membership of a target group. For example, an indicator on access to training can be broken down by gender and age group (young people and adults) to reflect the cross-cutting principles of equity and inclusion.

This approach not only meets the requirements of funding bodies, but also strengthens the project's social relevance and its capacity to generate useful insights for AVSF and its partners.



	Results Chain	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Sources and means of verification	Hypothesis
General objectives	GO1 GO2...	IMPACT INDICATORS		
Specific objective	SO	OUTCOME INDICATORS		
Results	R1 R2 R3...	RESULTS INDICATORS		
Activities	A1.1 A2.2 A3.3...	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		





TOOLS

- [Microsoft Word - PCM manuel EN-mars 2001.doc](#)
- [Action for change.](#)
[Methodological guide to supporting 'complex' change processes: analyse, plan, monitor and evaluate - F3E](#) (in French)

Examples of indicators based on what they are specifically intended to measure:

Type of indicator	Measures...	Examples
Activity	What is done: Resources and efforts (both human and financial) mobilised to achieve a result.	Technical and financial support allocated for the rehabilitation or construction of an irrigation system.
Result (or outcome)	What is produced: The tangible and direct products or services generated by the project for the target groups through the activities carried out.	1 irrigation system rehabilitated/constructed.
Outcome	The lasting changes produced (short and medium term): The changes or direct effects produced by the project's results among the target groups.	Immediate effect (short term): 320 families living at the end of the canal are introducing new crops (avocados and fruit) that they can irrigate every fortnight. Main outcome (medium term): an increase in income of at least 25% for the 320 families, thanks to the introduction of new irrigated crops (avocados, fruits).
Impact	The lasting changes produced (medium and long term): Changes for indirect beneficiaries, measurable after the project.	Poverty reduction and an improvement in food security in the target areas (greater local availability of a variety of foods), resulting from the rehabilitation of irrigation systems and the development of marketing chains for new products, which have been well received in local markets.

It is also advisable to include a selection of relevant, aggregate cross-cutting outcome indicators within the project's logical framework. Indeed, the distinctive feature of AVSF's MEAL system lies in the definition of a set of institutional evaluation questions and common indicators designed to answer them, reflecting the progress and ambitions of AVSF's projects and programmes.

Evaluation questions
Frequently asked questions for all AVSF projects
How do AVSF's actions contribute to the agroecological transition?
How do AVSF's actions help to increase the income of smallholder farming families?
How do AVSF's actions contribute to policy advocacy?
How do AVSF's actions help to improve gender equality and youth issues?
Frequently asked questions for the Livestock, Animal Health and Veterinary Public Health (LAVD) sector
How do AVSF's actions contribute to the sustainable strengthening of animal health services for livestock?
How do AVSF's actions help to improve the performance of smallholder livestock farms?
How do AVSF's actions help to improve the social and environmental sustainability of smallholder livestock farms?
Frequently asked questions for the Agroecology, Natural Resources and Climate Change (ARC) sector
To what extent / how is the management and protection of natural resources improved? (soil, water, forests, trees, cultivated biodiversity)
To what extent do agroecological farms strengthen their ability to adapt to climate change?
Frequently asked questions for the Producer Organisations and Markets (POM) sector
To what extent do the agroecological processes supported by AVSF help to improve the economic performance of producers?
Does AVSF's assistance help to improve the support services that POs offer to smallholders?
Can it be said that AVSF's support helps to provide smallholders with more favourable and sustainable access to markets?

A participatory initiative launched in 2019 with the support of the cooperative consulting firm Tero led to the definition of 18 cross-cutting Outcome indicators (CCOI). Of these, 6 are common to all AVSF projects and 12 are specific to AVSF's three technical sectors (LAVD, ARC and POM):

CCOI common to all AVSF projects	1. Number of farmers and livestock farmers who have adopted new agroecological practices on their farms and land/number of animals affected 2. Number of local multi-stakeholder platforms that contribute to the conservation of natural resources, and the areas in which these resources are conserved as a result of their actions. 3. Gross margin per hectare - Gross margin per unit of livestock production 4. Number of public policies or regulations that have incorporated proposals from AVSF 5. Proportion of women in organisational and community governance bodies 6. Proportion of young people in organisational and community governance bodies
CCOI common to the LAVD sector	7. Mortality rate on supported livestock farms 8. Livestock farmers' satisfaction rate regarding the animal health service 9. Quantity of livestock products consumed or sold
CCOI common to the ARC sector	10. Land areas that are better protected against degradation and are in the process of regaining their fertility 11. Areas where vegetation has increased, resulting in improved tree cover and/or enhanced agrobiodiversity 12. Number of farmers who have significantly diversified their production and the land areas involved
CCOI common to the POM sector	13. Yield per hectare 14. Number of producers and land area (ha) complying with organic farming specifications 15. Price difference (%) between conventional and certified products for the producer 16. Type and quality of production and marketing support services provided by producer organisations (POs) to their members 17. Evolution of PO turnover 18. Sustainability and quality of PO-buyer business relationships

At the project formulation stage, it is advisable to carefully select, from the 18 CCOI proposed above, the ones concerning themes relevant to the project, in order to assess the developments/changes that the project helps bring about. On average, a project selects 5 CCOI, with 10 being the maximum expected per project.

These CCOI must be monitored, measured and analysed in accordance with the guidelines in Chapter 4.

Head office is awaiting the report detailing the changes observed during year N, starting from January of N+1. The SYSE format will be used for this purpose.



TOOL

➤ Tab 3 of the file [SYSE Format 2024_VF_EN.xlsx](#)

In the Project Narrative

Making AVSF's institutional approach visible through the MEAL framework: it is vital that projects reflect AVSF's institutional identity, including the way MEAL activities are designed, implemented and reported on. MEAL should not be viewed as a mere reporting tool, but rather as a strategic instrument serving AVSF's objectives: to strengthen local stakeholder capacities, promote agroecology, smallholder farming and fairer value chains, as well as foster sustainable regional dynamics. Therefore, MEAL activities must be clearly reflected in the project narrative reports.

This serves to:

- **Demonstrate that AVSF's MEAL approach is rooted in the reality on the ground**, adapting to local contexts, partner dynamics and the schedules of beneficiaries;
- **Highlight the specific features of our approach**, such as the involvement of farmers' organisations in participatory monitoring, which helps to strengthen their own structures; the use of tools tailored to local capacities; and, above all, the importance of collective learning;
- **Reinforce the clarity and consistency of our actions**, demonstrating that MEAL is not an external requirement, but an integral part of our approach to quality, accountability and continuous improvement.

For example, a project can highlight in its narrative report how the capitalisation workshops helped partners adapt their practices, or how accountability mechanisms improved trust among the stakeholders involved.



TOOL

- ✎ Standard text to be included in the project narrative report: [TEXTE STANDARD SE POUR AP AO en.pdf](#)

In the Timeline

The planning of MEAL activities must be integrated from the project design phase onwards, in line with the overall timeline. It is essential **to adapt these activities to the timescales and dynamics specific to the local context to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.**

For example:

- **In an agricultural project**, follow-up surveys on yields or agricultural practices must be conducted **after the harvests**, rather than during the sowing season or periods of intense farmer activity, to ensure that beneficiaries are available and that the data is reliable.
- **In the case of farmers' organisations (POs)**, key moments such as **general assemblies, membership drives or trade negotiations** can serve as strategic opportunities to organise accountability or capitalisation activities, as they bring members together and foster collective expression.
- **For implementing partners**, it is important to take their own institutional calendar into account (year-end closures, internal audits, mandate renewals, etc.) when planning evaluation workshops or learning sessions, to ensure their full participation.

Ignoring these periods may compromise the quality of the data collected, reduce the participation of key stakeholders and even lead to tensions or misunderstandings. A lack of planning often leads to data collection deadlines not being met, which means it is not possible to analyse changes using data time series that are sufficiently long, representative or consistent.

In the Budget

Project budgets must include a realistic and detailed estimate of the costs associated with MEAL activities, including internal and external human resources, as well as the necessary material and logistical resources. These items, which are often underestimated or considered secondary, should be seen as structural components of the project, on the same level as operational activities.

The budget items to be planned for may include:

- MEAL management and coordination time: staff involvement in monitoring, accountability, analysis and capitalisation
- Travel and field visits: monitoring missions, surveys, participatory assessments and data collection
- Capacity building: training local teams, partners and POs in MEAL tools, data analysis and accountability
- Data production and processing: data collection tools (questionnaires, tablets), data entry, data cleaning, statistical analysis and visualisation

- Specific studies and surveys: collecting information for assessing the baseline situation, classification of agricultural holdings (AH), agricultural assessments in new territories and impact studies
- Mid-term and final evaluations: participation of external experts, feedback workshops and dissemination of results
- Capitalisation and learning: multi-stakeholder workshops, documentation of best practices and dissemination of lessons learned and outputs
- MEAL system updates: review of indicators, adaptation of tools and database updates

For example, in a project supporting the agroecological transition, it may be appropriate to budget for a university internship to conduct an agricultural assessment in a new intervention area, or to include workshops on production system classifications to refine the monitoring indicators. Furthermore, having a specific budget allocation for the analysis of the data collected will enable the production of useful reports for partners and funding bodies.



STAGE 2: PROJECT LAUNCH

Reviewing/Adapting the Project's Logical Framework and Indicators

project was conceived and the conditions existing when its implementation starts. When a considerable amount of time has passed, the logical framework must be reviewed and, if necessary, be renegotiated with the funding body to ensure that the project remains realistic, viable and high-quality.

Once the indicators have been validated, the AVSF team defines the following for each one: the individuals responsible for monitoring, the evaluation method, the measurement frequency and the tools to be used (monitoring form, survey form, spreadsheet, Kobotoolbox questionnaire, etc.).



TOOL

- Format of the logical framework of the funding body co-financing the project



Include the Aggregate Indicators from the AFD's Multi-Year Cooperation Agreement in its MEAL Plan

The AFD's **Multi-Year Partnership Agreement (MPA)**, of which AVSF has been a beneficiary for several years, is a funding instrument designed for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Its aim is to support high-impact, multi-year projects, strengthen the capacity of CSOs and promote strategic partnerships. Within this framework, the AFD has defined a series of **aggregate** indicators to standardise how project outcomes are measured.

AVSF must therefore incorporate these indicators into the MEAL plan for each project, **even when funded by another donor**, to ensure institutional consistency and facilitate the preparation of AVSF's consolidated annual report.

The aggregate AFD indicators to be included are:

1. **Number of rural families directly benefiting**
number of households directly benefiting from the project's activities.
2. **Number of women directly benefiting**
with data disaggregated by gender, to highlight actions promoting gender equality.
3. **Number of young people benefiting**
specific monitoring of beneficiaries aged between 15 and 35, in accordance with national legislation.
4. **Number of co-implementing partners strengthened** Number of local partner organisations supported in project implementation (NGOs, institutions, etc.).
5. **Number of producer organisations (POs) strengthened**
Monitoring of POs that have received technical, organisational or institutional support.
6. **Number of capacity-building plans developed and/or implemented**
CBI or DPO ⁽²⁾ drawn up or updated during the year with the partners and the POs

These indicators must be monitored in **each project** using the corresponding MEAL tools and be **submitted to head office in January of year N+1 via SYSE** ⁽³⁾. The aggregation of these indicators facilitates capitalisation at an institutional level, strengthens accountability and enables AVSF to demonstrate the global impact of its actions to its partners and funders.



TOOL

- Tab 4 of the file [SYSE Format 2024_VF_EN.xlsx](#)

Describe the Monitoring Method for Each Indicator

Section 3.3 details an example of a monitoring table that summarises:

- **The selection of appropriate data collection tools:** depending on the type and quantity of data to be collected, questionnaires (online or on paper), semi-structured interviews, focus groups, direct observations or digital mobile data collection tools (such as KoboToolbox) may be used.
- **The planning of data collection intervals:** the frequency of data collection (monthly, quarterly or annually) should be defined based on project milestones and local dynamics.
- **The allocation of responsibilities:** identify who is responsible for the collection, entry, analysis and validation of data (project team, partners, consultants, etc.).
- **Analysis and adaptation:** the MEAL framework should also describe how data will be analysed, who will be responsible for this and how the results will be used to adjust project activities. Regular reviews (monitoring meetings, participatory analysis workshops, etc.) must be scheduled to ensure that the project remains aligned with its objectives and to incorporate lessons learned on an ongoing basis.

For instance, for an indicator that tracks the progress of agroecological practices, **field observations cross-referenced with interviews** with farmers/producers can be conducted every six months. The technical team then analyses the information gathered and discusses it in workshops with partner POs to adjust the training and support activities.

² CBI (Capacity Building Index) and DPO (Diagnosis of Producer Organizations)

³ Each NC therefore submits the following to head office: 1 SYSE for each project implemented in year N-1

Establish the Baseline Situation

Every measurement of results or outcomes requires a defined baseline established at the project launch. The baseline situation must therefore be included in the timeline as one of the first activities, as soon as the teams and resources are operational. This work, which can sometimes be time-consuming, makes it possible to establish the initial values for key indicators and to understand the complexity of the family farms, the stakeholders and the regions involved. It also helps to guide the review or adaptation of the project's logical framework and indicators.

It should be noted that, in order to obtain reliable information free from prejudice or bias, building trust with respondents is essential. This involves taking the time to provide information and raise awareness among the 'beneficiaries' and their organisations.

This first stage provides various outputs: the initial regional situation and the current dynamics (physical characteristics, zoning, topography, soils, water, etc.), agricultural history (land use patterns, socio-economic context, processes of differentiation among agricultural holdings, and factors favouring or limiting the development of agroecology); types of stakeholders (agricultural holdings and the socio-economic and institutional environment, value chains, relationships between stakeholders, socio-economic dynamics, challenges); especially elements linked to agroecology; and agricultural activities/value chains and markets.

NB: If the baseline was not established by the team at the project design stage, it must be reconstructed retrospectively ('retrospective baseline') using:

a) existing studies or those conducted before drafting the project b) the project document submitted c) interviews with specialists d) the project team's and partners' own expertise/knowledge.

- Refer to the baseline situation example in Annex 4.



TOOL

- [Practical guide to creating baseline situations for AVSF - Téro projects](#)
(in French)

STAGE 3: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Data Collection

The quality of this stage determines the reliability of the information analysed. The most appropriate methods (quantitative, qualitative, surveys, measurements, observations, focus groups, etc.) must be selected, as well as simple, user-friendly tools (paper sheets, field reports, tablets or smartphones, photographs, forms, monitoring sheets), while prioritising digital data collection tools. Data collection should be done at the most appropriate time for the teams and partners, in accordance with the MEAL plan.

To guarantee data reliability and quality, it is also necessary to ensure that the personnel responsible for data collection (field facilitators, technicians, partners or external service providers, etc.) are trained in the methods and tools used. Therefore, it is recommended that the tools be tested in advance with the people who will be using them (data collectors and beneficiaries) and adapted where necessary (e.g. translations).

The Focus Group Methodology

Focus groups, or discussion groups, are an essential qualitative method for gathering insights, opinions and experiences from target groups. They provide a better understanding of social dynamics, needs, expectations and perceived effects of a project. A focus group generally brings together between 6 and 12 participants who share common characteristics (age, gender, activity, etc.), and is moderated by a neutral person.

Preparation is key: it is important to define clear objectives, select participants in a representative manner and prepare a semi-structured interview guide. This guide is intended to steer the discussion without limiting participants' freedom of expression. The moderator must create a climate of trust, encourage equal participation and avoid any bias or domination of the discussion.

Focus groups are particularly useful for addressing sensitive issues, testing hypotheses derived from quantitative data or identifying qualitative indicators. They can be carried out at different stages of the project cycle: baseline situation, monitoring, evaluation or capitalisation.

Data analysis is based on the transcription of exchanges, the identification of recurring themes and the comparison of different points of view. Although their findings cannot be generalised, the groups offer valuable insights that can guide decision-making and strengthen accountability to communities.

Data Storage and Processing

Once the data has been collected, it should be entered into a database on a regular basis – an Excel spreadsheet will usually suffice – to prevent its accumulation at the end of the cycle. Finally, it is essential to choose a reliable storage medium.

Storage must meet three criteria: security, accessibility and organisation.

- **Safety:** Sensitive data (personal details, opinions, etc.) must be protected. Use computers or phones that are password-protected and avoid unprotected storage media (unencrypted USB sticks, unprotected notebooks).
- **Accessibility:** Authorised personnel must be able to access the data easily. Classify data by project, date, collection type, etc.
- **Organisation:** Use clear formats (Excel, Kobo, etc.) and name files consistently (e.g.: "Beneficiaries_Survey_March2025").

Processing allows raw data to be transformed into useful information. For this, it is important to check that the data is complete, consistent and free of duplicates; correct any obvious errors; and group responses by topic or category in the case of qualitative data (for example, open-ended responses).

➤ See further explanations in Chapter 3.3 – Developing and Applying Data Collection Tools

Data Analysis

Once the data has been collected, analysing it is a key step in assessing the project's performance, identifying achievements and obstacles, and guiding the necessary adjustments: it is a matter of turning information into decisions. This analysis must be carried out as a team, as understanding the results largely depends on information coming from the field. In this way, technicians and interviewers provide essential insights to the person responsible for monitoring and evaluation, who is tasked with interpreting the data.

The GTAE Guide⁽⁴⁾ recommends that *'the validation of analyses be carried out in a coordinated manner: project team, representatives of agricultural holdings and value chain stakeholders, support service agents. This coordinated review of the observed outcomes and effects of adopting these practices is essential for the quality of future reports and helps to improve the monitoring and evaluation system'*.

Key Stages of the Analysis

1	Use accessible tools Prioritise simple tools tailored to the teams' capabilities, such as Excel, Power BI or open-source software like R or QGIS for spatial data. These tools enable the creation of monitoring dashboards, charts and maps, and help to identify trends or significant differences.
2	Cross-referencing perspectives Work in pairs or groups to limit interpretative bias and enrich the analysis through complementary perspectives (technical, social, gender, etc.).
3	Documenting the interpretations Record hypotheses, observations and the limitations of the analysis in a clear format (analysis sheets, internal notes, presentations) to facilitate sharing and discussion with partners and teams.
4	Identifying the key information Identify trends (e.g. gradual improvement in performance) Identify differences between groups (e.g. women and men, young people and adults, supported and unsupported POs) Detect obstacles or success factors (e.g. low adoption of a practice, strong mobilisation with a workshop) Compare data with local or national benchmarks to put the project's results into context
5	Summarise the results Produce clear, visual summaries (dashboards, infographics, posters, progress reports) tailored to the target audience to make it easier for field teams, partners and funding bodies to understand and use the results.

For example, a quarterly analysis of training data may reveal a decline in the participation of young women in certain areas. This information, combined with qualitative interviews, can help to tailor training methods (for example, by adjusting timetables).

➤ See Chapter 3.5 – Data Analysis and Interpretation for further details

Feedback Mechanisms

Sharing analyses regularly with the project team, co-implementing partners and beneficiaries is essential to fostering a collective ownership of the MEAL system. The more stakeholders participate in analysing and interpreting the data, the better they will understand the significance of the actions taken and the more they can contribute to improving them.

Therefore, it is recommended that key forums for exchange and dialogue be organised, such as:

- team meetings to discuss results and adjust activities;

⁴ [Guide for the evaluation of agroecology - A method for assessing its effects and the conditions necessary for its development - \(EAN13 : 9782759241736\) | Quae Open Access](#). A methodological guide resulting from a collaboration between teams from the GTAE (AgriSud International, AVSF, Cari and Gret), AgroParisTech, CIRAD, IRD and Institut Agri Montpellier.

- participatory workshops with partners to jointly interpret the data;
- sharing results with the communities through simplified presentations, information boards or group discussions.

These spaces not only help to enhance transparency and accountability, but also to foster collective learning and strengthen the legitimacy of the decisions made.

➤ See Chapter 5 – Accountability for further details

STAGE 4: THE PROJECT AT THE MID-TERM STAGE

Halfway through the project, it is essential to establish feedback mechanisms that enable the stakeholders involved to share their views, experiences and suggestions. This approach encourages greater ownership of the project and allows interventions to be tailored to real needs on the ground. These contributions are essential for identifying unmet needs or difficulties, highlighting the achievements perceived by the beneficiaries and tailoring the intervention approaches to better reflect local circumstances.

Tools that can be used include simple, accessible feedback forms (paper or digital), suggestion boxes placed in high-traffic areas or meeting places, community meetings or discussion groups to encourage collective expression, as well as individual interviews or field visits aimed at collecting qualitative feedback. These tools must, of course, be adapted to the target audience (whether literate or not, etc.).



TOOL

➤ Example of a feedback form in Annex 5

Halfway through the project, it may be appropriate to conduct a mid-term evaluation if this was planned during the project's design phase. This makes it possible to measure the progress made, verify the validity of the initial hypothesis and adjust the strategy for the second phase. If no formal evaluation is conducted, then organising a comprehensive team review is recommended. This should be more in-depth and reflective than the annual reviews usually performed for planning and preparing activity reports.

➤ See Chapter 4 – Evaluation for further details

STAGE 5: PROJECT COMPLETION

From a MEAL perspective, the final evaluation is a crucial stage. It does not merely take stock of activities, but seeks to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions based on recognised criteria. This in-depth analysis highlights the impacts, identifies the factors contributing to success or failure and sets out recommendations for improving future projects. It is an essential tool for accountability and capitalisation.

Once the data has been analysed and conclusions drawn, the results must be shared with all stakeholders. This stage strengthens transparency, highlights collective efforts and fosters a dynamic of shared learning.

Different formats can be used depending on the target audiences:

- Final project reports: clear, concise and illustrated, highlighting the progress made, results achieved, lessons learned and future outlook.
- Project completion/closing presentations or workshops: aimed at co-implementing partners, local authorities or funding bodies, with the aim of promoting knowledge-sharing and accountability.
- Community meetings: designed to present the results to the beneficiaries in accessible language, using visual or interactive materials.

For example, a simplified report outlining the main findings (number of beneficiaries, changes observed, testimonials) can be shared with partners to encourage collective reflection and strengthen collaboration.

This stage also provides the opportunity to capitalise on the lessons learned from the project with a view to using them again in future projects or AVSF's strategies.



TOOLS

- Example of MEAL planning in Annex 6
- See Chapters 4 – Evaluation and 5 – Accountability and 6 – Learning for further details

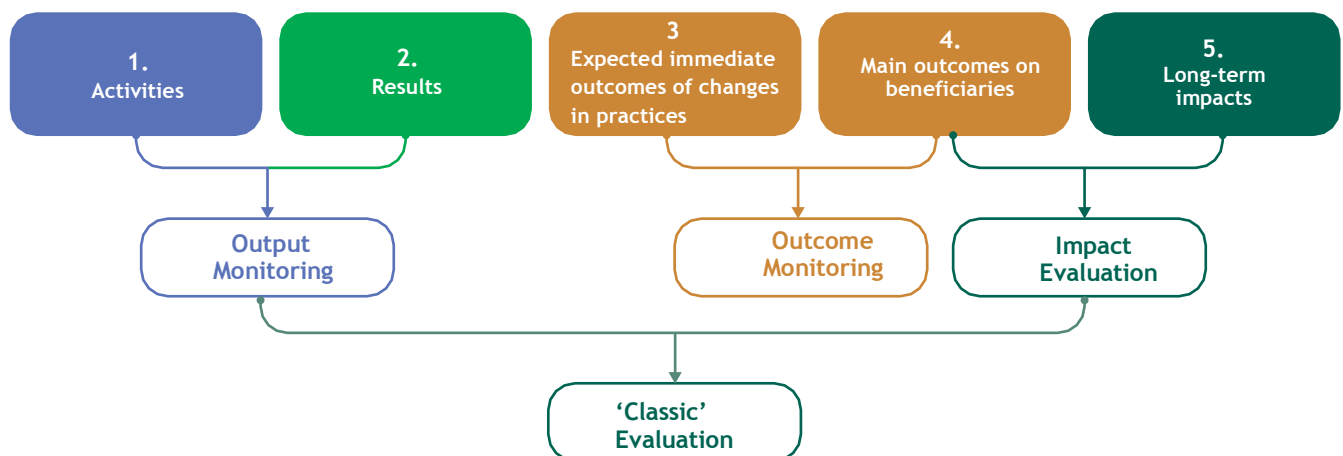
03

Monitoring of Activities, Results and Outcomes

3.1 Objectives

For each project, AVSF and its partners establish a specific monitoring system, designed, whenever possible, based on the project's theory of change and logical framework, in accordance with AVSF's MEAL guide.

This system includes several complementary components:



Output Monitoring

Output monitoring – meaning monitoring the contributions, activities and outputs generated – enables the practical management of project implementation (for example: the number of training sessions held, the quantities of veterinary medicines distributed and the number of visits carried out by CAHW). It represents an essential tool for adjusting actions in real time.

Teams conduct this monitoring on a regular basis, usually every month and throughout the intervention, under the supervision of the project manager. It is based on a structured plan drawn up using the logical framework, which details the activities, expected outputs, results, budget implementation and planned timelines. From the project launch, the person responsible draws up this plan and selects the monitoring tools best suited to the context, prioritising digital solutions where possible. This selection is made in consultation with the key stakeholders involved (institutional partners, producer organisations, local authorities, etc.).

The National Coordinator (NC) guarantees this monitoring: they ensure that each project has a structured plan and, if necessary, support the project manager with the initial implementation. The NC is also responsible for collating the information and regularly reporting on progress to the funding body, in accordance with the requirements of the grant agreements (deadlines, formats, etc.).

Outcome Monitoring

The aim of monitoring the outcomes (immediate or main) is to analyse the changes observed in the target groups as a result of AVSF interventions. It allows for moving beyond simply monitoring activities and results, to understand the real scope of the actions taken and draw useful lessons from them. This monitoring serves several complementary purposes:

At Project Level

- Help teams understand the developments observed in order to continuously improve intervention strategies and methodologies.

At Country/National Coordination Level

- Contribute to the development and adaptation of country strategies;
- Identify the adjustments needed to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts more effectively;
- Strengthen advocacy actions based on the changes documented on the ground;
- Use the lessons learned to guide the design and management of future projects.

At the AVSF Head Office

- Contribute to strategic discussions on priority issues (ARC, LAVD, POM);
- Support capitalisation and professional communication processes;
- Strengthen advocacy efforts at a global level.



In summary, outcome monitoring is a key tool within the MEAL system, as it helps to continuously improve AVSF's approaches and strategies through an in-depth analysis of the changes that its interventions produce.

The systems to be implemented for outcome monitoring are described in Section 3.3 below.



Output monitoring versus outcome monitoring:

Element	Monitoring of (results/outputs)	Monitoring of outcomes (immediate and main)
Objective:	Verify that the activities have been carried out	Measure the changes brought about for the direct beneficiaries
Examples	Number of training sessions, veterinary visits and supplies provided	Improving animal health and farmer satisfaction
Data types	Quantitative data on the activities carried out	Qualitative and quantitative data on the results
Time horizon	Short term, on an ongoing basis	Short and medium term
Usefulness	Operational project management	Evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the actions
Key question	Are we doing what we had planned?	Are our actions producing the expected outcomes/changes?

These two levels of monitoring are complementary: one focuses on **'implementation'** and the other on **'changes'**. Output monitoring enables the management of day-to-day project activities, while outcome monitoring helps to understand the project's relevance and effectiveness in the short and medium term.

Specific tools for evaluating partners' capacities and their development

The monitoring also includes an evaluation of capacity building within partner organisations (NGOs and producer organisations). To this end, AVSF has developed specific tools: the Capacity Building Index (CBI) and the Diagnosis of Producer Organizations (DPO), which enable the development of organisational capacities to be evaluated and provide guidance for capacity-building initiatives. These tools are not detailed in this guide, as they are the subject of separate publications.



TOOL

↘ Partner assessment, guides and tools for [CBI](#) and [DPO](#)

A specific monitoring system: early warning systems

For certain sensitive projects, AVSF may implement early warning systems, such as the Pastoral Alert and Information System (PAIS) developed in the Ferlo region of Senegal⁵. This system is based on targeted monitoring and coordination between multiple stakeholders, enabling a local emergency response. PAIS aims to rapidly detect and provide early warning of events that may affect local communities or natural resources. Specifically, it allows for alerts regarding:

- social or land-related tensions (for example, between livestock farmers and transhumant pastoralists over grazing areas),
- damage to wells or other pastoral infrastructure,
- forest or bush fires,
- suspected animal diseases (zoonoses)⁶
- vaccination or reforestation campaigns

The system relies on a variety of communication channels tailored to conditions on the ground: Text messages, voice messages, community radio stations, local alert centres, a web-based geoportal and mailing lists. This makes it easier for livestock farmers, technical services, local authorities and decision-makers to access information, while strengthening traditional information-sharing networks.

This type of system helps to improve communities' resilience to climate risks, health crises and land-use conflicts, while supporting the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources.

⁵ Fiche-innovation_avsf_syteme_pastoral_alerte_senegal_2020_vf.pdf (in French)

⁶ Community and integrated zoonosis surveillance - AVSF - Agronomes & vétérinaires sans frontières

3.2 Defining Systems for Monitoring Project Outcomes

The first stage involves defining the systems to monitor project outcomes. This is carried out under the responsibility of the project's monitoring and evaluation officer, in consultation with the other stakeholders (project manager, national coordinator, programme officers, partners, etc.). If there is no designated monitoring and evaluation officer, this responsibility falls to the project manager.

It should be noted that some of these principles also apply to output monitoring, though to a lesser extent. In this regard, outcome monitoring requires particular methodological rigour from project teams, given the greater complexity of the indicators and the need to contextualise them to analyse the changes observed.

This process is divided into several stages:

Selection and Validation of Project Outcome Indicators

This stage involves defining or confirming the cross-cutting outcome indicators to be used in the monitoring of each project. AVSF has defined a common set of 18 outcome indicators (CCOI):

- 6 cross-cutting outcome indicators applicable to all AVSF interventions;
- 3 specific indicators for LAVD projects or components (Livestock, Animal Health and Veterinary Public Health);
- 3 indicators for ARC projects or components (smallholder farming, natural resources and climate change adaptation);
- 6 specific indicators for POM (Producer Organisations and Markets) projects or components.

In most cases, these indicators are selected and incorporated during the project formulation phase (see Chapter 2.2: MEAL planning in the project cycle). If this wasn't done at that stage, it can still be incorporated at the project launch. It is also possible to add CCOIs that were not originally planned, provided that a realistic assessment is made of the time required to measure them and use the results during the project.

Indicators are selected based on relevance criteria: they must be aggregable, sensitive to the project's outcomes and feasible/measurable. They must be directly linked to the changes the project aims to produce.

Methodological datasheets have been drawn up to ensure the robustness, comparability and aggregability of the indicators: they facilitate a common understanding and interpretation of the indicators and calculation procedures; they provide guidance on sampling, data collection methods, data processing and analysis, as well as on errors to be avoided.



TOOL

- ↳ CCOI methodological datasheets
[MONITORING CROSS-CUTTING
RESULT INDICATORS TOOLS](#)

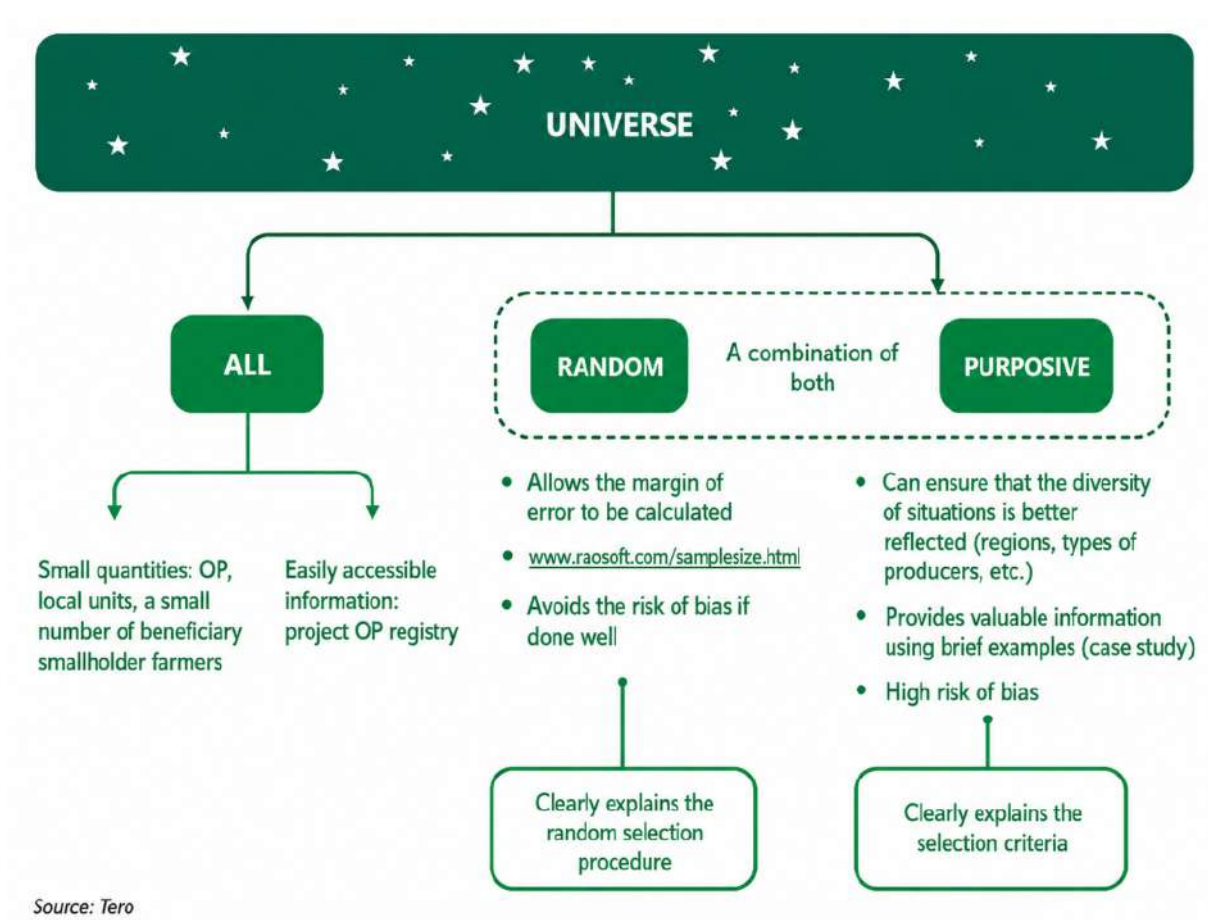
AVSF cross-cutting outcome indicator description sheet

Indicator CCOI No.	
Type of indicator	
Theme	
Description 	
Gender	
Calculation method 	
Sampling method and sample size 	
Methods and tools for data collection 	
Data processing method 	
Measurement frequency 	
Common challenges/risks 	
Guiding questions for data analysis 	

Definition of the Sampling Procedure

For each indicator, it is necessary to:

- Describe and define the 'universe' (the target population) from which the sample will be drawn (smallholder farmers, partner OPs). This is the target group in which the changes that the indicator aims to measure are expected to be observed.
- Determine the sampling type (random or purposive), clearly explaining the procedure followed in each case.
- Determines the sample size, striking a balance between the desired representativeness (acceptable margin of error) and feasibility, considering the project's available resources and timeframe.



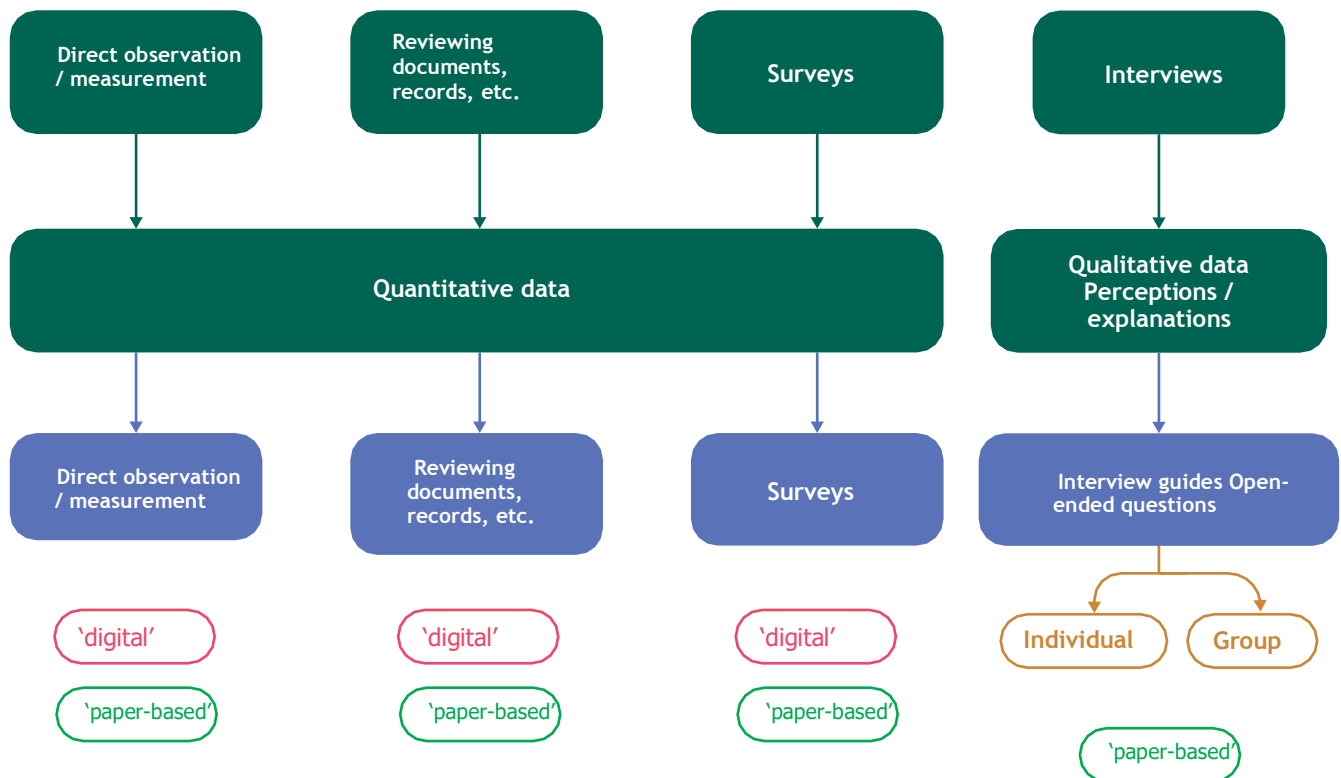
In addition to the methodological datasheets providing specific guidance for each indicator, a tutorial has been produced to explain and illustrate this sampling procedure, available here:

- [Tutoriel sur l'échantillonnage_VF.pptx](#)
(in French)

Identification of Specific Data Collection Tools and Methods

Methods may include direct observation or measurement, reviewing documents or records, interviews (individual or group) and surveys (with closed or open-ended questions).

Data collection methods / instruments



Source: Tero



Preparation of a Summary Table for the Proposed System

This table summarises the key information for each indicator:

- collection period/frequency
- collection tools/methods
- sampling (universe, sampling methods, quantity)
- persons responsible for compiling and monitoring the indicator
- available tools and comments

It is part of AVSF's global SYSE framework

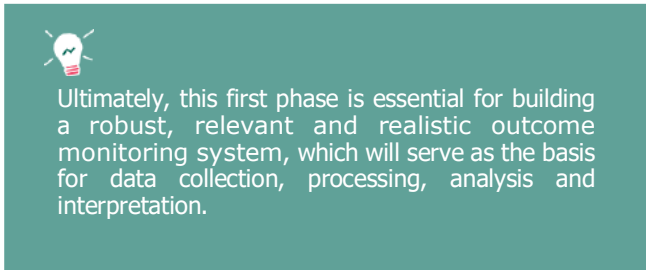
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TOOL

↘ Tab 2 of the file

SYSE Format 2024 VF EN.xlsx

The same data collection tool can provide information for several indicators (when these apply to the same population sample) and should allow for the collection of important complementary data (useful for data analysis and interpretation), while avoiding the collection of unnecessary information.



Ultimately, this first phase is essential for building a robust, relevant and realistic outcome monitoring system, which will serve as the basis for data collection, processing, analysis and interpretation.

3.3 Developing and Applying Data Collection Tools

The second stage of the process, once the methodology has been defined, involves developing and implementing the data collection tools. This stage is also coordinated by the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer, who must propose and approve specific data collection tools, implement them and/or train and supervise the persons responsible for using them. The main actions are as follows:

Detailed Identification of the Information to be Collected Using Each Data Collection Tool

The M&E officers draw up an 'inverted table' for each data collection tool.

Data collection tool/method	Sample to which the tool will be applied	Indicators to be measured with this tool	Data to be collected to measure/calculate these indicators	Useful supplementary data for analysis and interpretation	Available tools

The same tool can provide information for several indicators.

The objective is to ensure that the data collected is genuinely useful, avoiding both gaps in information and the collection of superfluous data that will not be used. This approach also aims to encourage the sharing of available tools and the pooling of resources and efforts between projects, particularly within the same country, in order to harmonise practices and methods.

Development and Design of Data Collection Tools

Next, the M&E officer must design the tools, prioritising 'closed' questions, which enable the collection of objective data and verifiable facts. It is essential to anticipate possible response types in advance to simplify data processing, while taking care not to skew the information collected. Additional open-ended questions may be included to gather feedback and explanations regarding the data or the observed changes.

Given the advantages of digital data collection tools (immediate data availability, reduced errors, etc.), their use (via smartphones or tablets) is strongly recommended. This involves budgeting for both equipment and training (software or application configuration, bug troubleshooting, etc.). When the necessary conditions for using digital tools are not met, paper-based tools may be used instead.

It is recommended, whenever possible, to identify available tools and explore opportunities for sharing them across projects. The objective is to strike a balance between reliability, feasibility and efficiency.

Once the tools have been developed, it is important to organise and carry out a testing phase. This phase is essential for teams to familiarise themselves with the use of these tools and to validate their use before rolling them out on a larger scale.

Completion, Validation and Implementation of Data Collection

The M&E officer is tasked with finalising and validating the set of frameworks and tools, setting deadlines, establishing procedures for data exchange and identifying the necessary partnerships.

Once this stage is complete, the data collection phase begins. This refers to the actual implementation of the system, during which the M&E officer must:

- Train and prepare the data collection staff: ensure that data collection officers know how to use the tools and procedures, drawing particularly on the results of previous tests.
- Conduct sampling rigorously: ensure the quality of the samples and aim to use the same sample from one measurement to the next to ensure data comparability.
- Plan and supervise data collection: carefully organise the schedule, resources and implementation of field data collection work.



In short, this second stage involves transforming a methodological framework into practical action. At this stage, the M&E officer plays a key role: they design, test and rigorously supervise the data collection process, a task that is essential for ensuring the reliability and robustness of the information used in the analysis of project outcomes.



The next step involves processing the data collected and verifying its reliability. The M&E officer must ensure that the data is of high quality and can be used effectively, applying appropriate methods for this purpose.

The database design and implementation stage establishes the link between the collection of raw data and its analysis.

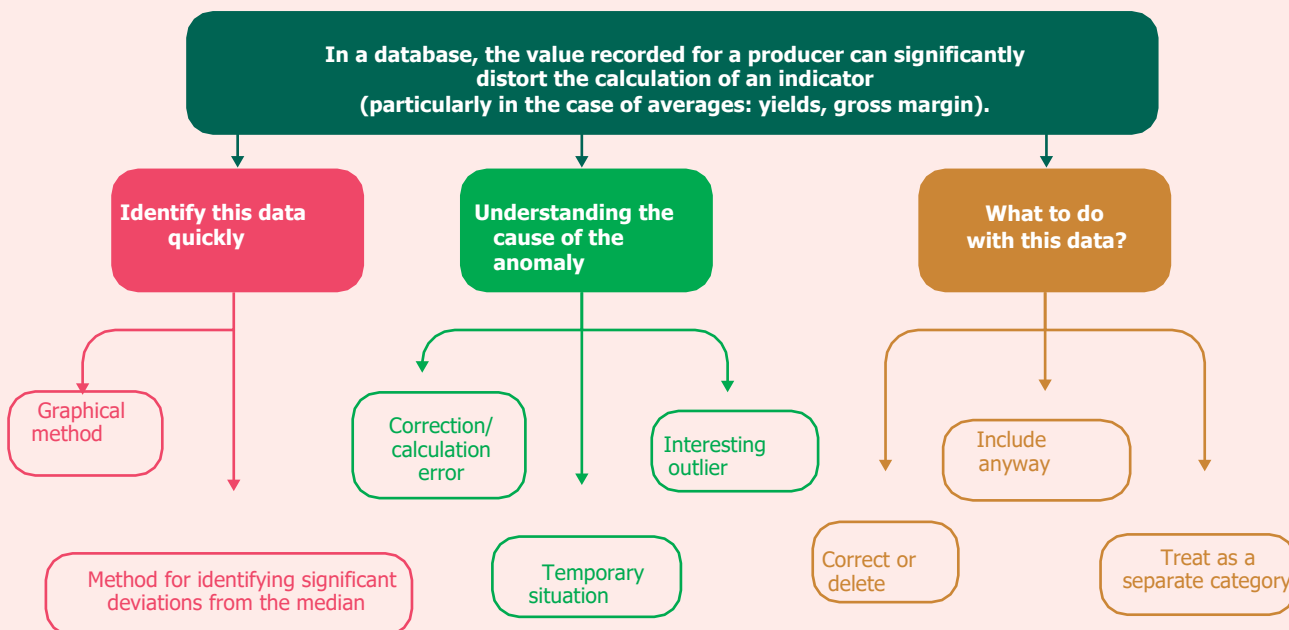
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- For each producer and each practice, check whether it was applied in year N when it was not applied in year N-1.
- For surface areas, compile the practices applied per plot and use the 'CONCATENATE' function to obtain data structured by producer and by plot.
- Ensure that the names of the farmers and the identification of the plots are recorded and coded consistently from one survey to the next.
- Use the available Excel files (mentioned above), which contain formulas to calculate the indicators, avoiding duplication where necessary.

Data Quality Assurance and Improvement

It is crucial to first identify outliers that could significantly distort the calculation of an indicator, particularly averages (yield, gross margin).

There are various methods for identifying this type of data, including:



Source: Téro

- **Graphical method**

This is the simplest method. This involves visually representing data, often using graphs, to identify points that deviate significantly from the rest of the observations. In this context, scatter plots are commonly used to quickly identify outliers.

- **Method for identifying significant deviations from the median**

This is a more statistical, structured and rigorous approach, designed solely for those who already have a background in statistics and want to go deeper (see Appendix 7).

Furthermore, to guarantee data reliability and prevent errors, it is important to pay attention to the following points:

- **Use sufficient and relevant data sets** to identify outliers
- These methods **do not allow for the identification of 'systematic' errors** in data collection or processing. To avoid them, it is essential to have references for the calculated orders of magnitude and to analyse the data critically.
- **Accumulating approximation errors** when calculating the indicators must be avoided. To achieve this, to the extent possible, start with the most reliable baseline data (i.e. avoid, for example, calculating averages of averages).

Next, it is necessary to understand the cause of the anomaly: it may be a data collection or calculation error, a temporary situation or an outlier. Understanding the cause allows a decision to be made on how to handle this data: correct it, delete it, retain it or treat it as a specific category.



TOOL

➤ PWP Webinar No. 3 Téro for further details [MODULE 3 English session 25 juin 2024](#)

Cross-referencing variables

This analysis enables a comparison of indicator values based on specific criteria (crop types, regions, farmers' organisations, time periods, target groups versus control groups), with the aim of disaggregating the data and identifying factors that help to explain the differences observed. For example, analysing yields based on agroecological practices adoption levels, or animal mortality rates based on access to animal health services.

In Excel, these cross-references can be done using sorting, filtering and, at a more advanced level, pivot tables.

In order to carry out these cross-references, the categorical variable must be consistent with the initial hypotheses, and each category must contain a sufficient number of values to ensure that the results are statistically significant (this should be taken into account during the sampling phase). It is also vital not to confuse correlation with causation (a cause-and-effect relationship). Statistical tests, such as the chi-square test, can help check the significance of the differences observed.



In short, this stage involves rigorously structuring, cleaning and processing the data in order to transform raw data into reliable information that can be directly used to analyse the effects of interventions.

At AVSF's head office, this data is used to support the overall monitoring process:

ANNUAL MONITORING OR CROSS-CUTTING OUTCOME INDICATORS (CCOI)								
Fill in the table AT THE START OF THE PROJECT and then EVERY YEAR.								
		Date (start): Indicate year	Date (year 1) : Indicate year		Date (year 2) : Indicate year		Date (year 3): Indicate year	
Cross-cutting outcome indicators (CCOIs) common AVSF and common ESAP/ARC/OPM projects	Target value at the end of the project	Value at start of project (reference situation)	Value achieved to date	Comment	Value achieved to date	Comment	Value achieved to date	Comment
List the CCOIs selected for the project according to their relevance : choose from 20 key CCOIs (see tab Appendix 1) and 10 additional CCOIs (see tab Appendix 2). Enter here the number of the CCOI+ its title (e.g. n°1 to 30) E.g.: CCOI n. 12 "Number of farmers who have significantly increased the diversity of their production and areas concerned".	Ex: Gross cocoa margin 445,000 FCFA/hectare	Ex: Gross cocoa margin 380,000 FCFA/hectare						If necessary, add as many columns as necessary for the other years of the project. At the end of the project, justify any discrepancies noted if the target value was not achieved
CCOI Number								
CCOI Number								
CCOI Number								



TOOL

Tab 3 of the file
[SYSE Format 2024_VF_EN.xlsx](#)

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The stage involving the analysis and interpretation of data relating to the project outcomes has a twofold objective: to strengthen AVSF's analytical capabilities (project teams, national coordination units and head office) and to continuously improve intervention strategies. The objective is to transform the data collected in the field into useful information for decision-making, learning and strategic planning.

This process is structured around three complementary stages.

1. Describe the data in detail and provide an initial analysis

The objective of this first stage is to make the data readable, understandable and directly usable.

Presentation of Raw and Aggregated Data

This involves showing the trends in the outcome indicators measured in the project, ideally in graphical form. Global/aggregated figures are presented and, where possible, put into context using comparative data (control groups, baseline situation, etc.).

Disaggregated Analysis and Cross-referencing Variables

To gain a better understanding of the results, the data can be disaggregated (by farmers' organisation, type of producer, geographical area, etc.). Cross-tabulation makes it possible to identify differences, correlations or trends based on various criteria: crop yields, adoption of agroecological practices by region or producer organisation, comparisons between target farmers and control groups, etc.



In Madagascar, the analysis of Gross Margin per hectare carried out within the framework of the **Tambatra** project shows a significant difference between crops managed using agroecological practices (in Farmer Field Schools – FFS) and those managed using conventional practices (control plots). The average gross margin stands at 5,345,833 Ar/ha in the FFS plots, compared with 3,674,000 Ar/ha in the control plots, representing a difference of 46%.

In the **Agricoop** project, the analysis focused on the degree of adoption of agroecological practices (AEPs), depending on the producer organisation to which the producers belonged. The results show strong disparities between producer organisations (OPs): members of the Tombotsoa OP mainly use mulching, pruning and tree maintenance, while those of the Menakely OP employ a much wider range of practices.

2. Analyse: understanding the differences and identifying the factors that explain them

Once the data has been described, the analysis stage involves going beyond simply observing the results to understand their causes. The objective of the analysis is to explain the differences observed between situations (baseline/current) and groups (target/control)

or categories of beneficiaries. This involves evaluating the extent to which the values achieved by the indicators meet the project's expectations and the needs of the target audiences.

It also makes it possible to determine whether the results achieved can be considered satisfactory, both in terms of the project's objectives and the resources mobilised, and in terms of the challenges faced by the target groups.

Next, the analysis must identify the factors that explain the observed values. There may be a number of factors at play: contextual factors, the socio-economic characteristics of the target groups, the intervention methods or even unforeseen events that have influenced the results. This stage often requires an in-depth analysis of the data, cross-checking different sources of information and, when immediate explanations are not available, gathering the missing information by consulting teams, partners or beneficiaries. The objective is to understand why certain outcomes have been achieved, why others have not, and why differences arise between zones, farmers' organisations or types of producers.



The **Tambatra** and **Agricoop** projects clearly illustrate this approach. In Tambatra, the differences in gross margin per hectare between the agroecological plots and the control plots could be directly attributed to the implementation of agroecological practices, which resulted in better yields. In contrast, in Agricoop, the differences observed in the gross margin are not primarily explained by the AEPs, but rather by the types of crops grown, marketing conditions (markets and prices) and the cost of intermediate inputs. Similarly, differences in the level of AEP adoption across farmers' organisations were found to be linked to the local availability of the necessary raw materials (for example, for composting) and to the suitability of the proposed practices for the agroecological context of each zone.



To support this stage, the methodological sheets provide points for reflection and guiding questions that allow for a more in-depth analysis of the values observed for each cross-cutting outcome indicator (CCOI). They provide essential methodological support for structuring the analysis and ensuring a rigorous and consistent interpretation of the data.

3. Interpret: drawing lessons and making recommendations

Interpretation represents the culmination of the analytical process. Its objective is to transform the observed results and the explanatory factors identified into concrete lessons for future interventions. This stage makes it possible to understand what the data actually reveal about the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, the conditions that have enabled the desired outcomes to be achieved and the limitations encountered.

The first part of this interpretation involves drawing conclusions and lessons.

The aim is to identify the main lessons arising from the analysis: what outcomes have actually been achieved, what factors have contributed to those results, but also what elements have not produced the expected outcomes. This reflection makes it possible to determine the extent to which the activities carried out have contributed to the changes observed and to evaluate the appropriateness of the decisions taken.



Examples from the projects clearly illustrate this approach. In the **Tambatra** project, the analysis highlighted the central role played by the Farmer Field School (FFS) in disseminating agroecological practices: by allowing farmers to experiment with and directly observe the technical and economic effects of agroecological practices, the FFS became a key factor in their adoption. In contrast, in the **Agricoop** project, the interpretation of the results revealed the fragility of commercial relationships when farmers' organisations do not control their certification process, which limits their bargaining power and their ability to diversify their markets. The analysis also highlighted the importance of selecting AEPs suited to the local context, particularly in light of the availability of the necessary raw materials.

Building on these lessons learned, the second part of the analysis involves formulating operational recommendations.

These recommendations should guide adjustments to the current project, but also provide input for the design of future interventions. These may relate to support strategies, practices that should be promoted, implementation methods or how to best integrate certain contextual factors. These recommendations also contribute to strategic reflection at country and institutional levels, as well as to advocacy actions.



The above-mentioned projects provide, once again, concrete examples. In the case of **Tambatra**, it was recommended that meetings to present FFS findings be organised on a regular basis in order to maximise their impact. In **Agricoop**, the recommendations focused on carrying out assessments of the availability of raw materials before promoting specific AEPs, as well as on strengthening support for cooperatives to build more stable and favourable commercial relationships.

Finally, it is essential that all these stages – analysis, interpretation and the formulation of recommendations – are carried out in a participatory manner. The M&E officer facilitates this process, which must involve the participation of project teams, partners, farmers' organisations, the national coordination team and the programme officer. This collaborative process ensures that the findings are relevant, that the stakeholders take ownership of them, and that they are integrated into operational practices.

From an operational perspective, presentations and summaries play a key role in this process.

- The M&E officer prepares a first draft of the PowerPoint presentation, structured in accordance with the methodological guidelines (see below). This document is subsequently expanded upon during joint review sessions with project teams, local partners and representatives from the target groups.
- A second version, incorporating these contributions, is then discussed at other levels – national coordination, head office – to consolidate the lessons learned and formulate the final recommendations.

Ultimately, this data analysis and interpretation process must go beyond simply compiling figures. It requires a rigorous description, an in-depth participatory analysis of the causes and effects, and a collective strategic interpretation to guide future actions and capitalise on past experiences.



TOOL

➤ PWP Webinar No. 4: Téro: [WEBINAIRE TERO MODULE 4 ANALYSE DES DONNEES SEPT 2024 FR EN ESP](#)

Guidelines on submitting the project-level outcome analysis

1	 Brief project overview	Intervention logic and target groups  1 slide
2	 Presentation of cross-cutting outcome indicators (CCOI)	CCOIs measured in the project  1 slide
3	 Description of the data collection process	Sampling carried out, data collection methods, etc.   2 slides ✔ A brief analysis of the reliability and representativeness of the data collected
4	 Graphical presentation of the key data obtained for each indicator monitored	 1 slide per CCOI ✔ Overall values or aggregates of the indicators, with comparative data where possible (comparison groups, baseline situation, etc.) ✔ if applicable: ▪ Present disaggregated data (by PO, type of producer, geographical area, etc.) ▪ Present additional data that is useful for the analysis and interpretation of the values of the indicators being monitored
5	 Presentation of the key findings that emerge from this data	 1 slide per CCOI ✔ To what extent are the values recorded by the indicators satisfactory (in line with the target values)? What factors explain why the expected results were, or were not, achieved? ✔ If disaggregated data is provided: What are the main differences that can be observed? What factors explain the differences observed?
6	 Key findings/lessons learned and recommendations for the continuation of the project/new interventions	A summary of the actions taken / proposals for discussion regarding outcome indicators within the project team and with AVSF's project partners (local NGOs, OPs, etc.).  1 slide ✔ For each group of selected indicators (POM/LAVD/ARC/cross-cutting)  1 slide per group of indicators 1. What contextual factors, characteristics of the target groups or unforeseen events prevented the expected outcomes or impacts from being achieved? ▪ <i>How can these be better taken into account in the future? (by reviewing/adjusting the intervention strategies? being more realistic/adjusting the expected changes? (Any other options?)</i> 2. Which elements or factors of the intervention mechanisms or strategies were particularly effective in achieving the changes observed? Conversely, which elements and factors of the intervention mechanisms or strategies failed to produce (or did not sufficiently produce) the expected outcomes? ▪ <i>What lessons learned and recommendations can be drawn to improve intervention mechanisms and strategies with a view to continuing the project or launching new interventions?</i>

04

Evaluation

4.1 Evaluating: For What Purpose?

AVSF adheres to the definition of evaluation established by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, namely: *'The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project or programme, its design, implementation and results'*.

Project teams often view the final evaluation as a requirement imposed by the funding body and, therefore, as a 'mandatory exercise'. However, when evaluation is viewed from the planning stage as an opportunity for reflection and learning, and closely involves all stakeholders – the project team, partners and beneficiaries – it can provide valuable insights and help to refine our strategies and approaches, particularly in mid-term evaluations. AVSF aims to strengthen the learning dimension of the evaluation.



Why evaluate a project?

The expected outcomes of an evaluation are multiple and depend on the position and interests of each stakeholder involved in relation to the action being evaluated.

Expectations regarding the evaluation			
Learning	Accountability	Deciding	Communicating
- gaining a better understanding of the complexity of the context in which the action takes place - identifying the obstacles to improving future strategy and practices - assessing the outcomes, results, impact, achievements and challenges, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of an action, a strategy or a mechanism	- before financial institutions, donors, elected officials, the board of directors, the general meeting, partners and beneficiaries - concerning the results and relevance of the action, to encourage exchange and dialogue - concerning the challenges and recommendations for discussing options and strategies with a view to making progress	- continuing, redirecting or terminating the action - redefining the intervention strategy, methods and partnerships - giving new meaning to the action	- gaining visibility through the wider dissemination of the evaluation's findings and recommendations - raising the profile of the organisation, its actions and its expertise - consolidating its position within the institutional landscape

Many evaluations are based on the criteria defined by the OECD, which are set out below. These criteria continue to be particularly valued by funding bodies, especially to meet accountability requirements, and may form part of the evaluation process. However, a growing number of stakeholders are now opting for evaluations that focus on structural issues directly linked to the main objectives of a project or a group of projects on the same theme. Depending on the requirements and the level of dialogue with the funding body, AVSF teams may opt for final evaluations that focus on addressing evaluation questions and include a forward-looking dimension.

AVSF projects tend to create dynamics of change, whether on farms, within groups (farmers' organisations, community groups, NGOs) or across regions. Consequently, traditional evaluation criteria can be supplemented to better understand the changes experienced by the stakeholders involved.

These criteria may include (the list is not exhaustive):

- The scope of the partnership: Do the partners play a strategic role within the project? Do they have a say in decision making and

strategic guidelines? Do they have the autonomy and initiative to carry out the missions/actions entrusted to them? Are the project's resources distributed fairly?

- **The approach / methodology:** Is the approach developed adapted to the stakeholders and their environment?
- **Participation:** How do the beneficiaries contribute to the choice of activities? Do they have a say in strategic decisions or in the decision-making process?
- **Ownership:** Do the beneficiaries and partners take ownership of the results of the action and the methodologies? What capacity do they have to integrate them and ensure their long-term sustainability?

The purpose and expectations regarding the evaluation will determine the selection of criteria, their relative importance and the formulation of evaluation questions. This selection must be reflected in the terms of reference.

Evaluation criteria adopted by the OECD	Assessment criteria
Relevance	• To what extent do the objectives and design of the intervention align with the needs, policies and priorities of the beneficiaries, the country and the partners/institutions?
Coherence	• To what extent is the intervention compatible with other interventions developed in the same country, sector or institution?
Effectiveness	• The level of project implementation (a comparison between the expected results and those actually achieved) and the effectiveness of implementation (a comparison between the results achieved and the project duration). The programme's MEAL framework will be one of the tools available for evaluating effectiveness; • The extent to which the project's objectives have been achieved, as well as the observed differences and varying results among the target groups.
Efficiency	• The relationship between the resources mobilised (funds, technical expertise, time, etc.) and their costs, on the one hand, and the projects funded, on the other. To what extent does the intervention produce, or is capable of producing, results efficiently and within the planned timeframes?
Sustainability	• Whether the objectives achieved and the results already obtained, or currently being achieved, can be sustained and even expanded over time, and, if so, under what conditions. Four dimensions of sustainability are analysed: Institutional, Environmental, Technical (technical transfers and skills acquired) and Financial.
Impact	• The outcome or potential outcomes, both positive and negative, that can reasonably be attributed, in whole or in part, to the action under evaluation, whether directly or indirectly (direct and indirect effects), and whether intentionally or unintentionally (expected or unexpected outcomes). • Special attention will be paid to analysing the outcome on gender equality and the promotion of equality between women and men.

4.2 Types of Evaluation

Three main types of evaluation can be carried out in AVSF projects: interim, final and ex-post. However, there are other types of evaluation that can be conducted as required (ex-ante evaluation or initial diagnosis prior to the start of the action⁽⁷⁾, thematic evaluation, etc.).

The mid-term evaluation

Its main objective is to evaluate the extent to which the objectives have been achieved following several months of implementation (what initial results have been achieved?), to verify the suitability of the methodology, to analyse the intervention strategies and to make recommendations for the continuation of the project (possible reorientation, prioritisation of actions, etc.).

It is usually carried out internally by an AVSF staff member from another project or partner country, selected for their technical expertise, in an approach often referred to as '*peer review*'. In some cases, an external evaluator may be appointed.

This is the most critical evaluation stage of the project cycle, as it takes place at a point when it is still possible to adjust technical, methodological or partnership approaches. It must therefore be carefully prepared and result in operational reports that can be put to use quickly by the teams.

Final evaluation

Its aim is to evaluate the project's results, outcomes and lessons learned, as well as its contribution to local or sectoral policy dynamics. Carried out by external consultants, it provides an independent assessment based on a range of criteria that varies in scope depending on the interests and expectations of the commissioning body (AVSF and/or the funding body). Special attention is paid to the sustainability of the observed outcomes, taking into account the context and the perceptions of the different stakeholders involved.

The preparation for this evaluation must be planned well in advance: ideally, reflection should start between six and nine months before the project ends, to allow sufficient time to draw up high-quality terms of reference, hire consultants under good conditions, and ensure that the evaluation can be carried out with the team present. This foresight is essential to guarantee the quality of the information collected and to ensure the best possible use of the reports produced.

In a **learning-oriented evaluation approach**, it is also important to examine the practical knowledge mobilised, the quality of partnerships, the exit strategy and the sustainability of the achievements made. When relevant, the final evaluation may also consider the advisability of a subsequent phase, from a forward-looking and strategic perspective.

Ex-post evaluation

It allows for the evaluation of the technical, economic and social impact, as well as the direct and indirect residual outcomes, of a cooperation action undertaken by AVSF and its partners in a given region, after several years (between 5 and 10 years).

AVSF prioritises missions of this kind being carried out by a duo comprising a volunteer who is a member of the Board of Directors and an AVSF contact person or staff member.

The methodology for these missions is based primarily on interviews – either one-to-one or in small groups – with the key stakeholders who participated in the project under evaluation (partners, beneficiaries, other stakeholders, etc.).

This ex-post evaluation must, taking into account changes in the context:

- Formulate opinions on the main guidelines relevant to the continuation of AVSF's cooperation in a particular field/sector (e.g. support for smallholder livestock farming in the country).
- On this basis, technical recommendations can be made and strategic intervention priorities defined for AVSF teams in the corresponding sector.
- Finally, draw up a brief communication document setting out the lessons learned from the ex-post evaluation: the recent history of cooperation in the relevant field, the impact observed and future prospects.



TOOLS

- ↳ [Video The evaluation by F3E](#) (Available in French only, but with optional English subtitles)



- ↳ [Document: 'Some proposals for an impact evaluation of a completed AVSF programme' AVSF proposal for an ex-post evaluation.docx](#)

⁷ See examples of questions for collecting initial and technical data in the agricultural sector, pp. 49–50 from the [SEADS Handbook](#)

4.3 Evaluation Procedures

Drafting terms of reference

The PM/NC team must plan each evaluation, include it in the budget and prepare for it in advance, in coordination with the programme officer. The ToRs set out the objectives, criteria and evaluation questions.



TOOL

- ↘ [Terms of Reference templates](#)
[EXAMPLE OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND AN EVALUATION REPORT](#)
(in French)

Selection of consultant(s)

The selection is made in accordance with AVSF's current internal procedure for the procurement of intellectual services (e.g. evaluations, studies, technical assistance).



TOOLS

- ↘ [AVSF-DematDoc Head Office Procurement Procedure](#)
(in French)
- ↘ [Field procurement procedure for AVSF -DematDoc](#) (in French)

The amounts determine which procedure should be applied:

Amounts	Method
€2,500 → €4,999 (including VAT)	Purchase with one quote
€5,000 → €59,999 (including VAT)	Purchase with three quotes from three different suppliers
>€60,000 (including VAT)	Procurement via tender (restricted or open, local or international, depending on the amounts involved)



TOOLS

- ↘ [Head Office Procurement Analysis Matrix - AVSF-DematDoc](#)
(in French)
- ↘ [AVSF Field Procurement Analysis Matrix – DematDoc](#)
(in French)

The AVSF NC or PM is responsible for implementing the procedure and its principles. It is essential that the persons involved in this process understand the procedure and its objectives beyond their purely administrative aspects, and ensure that the following values are upheld: fairness between suppliers, transparency and integrity. Free competition between suppliers and the absence of conflicts of interest are essential.

Contract

A contract is always drawn up for intellectual services. Payments are usually made in two instalments.



TOOLS

- ↘ [Service contract template AVSF-DematDoc](#) (in French)



05

Accountability

5.1 Definition and Ethical Principles

In a MEAL system, accountability mechanisms refer to the set of tools and processes that enable stakeholders – beneficiaries, partners and local communities – **to participate actively in projects, ask questions, express their views and lodge complaints or report abuses.**

Accountability is based on AVSF's core values and ethical principles, as defined in its Code of Conduct, and applies to everyone involved in the organisation's activities: salaried staff (head office, field staff, expatriates), volunteers, interns, consultants, members of the governing bodies, etc.:

- humanity and respect for fundamental human rights
- neutrality, impartiality, independence
- respect for the parties involved
- integrity, responsibility, transparency
- non-discrimination and accountability

For example, regarding data collection and use, AVSF recommends that its teams:

- obtain free, informed and explicit consent prior to any data collection, clearly explaining the objectives, intended use and participants' rights (specifically the right to refuse or withdraw at any time during the process)
- guarantee the confidentiality of personal data, for example by anonymising questionnaires
- implement security measures to prevent any loss, theft or misuse of data (restricted access for authorised personnel, encryption, passwords, etc.)



TOOLS

- ↳ [AVSF Charter-DematDoc](#) (In French)
- ↳ [AVSF Code of Ethics - DematDoc](#)
- ↳ [AVSF-DematDoc Policy on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment](#)



5.2 Accountability Mechanisms

Each project manager may choose, from among those described below, the mechanisms best suited to their project context.

Feedback mechanisms

These mechanisms enable feedback to be gathered from beneficiaries on the quality, relevance or impact of the project's activities. Depending on the context, options may include suggestion/feedback boxes, regular community listening sessions (focus groups, community meetings), anonymous forms or evaluation questionnaires.

Complaints submission mechanisms

They enable beneficiaries or other stakeholders to report problems, professional misconduct, rights violations or abuse with complete safety and confidentiality, as detailed in section 5.4. For this, toll-free numbers or dedicated hotlines – including WhatsApp – may be made available, along with a dedicated email address, designated contact points trained to handle complaints or confidential one-to-one meetings with project team members.

Recommendations

- Use clear and accessible language, tailored to the literacy level of the target groups.
- Translate materials or adapt tools to avoid linguistic, cultural or gender biases.
- Ensure that trained facilitators are present to collect and analyse the information received.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to feedback and complaints: adapt the project accordingly (for example, by adjusting an activity that has been poorly received or is ineffective) and inform those who have made a complaint of the measures taken in response to their feedback.
- Systematically record feedback and complaints, and document the cases and the actions taken.



TOOLS

- ✎ Email address of the Ethics Committee for reporting complaints: comiteethique@avsf.org
- ✎ Coming soon: a list of designated PSEAH focal points in each AVSF country.

5.3 Partnership, Participation and Transparency

Partnerships as the cornerstone of AVSF's cooperation

Partnership-based work is one of the pillars of AVSF's cooperation and is fully aligned with its mission to strengthen civil society.

After several decades of presence in more than half of its intervention countries, AVSF has built long-standing relationships based on mutual support that goes far beyond the scope of individual projects. This approach seeks to build balanced partnerships that recognise the capabilities of each party and the sovereignty of Global South stakeholders. It is gradually evolving into genuine strategic and political partnerships that go far beyond operational management: joint production of publications, organisation of spaces for reflection (workshops, seminars), common positions on advocacy issues and, on occasion, participation in the institutional life of partner organisations.

Within the framework of this voluntary, long-term commitment, AVSF defines itself as an NGO that is accountable to its partners and the communities involved. Ongoing dialogue, transparency and the joint definition of guidelines ensure that its interventions respond to locally identified needs and account for the outcomes achieved.

In regions or countries where cooperation is more recent, and in contexts where AVSF directly implements projects, special attention is paid to the active participation of the various stakeholders – beneficiary organisations, local communities and other parties involved – and to the implementation of the accountability mechanisms described above.

Transparency and information for stakeholders

AVSF promotes a participatory approach based on transparency throughout the entire project cycle, from the initial analysis to evaluation. Therefore, most projects are designed in collaboration with key partners and are based on the recognition and integration of local knowledge and expertise.

As noted in the [SEADS Manual](#) "*Crop producers, input sellers, post-harvest processors, government extension agents, community-based organisations, NGO staff, financial service providers, wholesalers and transporters have vast collective knowledge, skills and experience of local crop production systems. They have a right to be recognised, respected and heard.*" (Principle 2).

Transparency aims to inform stakeholders (partners and beneficiaries) about their rights, the services available, the commitments made by AVSF to them and how to express their views or make a complaint. In this regard, transparency involves:

- Clearly communicating the objectives, planned activities and duration of the project.
- Communicating the identification and selection criteria transparently: explaining why certain individuals or households are included or excluded from the project (for example, vulnerability criteria, minimum baseline competences, etc.), in order to reduce tensions or misunderstandings within the community and promote social acceptance.
- Disseminating clear information about the project's services for stakeholders (e.g. if agricultural kits are being distributed, specify the types of items, the quantities planned and the value of the kits).
- Involving communities in the management of distribution (e.g. through beneficiary committees).
- Presenting evaluations based on verifiable data, free from political, financial or personal influence.
- Communicating the results (quantitative or qualitative) in a manner accessible to the communities involved: results presentation meetings, infographics and posters.

Translating the results into tangible actions (e.g.: 'Based on your feedback, we have adapted X or changed Y').

- Using visible information (e.g. billboards, posters), targeted awareness-raising or communication activities (e.g. local radio, community meetings) in the local language and visual materials for illiterate populations.



TOOLS

- ▼ Identification example: [Handbook for the Planning and Management of CAHW Programmes – VSF International](#). Chapter 3: 'Selecting the right CAHW candidates'

5.4 Prevention of Abuse

AVSF combats all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Since January 2025, AVSF has had its own PSEAH policy, which is currently being implemented. This policy stipulates that all staff members, or anyone involved in AVSF's activities under a contract or agreement with the organisation, undertake to treat everyone – whether a beneficiary, partner or staff member – with respect and dignity, and to combat all forms of sexual harassment, intimidation, abuse or exploitation.

The table below details various examples of potential abuses in the context of MEAL activities.

Risks	
1. Abuse of power in data collection	Forcing people to participate in surveys or focus groups without their free and informed consent.
	Manipulating or intimidating participants to elicit specific responses.
2. Sexual exploitation or sexual abuse	Demanding sexual favours in exchange for participation in a project or access to services.
	Exploiting the vulnerability of interviewees to establish inappropriate relationships.
3. Breaches of privacy and data mismanagement	Disclosing personal information without consent, for example, publishing photos of beneficiaries without their authorisation.
	Storing data insecurely, thus exposing people to risks (harassment, discrimination, violence, etc.).
4. Discrimination or marginalisation	Excluding certain groups (women, minorities, people with disabilities) from consultation or evaluation processes.
	Tailoring MEAL tools solely to specific audiences, thereby making their use unfair or inaccessible to others.
5. Misuse of feedback mechanisms	Ignoring or manipulating complaints received through accountability mechanisms.
	Repressing or punishing people who report abuse.

Some best practices for preventing risks:

Best practices	
Before data collection	• Carry out a risk analysis. • Train MEAL teams in PSEAH and data protection. • Develop consent procedures that are simple, clear and tailored to the participants (language, literacy level, age, etc.).
	• Respect privacy: arrange interviews in safe and confidential locations. • Use interviewers of the same gender or cultural group if this makes participants feel safer. • Pay attention to any signs of distress or discomfort and stop the interview if necessary. • Never offer any form of compensation in exchange for answers.
	• Store data on secure systems (password-protected, limited access). • Anonymise data whenever possible. • Share the results without exposing the participants' identities.
After data collection	• Establish a secure, accessible feedback mechanism for communities (complaints box, helpline, trusted staff). • Inform communities of their right to make complaints and how to do this. • Handle complaints seriously, confidentially and promptly. • Ensure an appropriate response to and follow-up on cases of abuse or harassment.
Accountability and complaints mechanisms	

06

Learning and Capitalisation

Learning and knowledge management mechanisms are a central pillar of AVSF's MEAL approach. Their purpose is to strengthen the quality, effectiveness and impact of AVSF's interventions, ensuring continuous improvement in its practices.

6.1 Continuous Learning Mechanisms

Learning throughout the duration of a project is known as continuous learning. At AVSF, this means that teams should not simply implement activities: they must also pause regularly to analyse what is working, identify any difficulties encountered and propose improvements.

The aim is to generate real-time learning through monitoring, evaluations and regular exchanges between teams and partners. **Continuous learning is not limited to capitalisation upon project completion; rather, it should form part of a dynamic process that is integrated into every stage of the project cycle.**

These mechanisms, which allow methodologies and activities to be adjusted on the go, include, for example:

- monitoring meetings to analyse the data regularly
- annual reviews (annual workshops, etc.)
- exchanges between partners and between projects (regional thematic workshops, etc.)
- workshops for sharing experiences with stakeholders
- documentation and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.

Continuous learning must be participatory and rely on the active involvement of the stakeholders: field teams, local partners, beneficiaries and institutions. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish spaces for dialogue (workshops or seminars) and to allocate specific resources.



Example 1 – Adapting agroecological practices through experience-sharing workshops (Peru)

As part of a project to promote agroecology among smallholder Andean farmers, AVSF organised quarterly experience-sharing workshops, bringing together farmers, local technicians and monitoring teams. A cross-analysis of monitoring data (productivity, technique adoption) and field reports revealed that some agroecological techniques (e.g. pit composting) had a low adoption rate, as they were not suited to local climatic conditions.

Based on these exchanges, practices were adapted to incorporate farmers' know-how, such as surface composting. This learning mechanism fostered wider adoption of the practices and greater local ownership, whilst also providing input for the formulation of methodological recommendations applicable to the organisation's other agroecological projects.



Example 2 – Strengthening community participation through the analysis of beneficiary views and feedback (Burkina Faso)

As part of a programme to build resilience to climate change, AVSF established a system to gather feedback from beneficiaries through semi-structured interviews and anonymous suggestion boxes. The analysis of the feedback received after six months revealed an imbalance in women's participation in technical training courses.

This finding led to rapid adjustments: changes to the training schedule, the recruitment of local female facilitators, and the inclusion of specific modules on gender roles. The learning process made it possible not only to improve the project's inclusivity but also to document a replicable approach for other gender-sensitive contexts.



Example 3 – Improving animal vaccination campaigns through participatory analysis (Mali)

As part of an animal health project in Mali, AVSF supported vaccination campaigns for small ruminants against Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), in collaboration with local veterinary services and community animal health workers.

During the first round of vaccination, coverage rates fell well short of the targets set. As a result, a participatory analysis workshop was organised with community animal health workers, livestock farmers and vets. This experience-sharing session highlighted several obstacles: a lack of prior information, insufficient planning ahead of the transhumance period and costs that some communities perceived as being too high.

Based on this collective learning, a number of adjustments were decided upon: strengthening communication via local radio stations, improving coordination with mobility periods and establishing a solidarity contribution mechanism for the most vulnerable households. During the following campaign, coverage rates rose by more than 30%.

This experience-sharing was formalised and shared with other AVSF regional teams, serving as a benchmark for the organisation of future campaigns in pastoral contexts.

6.2 Knowledge Capitalisation

Why capitalise?

Since its inception, **AVSF has viewed knowledge capitalisation as a key tool for turning experiences into useful insights, improving practices, disseminating technical expertise and influencing public policy.** To ensure that it is not perceived as an obligation imposed by projects or funding bodies, capitalisation must be planned from the outset and address clearly defined objectives.

AVSF currently has two main objectives: firstly, to produce technical and methodological benchmarks that reinforce learning and help to build a shared culture among teams and partners; and secondly, to contribute to the agendas of public policy-makers and funding bodies by analysing challenges and formulating a coherent advocacy message aimed at influencing decision-makers in France and in partner countries.

Therefore, capitalisation serves several objectives:

1. Impart knowledge and strengthen professionalisation	Learning Learn from accumulated experience to avoid repeating the same mistakes.	2. To highlight practical know-how	Formalisation Document methods and tools to facilitate internal and external transmission.
	Professionalisation Systematise and share practical know-how to strengthen self-confidence and capacities.		Dissemination Showcase the organisation's expertise among its partners and within professional networks.
	Mobilisation Boost team motivation by recognising acquired skills.		Continuity Ensure the continuity of actions and methods regardless of changes in personnel.
3. Influence public policy	Analysis Analyse challenges related to public policies.	4. Deal with difficult situations	Transition Help manage organisational transitions while preserving the memory of past actions.
	Advocacy Use systematised knowledge to influence public policies and decision-makers.		Staff turnover Minimise the impact of staff departures.
	Innovation Fuel reflection and innovation through shared experiences.		Limited budget Use capitalisation as an internal learning tool when resources are limited.

Source: Ciedel

Methodological elements for capitalisation at AVSF

As part of the MEAL system, capitalisation must be integrated into the project cycle, planned for, allocated specific resources and backed by commitment from the teams. Having robust data from monitoring and evaluation provides a foundation for key messages and adds real value to most capitalisation documents. It is primarily organised on two levels: in the partner countries and at head office. To ensure its success, all capitalisation processes must begin with a clear definition of the project and prior consultation with those responsible. This initial definition phase allows for the specification of:

1. **The objectives**, as well as the exact scope of the subject matter, topic or innovation to be documented;
2. **The target audience and the type of output expected**, ensuring consistency between the two;
3. **The chosen method** and the resources required to carry out the capitalisation.
4. **The output promotion process**

What tools are available?

A methodology factsheet, which teams must use, provides a framework for all capitalisation work. A glossary defines the various forms of capitalisation and their objectives (see the table below). For certain formats, such as the innovation factsheet, a standard template and editorial structure have also been defined to facilitate drafting



TOOLS

- ↳ [Capitalisation Factsheet](#)
- ↳ [Innovation Factsheet](#)
- ↳ AVSF Document: Capitalisation Glossary [POLCOP 07 10 2024.xlsx](#)

Capitalisation formats	Objectives / content	Target audience		Coordinate the capitalisation	Final validation of the capitalisation
		Decision-makers	Development professionals		
Policy brief	To set out policy recommendations	✓		Programme Officer, Advocacy Manager	AVSF Executive Committee and Board of Directors
Technical note	To present AVSF's approach and positioning		✓	Programme Officer	Executive Committee
Innovation factsheet	To explain an innovative approach or method in a brief format	✓	✓	Programme Officer, Project Manager	Programmes Department
Methodological guide	To present a method and the associated know-how in an educational format		✓	Programme Officer	Sector Manager - NC
Technical and economic framework	To present the technical and economic characteristics of a project or activity within a specific context. Example : smallholder poultry farming in northern Togo		✓	Project Manager	National Coordinator
Other capitalisations	'Best practices' / 'Lessons learned': defining the 'success factors' (of a project, a method, etc.)		✓	Project Manager, National Coordinator	National Coordinator

It should be noted that AVSF also participates in collective capitalisation work, coordinated by networks (Groupe Initiatives, VSF-International, Inter Réseaux, etc.) in various formats (policy briefs, journals, etc.).

The key questions for a successful capitalisation process!

The following questions help to define the desired outcomes:

1.	Why do we want to capitalise? What do we want to achieve with this capitalisation project?
2.	What are the objectives of the capitalisation process for individuals, the group, the institution and partners? What results are expected?
3.	What will be the focus of the capitalisation? A project, an initiative or a topic?
4.	Who participates in the capitalisation? Who are the stakeholders involved: everyone who took part in the action, or just some of them? Are they still available? What are their expectations? And their motivations?
5.	Are the resources still available? Project documents, meeting minutes, the people who took part in the action?
6.	Who is it for? Who is the target audience? Who will make use of the results of the capitalisation in the future? Ourselves, colleagues within the same organisation or partners? What is their interest?
7.	Who coordinates the capitalisation work? Who is responsible for ensuring that the schedule is kept, that work progresses smoothly and that the planned deliverables are produced?
8.	Who will provide support? An internal team member or an external consultant?
9.	Which resources?

Source: Ciedel

Note: these questions form part of the methodology factsheet.



TOOLS

Video [Capitalisation for F3E](#) (in French)



Example 1 — Capitalisation on community-based animal health in Madagascar

Within the framework of the Sanuva project, which aimed to strengthen food and nutrition security in the Vakinankaratra region, AVSF carried out a capitalisation process on the implementation of the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW). The objective was to document the conditions that contribute to the success of this scheme, its limitations and the prospects for rolling it out in other rural areas, as well as to highlight the role that CAHWs can play in implementing the One Health approach in rural communities.

A participatory process was initiated to select the agents and to train and support these livestock farmers from local communities. The process included exchange workshops, training based on the national reference framework as well as supplementary sessions on the One Health approach and animal production. Tools such as the Operational Management Plan (OMP) and monitoring visits made it possible to analyse practices, adjust support measures and make recommendations.

This capitalisation process showed that local roots and a peer-to-peer approach encourage the adoption of best practices. It also demonstrated that advisory and prevention activities, combined with the validation and dissemination of ethnoveterinary practices, help to significantly reduce the use of antibiotics and improve the adoption of preventive measures. It also highlighted the importance of diversifying services to ensure the financial viability of the CAHWs and to strengthen their role as technical advisers.

The lessons learned now feed into advocacy efforts for a sustainable framework that is integrated into public policy, and are inspiring other community-based animal health projects.

➤ [The CAHWs: Key Stakeholders in the One Health Approach in Rural Communities – AVSF - Agronomes & vétérinaires sans frontières](#) (in French)



Example 2 — Capitalisation for advocacy in the fight against deforestation

AVSF and ETHIQUABLE carried out a capitalisation process to prepare for the entry into force of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The analysis focused on the potential impacts of this regulation on the cocoa and coffee supply chains, as well as on the conditions for inclusive implementation. The objective was to identify the risks of excluding smallholders, the technical challenges relating to traceability and providing proof of legality, as well as opportunities to strengthen cooperatives and improve value chain transparency.

A collaborative process brought together partner cooperatives from several countries, alongside teams from AVSF and Ethiquable. These exchanges made it possible to document local realities, identify the national measures being implemented and evaluate the potential impacts of the EUDR on partner organisations. The analyses were subsequently summarised in a joint position paper that included operational recommendations.

This capitalisation process led to proposals aimed at preventing the exclusion of smallholder producers, ensuring that the EUDR recognises organic and fair trade certifications, and designing accessible compliance mechanisms. It served as an advocacy tool for European institutions and producer countries, highlighting the urgent need to provide technical and financial support and the necessity of guaranteeing sustainable, remunerative prices.

[EUDR Policy Brief: a Publication Aimed at Advocacy and Political Influence](#)



ANNEX

01

Bibliography

3 reference documents on monitoring and evaluation available for download on the F3E website

- ↘ [F3E_DSE_Factsheets_key-points-for-monitoring-and-evaluation.pdf](#)
- ↘ [F3E – Change-oriented Approaches – Strengthening Capacities for Action From a Gender and Ecological Perspective](#)
- ↘ [Action for Change. Methodological Guide to Supporting 'Complex' Change Processes: Analyse, Plan, Monitor and Evaluate - F3E](#)

2 F3E YouTube tutorials on monitoring and evaluation

- ↘ [Organising Monitoring and Evaluation - Tutorial 5 \(ENG - ESP\) »](#)



- ↘ [Monitoring and Evaluation Tools: Changing the Way We Look at Things to Change Practices](#)



F3E: TRANSFORMED EVALUATION

Summary edited by Lilian Pioch, Othmane Chaouki and Nathalie Saric, and produced by Luciana Uchôa-Lefebvre – November 2022

- ↘ <https://reseauf3e.org/ressource/evaluation-transformee>

Ciedel (International Centre for Local Development Studies) Training Course: 'Capitalising on Experiences' – 2024

- ↘ [01.PPT AVSF - Day 1 & Day 2.pdf](#)

Guide for the evaluation of agroecology - A method for assessing its effects and the conditions necessary for its development

Under the leadership of Laurent Levard and the GTAE (Agrisud International, AVSF, Cari and Gret), AgroParisTech, CIRAD, IRD and the Institut Agro Montpellier – 2023

- ↘ [Guide to the Evaluation of Agroecology](#)

SEADS Handbook: Standards for Supporting Crop-Related Livelihoods in Emergencies – 2022

- ↘ [SEADS_Web_03Nov2022.pdf](#)

Handbook for the Planning and Management of Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) Programmes – VSF INTERNATIONAL, OMSA, USAID – 2024

- ↘ [screen Handbook-CAHWs UK-ok.pdf](#)

Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) – 2023

- ↘ [Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards | LEGS | Humanitarian Relief | Livestock Welfare](#)

Guide to Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Project Cycle – Edited by Katia Roesch – AVSF – 2025

- ↘ [Guide to Integrating a Gender Perspective – AVSF-2025.pdf](#)

Building on Experience: Learning Together and Improving Our Work With F3E

Summary edited by Marie-Pierre Héritier, Othmane Chaouki and Nathalie Saric, and produced by Luciana Uchôa-Lefebvre – November 2023

- ↘ <https://reseauf3e.org/ressource/capitalisation-des-experiences-apprendre-ensemble-et-ameliorer-nos-actions>

ANNEX

02

MEAL Standards and Reference Frameworks

The main standards and frameworks that structure the MEAL system at international level are as follows:

1. OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee)⁽⁸⁾

The OECD-DAC evaluation framework is widely used to structure humanitarian and development evaluations. It is based on five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, to which coherence and coverage are sometimes added. These criteria are fundamental to MEAL systems.

2. LEGS (Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards)⁽⁹⁾

LEGS provides standards for livestock-related emergency interventions. It includes recommendations on monitoring and evaluation, in line with the principles of quality, accountability and community participation (see Principle 8).

3. Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)⁽¹⁰⁾

The CHS defines the nine commitments, listed below, that humanitarian organisations must respect to ensure quality, accountability and respect for the rights of the affected people. It emphasises participation, transparency, complaints management and learning. These also apply to development contexts.

4. The Sphere Handbook⁽¹¹⁾

The Sphere Handbook sets out minimum standards in key sectors (food security/livelihoods, water, nutrition, health, etc.). It promotes an approach centred on rights, human dignity and accountability. In this handbook, MEAL is presented as a tool for monitoring quality and impact.

6. SEADS Handbook⁽¹²⁾

The SEADS handbook sets out standards for supporting crop-based livelihoods in emergency situations. It emphasises programming based on livelihoods, community participation, coordination, environmental sustainability and learning.

It integrates MEAL principles by promoting participatory monitoring, rigorous evaluations, accountability mechanisms tailored to agricultural contexts and the ongoing capitalisation of lessons learned to improve future responses. It includes a chapter on monitoring and evaluation (Chapter 8).



⁸ [Quality Standards for Development Evaluation | OECD](#)

⁹ [Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards | LEGS | Humanitarian Relief | Livestock Welfare Languages | CHS 2024](#)

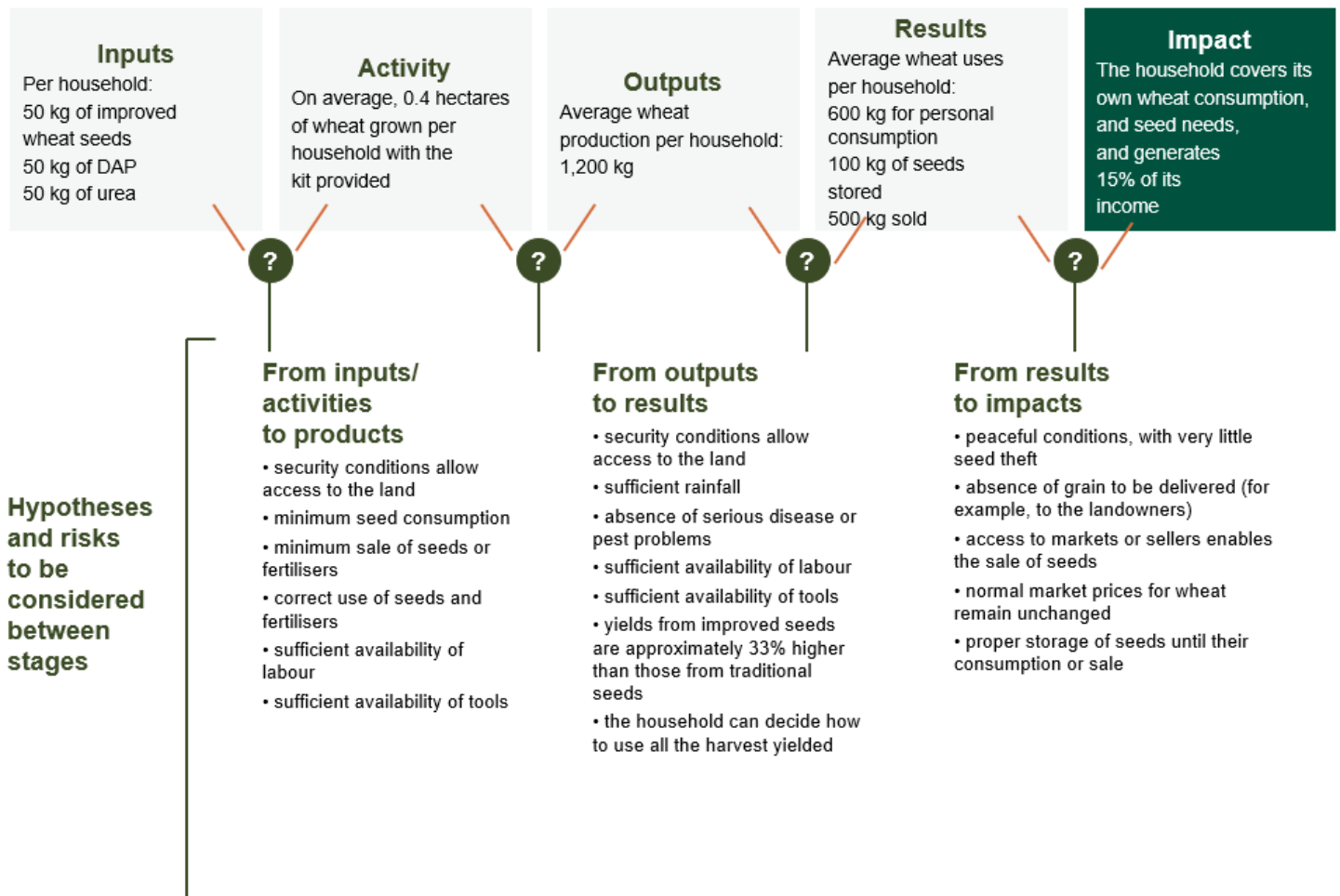
¹¹ [The Sphere Handbook 2018 | Sphere](#)

¹² <https://seads-standards.org/>

ANNEX

03

Example of a Theory of Change



ANNEX

04

Baseline Situation Example

Indicator Themes	Indicators	Baseline Situation	Estimated Value Upon Project Completion
Sustainable improvement in the living conditions of smallholder families in the Savanes region through sustainable natural resource management and the strengthening of food security	0.1 The income of the smallholder families targeted by the project has risen steadily throughout the project, and by 20% upon its completion.	733,150 CFA francs / household per year	879,780 CFA francs / household per year
	0.2 Upon project completion, the diet of the smallholder families had become more varied (number of meals per day, composition of dishes, etc.)	2 meals a day 70% dried vegetables during the dry season	More than two meals; less than 70% dried vegetables.
Development of diversified farms based on agroecological practices and capacity building for producer organisations	1.3 Upon project completion, 60% of the target farms will have adopted at least two of the following agroecological techniques: composting, stone walls, grass strips and intensive cereal/legume intercropping, supported by the services of their producer organisations (technical assistance and marketing).	Farmers do not apply agroecological techniques in a significant or adequate way.	570 farmers have adopted at least two agroecological techniques as defined in the indicator.
	1.4 Upon project completion, the average annual volume of organic matter produced for soil improvement had increased by 60% for the farmers benefiting from the project's activities.	4.6 tonnes per producer per year	7.36 tonnes per producer per year
Sustainable intensification of production among 950 smallholder cereal and vegetable growers through the adoption of agroecological and agroforestry practices, access to water and the sustainable management of wooded plots by 50 women	1.5 Yields of cereals (maize and rice) and pulses (soya) have increased by 20% among farmers who have adopted agroecological practices, such as compost pits, erosion control measures, etc.	Maize = 1.62 t/ha Rice = 2.02 t/ha Soya = 0.42 t/ha	Maize = 1.94 t/ha Rice = 2.42 t/ha Soya = 0.51 t/ha
	1.6 150 vegetable growers have continuous access to water during the dry season, and have established and respect rules governing the shared use of water and the collective maintenance of wells and equipment at the vegetable-growing sites.	No area has water available after March	150 vegetable growers have access to water from May onwards
	1.7 Annual vegetable production volumes (tomatoes and onions) have increased by 80% in the 10 horticultural areas, thanks to continuous access to water between October and May (permanent wells) and improvements to vegetable production techniques.	Tomatoes = 40.2 tonnes Onions = 2.5 tonnes	Tomatoes = 72.4 tonnes Onions = 4.5 tonnes
	1.8 Upon project completion, simple management plans for the five wooded plots have been drawn up and are being implemented.	0	5 simple plans

Indicator Themes	Indicators	Baseline Situation	Estimated Value Upon Project Completion
Farmers' organisations (cereals and horticulture) have been consolidated at an institutional level, provide services to their members (collective sales, training, etc.) and have capitalised on and promoted their experience in natural resource management within their respective national umbrella organisation.	2.9 The volume of cereals, legumes (soya) and horticultural products sold collectively by the UOPC and UROPC increased by 50% between the start and end of the project.	Horticultural products: unorganised bulk sales Cereals: 1,282 tonnes sold during the 2013/2014 season) Legumes (soya): 0	Horticultural products: _ Cereals: 1,923 tonnes Legumes:
	2.10 Upon project completion, the volume of savings mobilised by the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) across the 50 cantonal producer organisations exceeded 5 million CFA francs (€8,000).	3,571,000	5 million CFA francs
	2.11 Upon project completion, 100 farmers were making cropping decisions based on the technical and economic analysis provided by the farm's Management Committee.	0	100
	2.12 Upon project completion, the CPC and UROPC have disseminated the experience of agroecological farm intensification across the 13 cantonal unions in the Savanes region and incorporated it into their strategic guidance document and their agricultural public policy proposals.		

ANNEX

05

Sample Feedback Form

Project	[Project name]
Collection date	[DD/MM/YYYY]
Location / Area	[Town / Municipality / Region]
Data collection method	☐ Community meeting ☐ Individual interview ☐ Suggestion box ☐ Form ☐ Other: _
Respondent profile	☐ Beneficiary ☐ OP member ☐ Partner ☐ Local authority ☐ Other: _
Sex	☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other
Age	[Age group or exact age]
Feedback	
In your opinion, what are the positive aspects of the project?	
<i>[Free text box]</i>	
What aspects could be improved?	
<i>[Free text box]</i>	
Do you have any suggestions or ideas to improve the activities?	
<i>[Free text box]</i>	
Would you like to receive information about the actions taken in response to your feedback?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Data collector	[Name / Position]
Comments from the data collector	[Additional feedback, data collection context, etc.]

ANNEX

06

MEAL Planning Example

Project: Improving Food Security by Strengthening Vegetable Production in Burkina Faso

Overall Project Objective

To sustainably improve food security and incomes for 1,500 smallholder farmers in three rural municipalities in the North-Central region over a 36-month period.

I. Monitoring

Component	Description
Key indicators (examples)	- Number of farmers trained in agroecological techniques - Total area under horticultural cultivation (ha) Average yield per crop (kg/ha) - Average income of beneficiary producers
Data sources	- Training logs - Plot monitoring forms - Quarterly beneficiary surveys
Frequency	Monthly monitoring of field activities – Quarterly data collection
Responsible person	Project M&E Officer, working in coordination with the agricultural facilitators
Tools	- KoboToolbox for mobile data collection - Power BI dashboards for real-time monitoring

II. Evaluation

Evaluation Type Baseline evaluation Mid-term evaluation Final evaluation	Timing	Objectives
Baseline evaluation	Month 1	Establish the baseline for indicators (production, income, agricultural practices)
Mid-term evaluation	Month 18	Measure progress halfway through the project and make adjustments if necessary
Final evaluation	Month 36	Evaluate the results achieved and the impact on livelihoods

III. Accountability

Mechanism	Details
Anonymous suggestion boxes	Set up in each target village or in the AVSF office, as appropriate
Free helpline (WhatsApp number)	Available for reporting complaints and feedback
Community feedback sessions	Quarterly meetings to share the results with the beneficiaries and a final session
Complaints handling policy	Implemented in accordance with the deadlines set out in the PSEAH

IV. Learning

Activity	Objectives
Half-yearly capitalisation workshops	Identify best practices and challenges, and adjust strategies
Documentation of lessons learned	Drafting of technical factsheets shared with other NGOs and partners
Exchange between projects	Regional meetings to exchange experiences with other agricultural projects

Summary MEAL Timetable

Month	Activity
M1	Baseline, implementation of monitoring tools
M3	Initial monitoring report
M6	Learning workshop 1
M18	Mid-term evaluation
M24	Learning workshop 2
M36	Final evaluation and capitalisation

MEAL Human Resources

1 MEAL officer based in the NC
2 local MEAL technical assistants
4 field facilitators, trained in data collection
1 external consultant for the final evaluation

ANNEX

07

Expert Tools

The calculation of indicators measured on purposive samples

When using purposive sampling, it is essential to calculate a weighted mean⁽¹³⁾ that takes into account the number of individuals in each category, in order to obtain an estimate of the overall average that is as representative as possible of the target population as a whole.

For example, if yield surveys have been conducted on 10 farmers per cooperative, a weighted average of the average yields per cooperative (or category) must be calculated, using the total number of members in each cooperative as the weighting factor.

Given the categories may vary from one project to another, this type of calculation has not been included in the proposed files and must be adapted to each individual case.

Method for identifying significant deviations from the median

- Sort the indicator values from smallest to largest
- Identify or calculate the median of the indicator. The median is the middle value in an ordered dataset.
- Calculate the first and third quartiles (Q1 and Q3). Q1 is the median of the first half of the data (25th percentile) and Q3 is the median of the second half (75th percentile).
- Calculate the interquartile range (IQR): This is the difference between the third and first quartiles ($IQR = Q3 - Q1$). The IQR measures the spread of central 50% of the data.
- Identifying moderate outliers:
 - Any value above the upper limit: $Q3 + (IQR \times 1.5)$
 - Any value below the lower limit: $Q1 - (IQR \times 1.5)$
- Identifying extreme outliers:
 - Any value below the lower limit: $Q1 - (IQR \times 3)$
 - Any value above the upper limit: $Q3 + (IQR \times 3)$

¹³ Neither a simple average of the collected data nor an average of the category-specific averages should be used.

AGRONOMES & VÉTÉRINAIRES SANS FRONTIÈRES

14 avenue Berthelot (bâtiment F bis) 69007 Lyon, France
45 bis Avenue de la Belle Gabrielle, 94736 Nogent-sur-Marne Cedex, France

www.avsf.org



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