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U.S. Department of State

Monitoring for CVE

Documenting Progress on the Fight Against Violent Extremism

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Introduction

At the February 2015 Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), President Obama urged the United States and its partners to take concrete steps to fight against terrorist organizations; confront the warped ideologies terrorists espouse; and address the grievances terrorists exploit, including economic and political grievances. In February 2016, a year after the Summit, the Department of State and U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) further defined the U.S. government's way forward on this issue by releasing a joint strategy on Countering Violent Extremism.

The strategy defines CVE as actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize communities and individuals to violence; and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence. This includes both disrupting the tactics used by violent extremists to attract new recruits to violence and building specific alternatives, narratives, capabilities, and resiliencies in targeted communities and populations to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violence. To effectively counter this phenomenon, CVE efforts must be integrated into larger initiatives to promote good governance and the rule of law, respect for human rights, and sustainable inclusive development. The Department of State and USAID will work through the following objectives in an effort to disrupt recruitment and strengthen the relationship between governments and local communities, and civil society:

- Expand international political will, partnerships, and expertise to better understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions;
- Encourage and assist partner governments to adopt more effective policies and approaches to prevent the spread of violent extremism;
- Employ development tools and approaches to reduce specific political or socio-economic factors that contribute to community support for violent extremism or put populations at high risk of violent extremist radicalization and recruitment to violence;
- Empower and amplify locally credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideology among key demographic segments;
- Strengthen the capabilities of government and non-governmental actors to isolate, intervene with, and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence.

This guide, developed by the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, directly supports the joint CVE strategy's goals in "Measuring Results and Effects." The purpose of this guide is to support the integration of high quality monitoring into the projects that embassy personnel or Washington-based Department of State officers oversee as part of their CVE related projects. The guide is designed to be practical. It details best practice on solicitation, monitoring, and management of CVE projects. It is not intended to be an exhaustive guide on CVE but rather a supportive tool for project managers.

This guide focuses on:

- How to facilitate contextual CVE analysis and pillar of effective design;
- How to craft a strong call for proposals, including CVE-specific problems to address;
- How to recognize a strong proposals, monitoring plan and monitoring language to include in a solicitation;
- How to use monitoring as a management tool;
- How to prepare for an evaluation;
- Annexes provide a more detailed look at the application of monitoring practices, including tools like a CVE proposal review matrix, CVE logframe template, and a CVE monitoring plan template, among other information.

Key Concepts: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is the performance and analysis of routine measurements to detect changes in status. Monitoring is used to inform managers about the progress of an ongoing activity, project, program, or policy, and to detect problems that can be addressed through corrective actions.

Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed activity, project, program, or policy. Evaluations are formal analytic endeavors involving the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information.

Strong monitoring enables us to:

- Report interim results of our efforts to Department leadership, The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, and the public;
- Award grants and contracts to implementing partners with evidence-based track records of success;
- Make strategic course corrections to our interventions as environments change and activities prove effective or ineffective in the particular context; and
- Manage implementing partners effectively.

High quality evaluation enables us to:

- Report independently verified results of our efforts to Department leadership, OMB, Congress, and the public; and
- Learn which CVE approaches are most effective.

With the exception of Annex 3, which details common evaluation methodologies, this guide focuses predominantly on monitoring.

General M&E Terminology

Activity: A specific action or process undertaken over a specific period of time by an organization to convert resources to products or services to achieve results.

Award: Include grants, Cooperative Agreement, Contribution, or Agreement with an International Organization, Contract.

Awarding Officer: U.S. government representative with the legal authority to commit the USG to obligate funding.

Baseline: Information collected before or at the start of a policy, project, program, or activity that provides a basis for planning or assessing subsequent progress and impact.

Evaluation: A systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed activity, project, program, or policy: Evaluations are formal analytical endeavors involving systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information.

Experimental Design: A methodology in which research subjects are randomly assigned to either a treatment or control group, data is collected both before and after the intervention, and results for the treatment group are benchmarked against a counterfactual established by results from the control group.

Goal: The higher-order objective to which an activity, project, program, or policy is intended to contribute.

Impact: A result or effect that is caused by or attributable to an activity, project, program, or policy. Impact is often used to refer to higher-level effects that occur in the medium or long term, and can be intended or unintended and positive or negative.

Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative variable that provides reliable means to measure a particular phenomenon or attribute.

Implementing Partner: Entity receiving foreign assistance funds from U.S. government to perform or deliver activities, projects, or services.

Inputs: Resources provided for implementation and an activity, project, program, or policy. Examples are money, staff, time, facilities, and equipment.

Logical Framework (Log Frame): A management tool used to improve the design and evaluation of interventions that is widely used by development agencies. It is a type of logic model that identifies strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure.

Logic Model: A logic model, often a visual representation, provides a road map showing the sequence of related events connecting the need for a planned program with the program's desired outcomes and results.

Monitoring: The performance and analysis of routine measurements to detect changes in status. Monitoring is used to inform managers about the progress of an ongoing activity, project, program, or policy, and to detect problems that can be addressed through corrective actions.

Objective: A statement of the condition or state one expects to achieve.

Outcome: Outcomes are any results higher than an output to which a given project output contributes to but for which the project is not solely responsible. Outcomes may be intermediate or end outcomes, short-term or long-term, intended or unintended, positive or negative, direct or indirect. Outcome indicators have various ranges, from low-level outcomes to high-level outcomes.

Outputs: The products, goods, and services, which result from an activity, policy, or program.

Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)/Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E Plan): Strategic documents used to systematically-monitor the outputs and outcomes of a project, program, or strategy. It is common for each agency or bureau to have unique M&E templates. Regardless of the format, the intention is always organize the intervention under a logical design. Typically, this means starting with the theory of change and project goal with activities organized under each objective.¹

Program: A set of interventions, activities or projects that are typically implemented by several parties over a specified period and may cut across sectors, themes or geographic areas.

Project: An intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules.

Quasi-Experimental Design: A methodology in which research subjects are assigned to treatment and comparison groups typically through some sort of matching strategy that attempts to minimize the differences between the two groups in order to approximate random assignment.

Target: The specified result, often expressed by a value of an indicator, that an activity, project, program, or policy is intended to achieve.

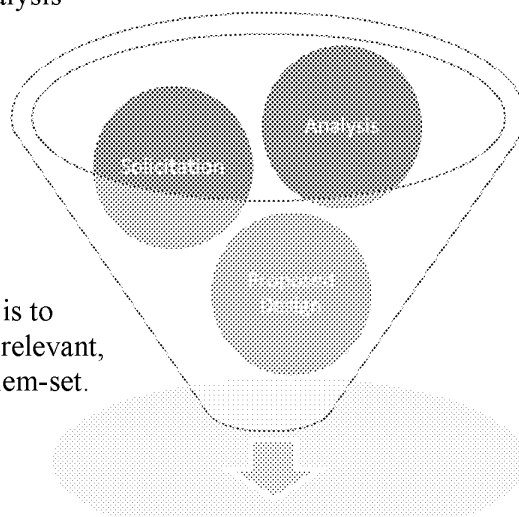
Theory of Change: A theory of change (TOC) states what expected (outcomes) will follow from a particular set of interventions. TOC is a means to describe a program's intended outcomes. Similar to the use of a hypothesis in social science studies, a theory of change posits how the program's activities will foster change in the target audience as part of the larger society. A CVE specific theory of change should explain how the program's outputs and outcomes intend to alleviate or reduce specific risk factors of violent extremism that pertain to a specified location.

¹ Note that USAID differentiates between a Performance Management Plan (PMP), Project M&E Plan, and an Activity M&E Plan.

Analysis and Design

The Department's global priorities for addressing violent extremism include a mix of prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation efforts. CVE initiatives focused on preventing the spread of violent extremism can include confronting terrorist recruitment and radicalization, especially their attempts to use religion to justify violence, and addressing the economic, political, and social grievances that terrorists exploit. Research suggests that factors associated with violent extremism may include, but are not limited to, state-sponsored violence (heavy-handed security practices and abuse), intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict, a belief in religious supremacy, or the perception one's religion or identity is under threat. This guide strongly recommends that project managers at post conduct or obtain a comprehensive analysis, or a CVE assessment before designing or soliciting projects.

Strong analysis is a cornerstone of strong projects and is the responsibility of both program managers at post and implementers at different stages. Analysis conducted at post is two-fold including (i) internal policy alignment and programmatic de-confliction and (ii) external research and analysis through desk research and field interviews. Before analysis begins for a specific project, posts/bureaus should internally assess if a CVE project is in line with current policy priorities and ongoing diplomatic, development, and security sector programs to insure project relevance and to prevent duplication. If post assesses a need for CVE project or programs, the next step is to conduct an analysis that informs a solicitation with timely, relevant, sub-national information about the violent extremism problem-set. To do this, post should review recent, relevant evaluations and complete a CVE assessment.² A starting point may be to review the common CVE factors listed in Annex 1.



Final Project Design

The objective of the analysis is to better understand the problem, the contributing factors fueling the problem, and to develop recommendations for programmatic action. Because violent extremist organizations (VEOs) or related actors may feel threatened by the proposed intervention, it is particularly important in CVE to analyze risks of negative outcomes associated with proposed interventions, and identify ways to monitor for and mitigate them. Specific information ideally derived from analysis and included in the solicitation are:

- Underlying drivers of violent extremism;
- Local resiliencies and actors who are countering violent extremism or mobilized to do so;

² When embarking on a CVE-specific assessment, check with USAID and Department of State (DoS) representatives at post and with the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism for existing assessment frameworks and tools.

- Relevant, on-going U.S. government, third-country programming, or international organization programming and if/how the new project(s) should collaborate or leverage existing programs;
- The proposed target group(s);
- Operating assumptions;
- Nuanced and realistic desired end state;
- Programmatic options with the largest possibility of success; and,
- Negative risks of programmatic intervention and means of monitoring and mitigating such risks.

Relevant project goals, proposed objectives, and activities should become increasingly more detailed as the process nears final project design. Note, a project is an intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules; an activity is a specific action or process undertaken over a specific period-of-time by an organization to convert resources to products or services to achieve results. These items will be separate but interconnected in a strong proposal.

It is important to note that the funding agency or office has control of the design process at each stage, especially the phases of solicitation and proposal review/approval. The solicitation is important because it sets project parameters. It displays the decisions made from the analysis and guides implementers' proposals. In submitting proposals, implementers are expected to further articulate their proposed design and implementation approach to achieve the project objectives. Capacity of implementers to complete this task will vary greatly. In most cases, program managers will need to guide implementers through the design process. For guidance on select types of frequently used CVE program models, see Annex 7.

A Strong CVE Project Design:

- Clearly identifies the VE driver it intends to address;
- Provides a logical justification for the prioritization of the identified driver;
- Proposes a comprehensive project design to mitigate the effect of the identified driver;
- Clearly identifies the target audience for the project;
- Provides a logical justification for prioritizing that specific target audience;
- Provides a strong theory of change, which address how the proposed activities will lead to an achievement of the project goal; (To help articulate a theory of change, see Annex 5 the CVE LogFrame Template)
- Considers the effect of outwardly labeling a project CVE and whether information about the funding sources (USG or western) for a project are publicized, and what doing so might mean for the outcome of the project;
- Identifies risks of negative outcomes for participants and beneficiaries of the project, as well as risks that VEOs, other actors, or social groups might react in a way that ultimately worsens VE.

The proposal review/approval stage is also highly influential in the quality of the final project design. At this stage, the funding agency or office should review the proposal against solicitation criteria and assess the logic behind the project design. If significant problems stand out, it is possible to make approval contingent upon the implementer resolving specific design

issues. Ultimately, this stage presents the last opportunity for the funding agency to tweak and strengthen design before it becomes locked into a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract without executing an award modification. Common requests that funding agencies make to implementers are:

- Rewording or redesigning objectives to facilitate logic clarity;
- The addition or modification of outcome indicators;
- Clarification of project goal or pairing down of the goal;
- Examples of the organization's previous experience with similar projects.

Crafting a Strong Call for Proposals

Selecting the strongest proposal for a CVE project begins with sound analysis of how certain interventions can be designed to achieve impact and clear guidance for how appropriate funding should be spent. Both lead to a stronger examination of how we solicit CVE project proposals. Effective solicitations should: (1) display an understanding of basic design vocabulary; (2) identify the CVE problem or factor to be programed against; (3) propose desired outcomes and activities; (4) lay out monitoring and evaluation requirements; and (5) clearly state the proposal review and selection process. Intended results should be accompanied by a the theory of change to achieve those results, the project's activities through which results will be achieved, outline monitoring requirements, and provide the standards against which applications will be assessed^{3,4}.

Display an Understanding of Basic Design Vocabulary

In order to receive proposals that display correct use of design terminology and strong design principles, the solicitation author must also understand this vocabulary and use it correctly. Serious design flaws can arise from simply writing an activity as an objective or using a strategic objective of a regional strategy as a project goal. See the General M&E Terminology section on page 5 for State Department definitions.

Identify the Problem

Global solicitations should clearly state U.S. government priorities and strategic objectives, as well as instruct applicants to provide their analysis of the specific drivers of VE in their proposed location. Because drivers of VE can vary in different contexts, if your solicitation is country-specific or even sub-national, include an analysis of what is causing local vulnerability to VE recruitment and radicalization. In cases where the exact drivers are unknown, posit what could be causing VE in that specific region, or include in the solicitation a requirement for a completed assessment of drivers. Be as specific as possible and include the possibility for multiple or intersecting drivers. For example, poverty alone does not cause a person to support VE, although violent extremist groups may seek to exploit a community's economic grievances and perceived marginalization. Joining a VEO might have more to do with an individual's desire to contribute to his/her society, rather than just financial incentive or income level. Given a context with multiple, influential drivers, strong solicitations require the applicant to identify the driver(s) they intend to intervene.

³ Keep in mind that CVE programming can involve a range of legal issues; project managers are encouraged to consult with the Office of the Legal Adviser early on in the process of CVE program design or review to ensure consistency with applicable legal requirements.

⁴ For detailed guidance on programming requirements see the U.S. Department of State Federal Assistance Policy Directive, <http://a.m.state.sbu/sites/OPE/FA/SiteAssets/SitePages/GRFAPD/2016%20Federal%20Assistance%20Policy%20Directive.pdf>

Propose Desired Outcomes and Activities

The appropriate target population and degree of change possible will vary by context and available resources. For example, a well-funded, multi-year project might anticipate it will result in the majority of a region's population believing their government respects their religion, while a smaller-scale project might seek to change the attitudes of one city's religious or cultural leaders. Take scope and breadth into consideration during the solicitation phase. Be candid about feasible outcomes, given the selected timeframe and budget. A common oversight in CVE project design is to assume the project goal should simply decrease violent extremism. Instead, scope the project goal to address push and pull factors while monitoring the CVE context. Push factors can include structural conditions and psychological-emotional factors that can increase an individual's or a community's likelihood of supporting violent extremism, while pull factors may include active recruitment efforts by violent extremism organizations and extremist messaging.

Solicitations can loosely direct applicants on the specific problem the proposals should address and then request suggestions on the most fitting project activities, or they can be prescriptive on both the desired outcomes and activities for the project. Prescriptive, narrowly written solicitations should be reserved for projects where the problem, theory of change, and activities are already well understood either from past/current projects or from evaluations.

Highlight M&E Expectations

Solicitations should require potential implementers to provide plans for how they will monitor project implementation, progress toward desired results or outcomes, and any significant changes to the operating context. It is important to note, however, that implementers may vary considerably in their ability to monitor their projects due to resource or funding constraints. In those situations, project managers may have to take on some of the M&E planning and baseline analysis for a project. When possible, however, implementers should be specific in the data collection methods they intend to use in order to monitor the progress of the project (i.e. focus groups, surveys, in-depth interviews, direct observation of project activities, etc.). All CVE projects should encourage implementers to report on local violent extremist trends to ensure that the project maintains relevancy. Appropriateness will depend on contextual sensitivities and program type.

Additionally, ACLED data tracks national-level conflict incidents and trends in close to real time (www.acleddata.com). ACLED data is not CVE specific, but can serve as a strong proxy. Free data is available for Africa and select countries in Asia. For example, ACLED data includes 49 of Africa's 54 countries, usually with only a one-month lag time. Data for Asia includes Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. However, data for Asia is reported with a more significant lag-time and may be less helpful for real-time analysis. Given a reasonable amount of media autonomy and objectiveness, it is possible to routinely check news outlets, police reports, or relevant civil society actors for mentions of incidents. The purpose of encouraging increased outcome-level data coupled with hyper-local trend assessments of VEO support is to create a clearer picture of a project's possible CVE impact. Refer to Annex 2 for a review of monitoring basics.

Require Analysis, Monitoring and Mitigation of Negative Outcomes

Solicitations should require anticipation of how VEOs and related actors might react negatively to the proposed intervention, and associated risks for participants and beneficiaries, and risks of unintentionally leading to increased amounts or new types of VE. The proposals should explain how the most likely and impactful risks will be mitigated through program design and contingency plans, and how the monitoring plan will aid early detection of these risks.

Lay out the Proposal Review and Selection Process

Solicitations should clearly communicate how the Department will determine which proposals to fund. This includes listing eligible countries, recommended information for the proposal to include (i.e. background information, theory of change, proposed objectives), list a clear scoring assignment and priority, and types of projects that qualify for funding. Listing this information serves to (1) identify the relevant topics to which applicants should focus their applications and (2) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Monitoring Requirements for a Solicitation

The project-monitoring plan guides key project activities, indicators of achievement, and the associated annual and life-of-project targets. The requirements and flexibility of the solicitation will depend heavily on the type of funding mechanism the solicitation is seeking. Below you will find a sample section for reporting and monitoring and evaluation requirements, which includes creative monitoring criteria.

Narrative Project Reporting

For a typical grant, project reports are due quarterly. The due date is normally 30 days following the end of the calendar year quarter: October-December reports are due Jan 30; Jan-March reports are due April 30; April-June reports are due July 30, and July-September reports are due Oct 30.⁵

Narrative project reports should reflect the projects' focus on measuring the impact on the goal or problems the project sets out to address. Reports should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs of the project as outlined in the grant's scope of work, the proposal, and the monitoring plan. Project reports should include, but not be limited to relevant contextual information, explanation of significant activities of the period, and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including how activities are meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the monitoring plan. Suggested reporting format includes a summary at the beginning with program highlights, followed by program context and relevant events, then completed activities by objective, paragraphs on lessons learned and challenges and obstacles, and ends with planned activities for the following quarter. Aggregated monitoring data can be attached as an annex.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The award recipient will develop the monitoring plan, which will subsequently be reviewed, and approved by the Grants Officer, Contract Officer, Agreement Officer, or a legal representative. The recipient must submit a final plan no later than 90 calendar days after the award date⁶. Performance monitoring must take into account various levels of reporting, including outputs, low, medium, and high-level outcome indicators.

The implementer will submit aggregated monitoring data, based on the approved monitoring plan, with each narrative report. If data collection is no longer feasible for the agreed upon indicators, it is the contractor /grantee's responsibility to propose alternative indicators and data sources more appropriate for the new operating environment.

⁵ The report deadline will differ depending on the type of funding mechanism. Thirty days is the period after implementation when reports are due for cooperative agreements and grants.

⁶ For awards with a period of performance less than one year, 30-60 days is recommended.

Reviewing CVE Proposals and Monitoring Plans

The following section highlights characteristics of strong CVE proposals and monitoring plans. For a comprehensive CVE proposal review matrix, refer to Annex 4. For a CVE monitoring plan template, see Annex 6.

Proposed CVE Projects

A strong proposal will address the link to violent extremism in its monitoring plan. It is not logical for any one project alone to measurably influence trends of violent extremism. For example, one community-policing project in a specified region will not likely affect the number of violent incidents carried out by extremists nation-wide.

Therefore, strong CVE proposals (1) demonstrates a clear, measureable project goal, which reflects the weakening of a factor contributing to VE and (2) measures the small steps required to catalyze the achievement of that goal, and (3) monitors local trends in violent extremism. Project design approaches may choose to address a problem set by disrupting negative CVE dynamics or enhancing positive dynamics and influencers. Incorporating strong monitoring into project design will not prove causality or correlation; but it can create a nuanced narrative of project results without substantively increasing a project's monitoring budget.

Project Goal, Objectives, and Organization

An indication of a strong proposal is its displaying appropriate organization of the proposed project activities and objectives, as they are laid out in the project design. From a top-down perspective, each project should have one goal that demonstrates a feasible change, aligns to government priorities, is relevant to the problem set, and maximizes possible contribution. Each objective is written as a desired state, which represents a change to the implementing context. Strong objectives demonstrate one concrete change, avoid jargon, and identify a target population. An objective is supported by a collection of project activities. From a bottom-up perspective, project activities collectively lead to the achievement of their respective objectives, the achievement of all objectives, will then ultimately lead to the achievement of the larger project goal.

Proposed Monitoring Plans

Each monitoring plan is unique to its project. Strong monitoring plans build upon project design and clearly organize data collection methods by objectives under the project goal. A strong monitoring plan includes a detailed design for measuring accomplishments under the project, with an emphasis on results achieved, measurable output and outcome indicators, as well as methods for data collection and disaggregation. Mixed-methods monitoring is ideal. This means that data collection utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is important to note, however, that in CVE environments much of the data likely will be qualitative in nature—with the exception of output indicators. This is due to the sensitivity of CVE themes and difficulty in accessing insecure areas.

Activities related to monitoring that do not contribute to the achievement of a project objective, such as focus groups, research, or surveys, do not need to be written into the monitoring plan. Only the monitoring activities that are expected to contribute to achieving a project objective should be included. Otherwise, monitoring activities are captured in the implementation plan, explained in the narrative section of the monitoring plan, and results are captured in quarterly reports.

Indicator Selection

Indicators should be selected thoughtfully with consideration to feasibility and ease of collection. Even at the proposal stage, it is possible to identify a handful of indicators for measurement and select data collection methods. Strong monitoring plans measure desired changes through the logic presented in the theory of change. Avoid relying heavily on output indicators, and instead demonstrate a mix of outputs and low, medium, and high-level outcomes. For example, it is important to understand not only how many participants were trained (output), but also how much they learned (low-outcome), and whether they are using the new information (medium-outcome). When unsure what and how many things to measure, err on the side of conservative monitoring, identifying relevant measurements, and minimizing the research burden to the implementer. This type of thoughtful monitoring mitigates data fatigue and aligns data expectations with budget availability.

Foreign assistance projects funded by the Department of State and/or USAID should report on standard foreign assistance indicators that are applicable to their funding and project activities. Standard foreign assistance indicators attempt to aggregate foreign assistant outputs and outcomes, allowing for concise and clear reporting to Congress. Standard indicators in conjunction with custom indicators should be integrated as appropriate into the project monitoring plan⁷.

In order to assess and address differences in the impact of interventions on women and men, and increase the likelihood that a project will reach its goals and objectives, monitoring plans need to be sensitive to gender, incorporating gender equality indicators and data disaggregation by gender. Data can be disaggregated by gender through collection in survey forms, in tracking men and women as participants in project activities, by ensuring both men and women are interviewed when collecting qualitative data on the project, and so on. Monitoring plans can use F gender indicators as well as specific indicators developed for that project.

Common Challenges and Creative Solutions for Monitoring

Monitoring for CVE entails additional obstacles due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, access to target populations, data poor environments, the challenge presented by seeking to prove counterfactuals, or general security concerns. In these contexts, it is necessary to develop innovative data collection while adhering to the wider general principles outlined above. Listed below are data considerations and potential “work-arounds” for monitoring in difficult contexts.

⁷ <http://www.state.gov/f/indicators/>

Data considerations:

- **Data purity vs. data realism:** Difficult operating contexts can prohibit best research practices or “gold standard” academic data collection strategies. Security is often fluid and situations are dynamic. Therefore, it is beneficial to focus on the quality of feasible data rather than acquiring perfect data.
- **Diversify data sources:** Drawing a causal link between a project and the reduction of localized violent extremism is difficult to confidently achieve. A more realistic strategy is to triangulate data from various sources. When data from different sources tells the same story, the strength of a correlation argument between the project and proposed outcomes becomes stronger.
- **Routine data collection:** Monitoring data is most helpful when collected routinely throughout the life of the project. Timely data facilitates informed decision-making and equips project managers to adapt to a dynamic operational context. End of project evaluation is not a replacement for monitoring.
- **Thoughtful indicators vs. numerous indicators:** The large size of a monitoring plan does not inherently make it better than ones that focus on a narrower set of indicators. It is advisable to confidently report on a handful of meaningful, thoughtfully chosen measurements rather than attempt to report across a wide array of measurements for the sake of data collection. Large monitoring plans tend to include many output indicators (counting people and products), which do not directly reflect a desired change (outcome). Local implementers can be a great source of information when attempting to create thoughtful indicators. They will have insights into what is feasible to collect and makes sense in the context of a given project. Therefore, it is wise to have final monitoring plans reviewed by local staff for clarity and creativity.

“Work-Arounds”⁸:

- **Existing research/data:** Where data is scarce, the monitoring design phase should include a review of existing data sources relevant to project outcomes. As with all data, the most important characteristics to look for are traditional data standards like validity, reliability, precision, integrity, and timeliness. Ultimately, like monitoring data, existing data should support informed and timely decision-making for project implementation. This could mean tapping into information from a Military Information Support Teams (MIST) at post, researching open source data, or using existing data sets like ACLED.
- **Qualitative methods:** Qualitative methods are both a “workaround” and likely a first-line approach, blended with quantitative methods, to monitoring CVE projects. There are many qualitative methods of data collection, including direct observation, partner observation, focus groups, and in-depth interviews, to name a few. If U.S. government staff is unable or restricted from traveling into areas of implementation, it may be

⁸ Additional resources on creative monitoring and evaluation approaches can be found at the USAID Learning Lab <http://usaidlearninglab.org/> and USAID Project Starter <http://usaidprojectstarter.org> .

possible to bring implementer representatives to post for meetings. If so, conducting qualitative data collection methods with relevant implementation staff, or participants, who do have access may yield valuable project information. For example, a focus group interview can provide managers with a wealth of qualitative information on performance of project activities, services, and products. Other qualitative data collection methods to consider in this context are key informant interviews, Delphi Method⁹, and a telephone hotline.

- **Direct observation:** Evaluators often use the direct observation method in data gathering for project evaluations, but project managers can use it in monitoring as well. Direct observation is basic observation without interference. In sensitive environments with reasonable access, structured, consistent direct observation techniques can establish data points. Observation is particularly useful when interview methods are considered easily influenced by relationship structures or fear of reprisal. To conduct direct observation well, determine the focus; develop standardized forms based on the focus for the observer; and select sites and timing intervals. Community monitoring is an example of direct observation.
- **Explore survey options.** If access is severely limited, consider using mobile phones or the internet as distribution mechanisms for surveys, where appropriate. Both methods increase access to information and participants geographic areas where bi-lateral or multi-lateral organization may not have access. However, this method operates on the assumption that target survey recipients have cell phone and/or internet access. This assumption comes with two obstacles: (1) if access is not pervasive surveys will only be taken by those who have access, presumably those who are more wealthy; and (2) if access is not individually pervasive, data may represent a gender imbalance if women do not have equal access to or are not permitted to use such devices.¹⁰

⁹ The Delphi Method is a structured forecasting method which relies on panels of experts to answer questionnaires through a predetermined and undisclosed number of rounds. The experts are provided with a summary of the group's responses, and asked to revise their earlier answers in light of the summary they received. In theory, overtime the experts will converge towards a small range of answers.

¹⁰ It is also possible to consult with INR/OPN regarding the existence of survey research and capabilities in a given country.

Monitoring as a Management Tool

Monitoring informs project-level decision-making, allows projects to show accountability and transparency, and serves as documentation for evaluation. Based on monitoring data, it is possible to make better-informed decisions, adjust project implementation when necessary, show strategic-level results, and ensure the best possible results as implementation moves forward. One of the many benefits of high quality monitoring is that it can inform the creation of better evaluations that feed into the knowledge base of the CVE community, which can influence U.S. government policies and strategies. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Types of Monitoring
Implementation Monitoring: Implementation monitoring tracks project output, measured by indicators. This type of monitoring does not track changes at the outcome level. It simply gathers quantitative data on the results of activities. For example, the number of people trained is an example of implementation monitoring.
Progress Towards Results: Progress monitoring measures changes catalyzed by a project. Progress is measured with indicators, at the low, medium, and high outcome levels. For example, percent change in knowledge after training is a low-level outcome that might be measured under progress monitoring.
Context Monitoring: Context monitoring is a snapshot of the environment, which assesses continued relevance of the project. It periodically reviews the assumptions made in the theory of change to ensure the project is adjusting accordingly. For example, if a project design is based on the assumption that the ruling party will not change, then context monitoring will track political developments related to that assumption.

Adapting to Remain Relevant

Because political and social situations are dynamic, incorporating context monitoring into normal project monitoring practices ensures relevance throughout implementation. By monitoring context, project managers can assess whether a project is still targeting the right problems and collaborating with the right people to achieve desired results. If the context does change, the intended results or activities may also need to adapt. Changes in context could include a change to an election date, a coup or political assassination, community or cross-border unrest, pandemics, or a cabinet re-shuffle. Implementers could track local, regional, countrywide, or even global developments as part of context monitoring. These changes in context may have crucial implications for the project's theory of change or basic assumptions about the project's activities and desired results to ensure the best outcomes, though it may not warrant adapting the project and activities.

Informed Decision-Making

Information from context monitoring, progress monitoring, and implementation monitoring is helpful to inform the day-to-day decision-making of project managers. Key points for decision-

making could revolve around types of participants, structure of activities, project funding, project extensions, or obligations of additional project funds. These decision points have two categories: (1) day-to-day project management decisions and (2) future funding decisions.

Implementation results and records of accomplishment can help decipher whether a particular organization is a good fit for an award in terms of organization capabilities. Items to consider include past local experience, technical capacity, and achievements of project results. Project results and implementation tracking are crucial for understanding project relevance and broader applicability of a specific project. For example, if a project is successful in one place, monitoring data can feed into an evaluation and help understand the possibility of replication in another location.

Data Gathering

In some cases when certain decisions need to be made, a project manager may request specific data (e.g. performance data, assessments, evaluations). For example, project managers may have particular data needs at various decision-making points in the project cycle (e.g. funding requests over \$500,000 must be accompanied by past performance reviews). It is imperative to understand the policies and the data needed based on the relevant bureau and office standard operating procedures.

Data gathering processes differ throughout the Department, but if no specific data collection procedures are in place for decision-making purposes, it is possible to facilitate independent and informal data collection opportunities. For example, speaking to implementers on a regular basis can significantly improve relationships and understanding of implementation and data gathering obstacles. In other instances, informal phone conversations with an implementer can entail asking a few targeted questions that, if done on a re-occurring basis, can help track progress.

Preparing for an Evaluation

The Department of State Evaluation Policy (January 2016) defines evaluation as, “A systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed activity, project, program, or policy: Evaluations are formal analytical endeavors involving systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information.” Further yet, a performance evaluation is distinct from an impact evaluation. An impact evaluation determines how much of a particular change can be *attributed* directly to the program being evaluated. Impact evaluations are highly regarded because of their ability to assign attribution. They remain uncommonly used in fluid and uncertain contexts due to their high cost, long-term commitment, and rigid design and data-collection requirements. If your bureau or office has weighed the risks and benefits of such a design, and chooses an impact evaluation methodology there are key considerations to note. The impact evaluation must be incorporated into design considerations and high-quality monitoring data will be necessary. The difference between preparing for an impact evaluation and a performance evaluation is that preparation begins at the outset for impact evaluations and continues throughout the project. Performance evaluations can take place at any point in a program’s cycle and often are beneficial early on in a program, in order to show if a program is being implemented and designed. They also can be prepared for in the final quarter of implementation, although ongoing organization and communication is advisable, if performance evaluations are done later in the program cycle. For more information on evaluation methodology, see Annex 3.

Performance evaluations are most common. But for all types of evaluations, the project team is in control of the information flows and process and has the opportunity to organize information and partners leading up to the evaluation. Embassies can prepare themselves and partners in advance of an evaluation to support the process and help it to be clear, organized, and productive. This includes preparing and organizing documents, prepping relevant partners for the evaluation, and understanding the process.

Organize Documents

Evaluators will need to read basic project documents. Ensuring proposal, design, quarterly reports, and baseline and endline documents are organized and available will expedite the process and decrease back and forth communication between the project team and evaluator. Other helpful data gathering tasks include reviewing original project design documents to assess whether the project evolved from the original design and aggregating monitoring data to-date. Aggregating monitoring data shows progress and makes comparison against monitoring targets simple.

Unless the project design was modified, the goal and objectives set out in the proposal will be the standards to which the performance evaluation measures the project’s success. If the project did significantly evolve, the project team should prepare to answer what context changes required the project to evolve, why the adaptations were appropriate, how the changes affected the project’s goal and objectives, and if the theory of change for the original project is still relevant.

Prepare Partners

Evaluators will likely want to speak with implementing partners. It is beneficial to communicate with implementers in advance of the evaluators' trip to explain the purpose of the evaluation and set out any parameters or concerns they may have. An example of concerns might be if beneficiaries or participants in a project are confidential or if partnering organizations desire to remain confidential. Identify and communicate challenges and restrictions to the evaluator as early as possible.

Owning the Process

Before the evaluation begins, consider appointing an evaluation point of contact (POC) and a simple communication protocol for the evaluator. Using one POC for the evaluator will allow the project team to provide introductions to partners and outside contacts as necessary as well as stay in the loop with the evaluator's communication and outreach. An example of a communication protocol could be for the evaluator to copy the POC on initial emails and to have biweekly information updates with the POC.

Annex 1: Factor-Specific Indicators

Factor-specific indicators may be helpful when assessing the risk of violent extremism in a given context. The indicators listed below provide a snapshot of common factors and can be utilized in combination with an in-country assessment. These indicators are not appropriate for project-level monitoring, but may be useful when preparing for a more rigorous analysis of violent extremism. Data sources listed below include the Pew Forum and Pew Religious Futures, the Political Terror Scale, and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. Other potential data sources include, the Political Instability Task Force Worldwide Atrocities Dataset and Jane's HIS Insurgency and Terrorism Tracker^{16, 17}.

Table 2: Factor-Specific Indicators			
Factor	Indicators	Data Source	Type
<i>Individual Factors</i>			
Perception of threat to religion	Score of the Social Hostilities Index	Pew Forum (2012) ¹¹	Perception Survey
Religious supremacy	Percent of citizens who report that people of other faiths are free to practice their religion and that it is a good thing	Pew Religious Futures (2010) ¹²	Perception Survey
<i>Societal Factors</i>			
Voice and Accountability	Global ranking on issues of voice and accountability	The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project (2014) ¹³	Index
State-sponsored violence	Country rating on the Political Terror Scale	Political Terror Scale (2014) ¹⁴	Content Analysis, based on annual reports from Amnesty International, U.S. Department of State Human Rights Reports, and Human Rights Watch
Inter and Intra-state conflict	Number of fatalities per conflict	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (2015) ¹⁵	Coded political violence data

¹² www.globalreligiousfutures.org

¹³ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>

¹⁴ <http://www.politicalterror scale.org>

¹⁵ <http://www.acleddata.com/>

¹⁶ <http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.dir/atrocities.html>

¹⁷ Jane's HIS Insurgency and Terrorism Tracker is a paid resource but available to the USG intelligence community.

Annex 2: Monitoring Basics

In order to learn about CVE project models, monitor low-level outcomes along with the overarching CVE-relevant impact the project hopes to achieve. Strong monitoring plans for CVE ideally encompass measurements for various levels of monitoring and include indicators that measure influences on CVE-drivers, progress indicators, and implementation monitoring indicators.

Level	Purpose	Characteristics
High-level Outcome	Assesses whether proposed activities, outputs, and lower-level outcomes affect the desired change regarding the identified driver of VE.	Speaks to a positive or negative influence on the identified driver of violent extremism as found through analysis.
Medium-level Outcomes	Tracks the degree to which the project is achieving its medium order changes.	Examines how and if low-level outcomes catalyze further results leading toward the goal.
Low-level Outcome	Tracks the degree to which the project is achieving its lower order changes.	Assesses the first level of changes catalyzed by project activities and outputs.
Output	Provides transparency and accountability of funds for the implementing agency and tracks if the project is producing the desired type and quantity of output	Direct results of implemented activities. Does not monitor a change.

- Indicators should be concise and measure one change (clearly defined) at a time. They should be measurable, and timely, and aid in measuring the achievement of the goal or objective. A helpful way of remembering these traits is the acronym **SMART**.
 - **S- Specific.** There is a clear degree of change intended to occur within a stated population. Note: the degree of change is reflected in the target, while the particular population should be stated in the indicator.
 - **M- Measurable.** There is only one change in the indicator and it is feasible to collect data on this factor in a reasonable amount of time and cost-effective manner.
 - **A- Accurate.** There is a direct signal of the change, which will be context-specific.
 - **R- Reliable.** Different people would all draw a similar conclusion through data collection and/or interpretation of the language.
 - **T – Time bound.** Includes a timeframe.
- Indicators should also be neutral and separate from the intended target to avoid any undue influence. Helpful phrasing includes:
 - Level of...
 - Percent of...
 - Number of...
 - Perception of...

- To support the creation of strong indicators, consider writing an indicator reference sheet. This is a document for capturing all reference information about a performance indicator. At minimum, reference data for each indicator includes:
 - The definition of the indicator;
 - Its relevance to the theory of change;
 - Unit of measure;
 - Whether and how the data must be disaggregated (by sex, age, or other category);
 - Data source;
 - Method of data collection, construction, and/or analysis
 - Reporting frequency;
 - Responsible office and individual for collection and analysis; and
 - Any changes to the indicator reference data over time.

Annex 3: Evaluation Methodologies and Mechanisms

Note types of data collection methods when reviewing a monitoring plan. Ensure that the data collection methods are in line with the program design. For example, if an implementer is proposing an experimental or quasi-experimental project design, this should be reflected in the data collection section of a monitoring plan. It is very difficult to retroactively create an experimental design for an evaluation, so these factors need to be considered at the program design phase.

There are three main forms of evaluation methodology, experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental. Which methodology is employed during an evaluation varies by the type of evaluation being performed: impact evaluation or performance evaluation. Impact evaluations include experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Two features distinguish a methodology as experimental. For a project to be an experiment it must contain some sort of intervention by a researcher (experimental manipulation or independent variable), with multiple comparison groups and the units in the study (people, businesses, schools, communities) must be randomly assigned to the comparison groups of the intervention. Pure experimental design involves Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) which are considered the “gold standard” and, if conducted properly, allows researchers the ability to make real causal claims about their work. RCTs are not always feasible to employ, particularly with implementers who have varying ability to conduct controlled experiments, work in insecure environments, and operate on shoestring budgets.

Other forms of experimental design are more common in impact evaluations and tend to be more complex and expensive than performance evaluations. Impact evaluations should be planned in advance of activity/project implementation. When experimental design is unfeasible, other impact evaluation options are available. In unpredictable or violent environments, projects would be more likely to rely on quasi-experimental design. Quasi-experimental designs are a way to find a plausible counterfactual, but do not show causality. Quasi-experimental design refers to instances in which interventions are administered by a researcher, but randomization to conditions is absent from the project. Quasi-experimental designs include regression discontinuity, difference in difference, and match methodologies, among others. These methods offer an alternative method to conduct an impact evaluation.

Non-experimental designs include case studies, pre-test/post-test, cross-sectional studies, snapshot, and other methods, which are appropriate for performance evaluations. Performance Evaluations offer anecdotes and answer performance questions; however, by their very nature performance evaluations are not designed to show program impact or causality.

- *Case Study Design* introduces a treatment and takes a measurement. Examples of case study design frequently used by projects are focus groups, key informant interviews, and post-training quizzes. In conjunction with other data points, these are examples of systematic data gathering but are not representative samples of the larger population and therefore cannot claim causality or correlation.

- *One Group Pre-test and Post-test Design* takes a measurement, introduces a treatment, and takes the same measurement again. An example of this in program monitoring is baseline and endline surveys, pre- and post-tests for trainings, and pre- and post-participant surveys. In conjunction with other data points, this design is helpful in understanding possible program outcomes but similarly is not able to claim causality or correlation.

Annex 4: CVE Proposal Review Matrix

Incoming proposals should be reviewed consistently against the same criteria. The chart below is an example of a proposal review matrix that is useful in selecting CVE proposals for funding. It is possible to use versions of this example with total possible scoring for each category.

		Questions	Comments
Minimum Threshold	Alignment	Does the proposal align with CVE policy? Does it align with the integrated country strategy?	
	Relevance	Does the proposal identify a key problem/opportunity that is central to countering violent extremism? Does this mesh with your knowledge of the country context? Does the goal address this issue directly? Why is the host government not funding this?	
	Clarity of Goal	Is there only one goal? Is it a change? Is it clearly defined?	
Proposal	CVE Relevance	What drivers are addressed? Does the scope of expected outcomes commensurate with the scope of intervention? Are CVE concerns thoughtfully integrated throughout the program design?	
	Maximize Contribution	Does the proposal seem likely to make a significant systemic contribution? If the change is only at the individual level, is the justification convincing? Is this a new program or an addition to an existing program? If it is an existing program, outcome/impact evidence should be provided.	
	Feasibility	Can the proposal create the desired change with the proscribed time, resources, and planned outputs? Does the proposal consider spoilers and build in risk mitigation?	
	Assumptions	Are contextual assumptions stated clearly? Are there any parts of the change pathway where assumptions are missing? Are high-risk assumptions convincingly addressed?	
	Do No Harm	Does the proposal appropriately consider the safety of all participants as well as potential effects on broader political, conflict, ethnic, and gender issues?	
	M&E	Is the M&E plan likely to help determine progress towards results and allow for course correction?	
	Overall Logic	Will this project create meaningful change? Do the proposed activities logically seem to lead toward the stated goal?	
Budget	Budget	Is the budget an appropriate representation of the work? Is it sufficiently detailed? (e.g. unit price, number of workshops, specific travel costs)	
IP	IP Expertise and Evidence of Success	Does the implementing partner (IP) possess the necessary expertise and relevant staff? Does the implementer's mission complement the project? Does the IP have a track record of effective project management?	

Annex 5: CVE LogFrame Template

A logframe is a tool for improving the planning, implementation, management, monitoring, and evaluation of projects. The log frame is a way of structuring the main elements in a project and highlighting the logical linkages between them. The logframe below is comprised of two parts: a narrative and a diagram. This format forces the exploration of contextual assumptions and the logical connection between VE factors, a project's theory of change, objectives, activities, and a definitive project goal.

CVE Logframe Narrative Template

Contextual Assumptions: Assumptions help embed the intervention in reality and can influence the management of expectations.

- What needs to remain true for this intervention to be successful? For example, does the ruling party need to stay in power? Do incidents of violence need to remain stable?
- Risks can also be added to this section and framed as assumptions. For example, if working in a sensitive environment where USG affiliation is deemed a negative, it would be logical to assume that the project footprint remains discrete.

Violent Extremism Factor: It is crucial that the project makes a clear connection between its goal and a driver of violent extremism. This is an opportunity to elaborate on the VE logic lines in the diagram.

- How was (were) the factor(s) identified?
- How is the project expected to influence the VE factor(s) identified? Please cite any specific data or information that supports this relationship.
- What approach will be used to effectively measure the contribution of the project to addressing the VE factors in the target area over the life of the project?

Theory of Change: There are underlying justifications of why proposed activities will catalyze intended results. The theory of change, lays out these justifications with data points. Supporting data might include scholarly articles, information derived from experience in country, or an assessment.

- Guiding questions for completing this section might include. Why this project? Why these activities?
- Through which pathways are the proposed activities and outputs expected to produce the desired outcomes?

Goal: Project goal statements are incredibly important. Statements should be concise, intentionally targeted, and feasible.

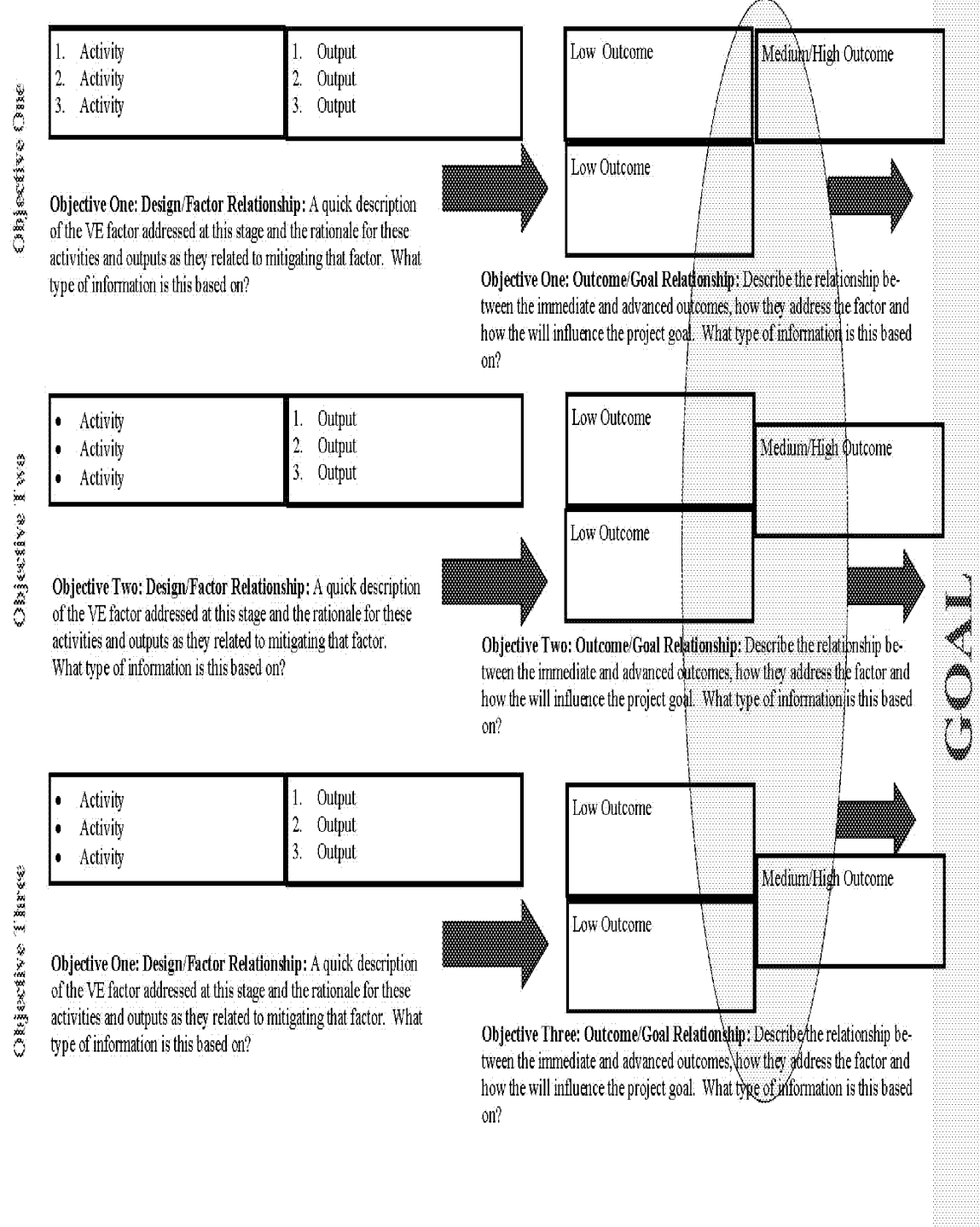
- What does a successful project look like?
- Is it quantifiable?
- In order for the goal to be achieved, is there a minimum threshold of changes that need to occur?

Activities, Output, and Outcome Dynamics: The activities should be explained in detail and linked with their projected outputs and outcomes. Special issues to consider are the area of implementation, targeting, and partners.

- How will population targeting be conducted? How will the target populations be identified and reached?
- What partners will be engaged to complete these activities? Are there local partners that will be participating? If so, what are their roles? What do they bring to the table?

CVE LogFrame Diagram Template

Theory of Change: Summarize the theory presented below in a simple statement. Support for your theory of change (evidence, articles, local knowledge) can be explained in the attached TOC narrative.



Annex 6: CVE Monitoring Plan Template

The chart below is an annotated example of a monitoring plan. It includes data collection information on how and when data will be collected. Structurally, monitoring plans mirror program design, each objective should be represented, and indicators should span the range of expected, including outputs, low, medium, and high-level outcomes.

Table 5: CVE Monitoring Plan Template							
Indicator	Factor	Baseline	Target	Data Source	Frequency	Disaggregation	Progress
High Level Outcome:							
Medium Level Outcome:							
Objective 1							
	Factor	Baseline	Target	Data Source	Frequency	Disaggregation	Progress
Indicator 1.1 Remember to keep indicators measurable, accurate, reliable, time-bound, and direction-neutral.	Identify the driver of VE, which this activity is attempting to address.	What is the starting point?	How many/what percentage/etc. do you expect to reasonable achieve by the end of the project.	Common examples could be project reports, surveys, & focus groups	How frequently will data be collected? Usually this is quarterly.	How should this data be broken down? Common disaggregation is by gender, are/country/region.	What is the progress to date? Include obstacles and next steps.
Indicator 1.2							
Indicator 1.3							
Objective 2							
Indicator 2.1							
Indicator 2.2							
Indicator 2.3							

Annex 7: CVE Project Models: What to Consider

CVE projects are not specific to a type exclusive to a particular sector. One intervention alone is not capable of reducing violent extremism writ large, only reducing push/pull factors that might increase the likelihood of an individual or group to support violent extremism. One type of intervention is also not applicable to every context. The projects profiles below address multiple problem sets inside and outside of the CVE space and have been selected for further exploration because they are frequently used in violent extremist contexts. A project's CVE relevance depends heavily upon strong analysis of the problem and drivers of CVE in a given context. Similarly, the measurement levels listed here will change according to the scope and size of a project.

The following project profiles are intended to be used as a first line of inquiry regarding relevance, appropriateness, and feasibility of common CVE project models to address relevant factors of VE. These profiles are illustrations of potential program types and not an exhaustive listing of all common CVE program types.¹⁸ The profiles *should not be applied* without sufficient contextual research on the local drivers of CVE or without further consultation with relevant subject matter experts.

Community Policing

Community policing is a law enforcement philosophy that promotes the systemic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. Community policing can address many law enforcement problems but cannot solve the problem of violent extremism alone. It may however, reduce the likelihood that factors linked to performance of security forces will push individuals toward violent extremism.

From a project perspective, community-policing strategies should be holistic and involve all sectors of society in order to find the right partners to sustain the engagement. It requires a change in the police culture, values, priorities, and measures of effectiveness that must infuse all levels of the police organization. In this effort, both women and youth must be included and leveraged as positive change agents. Those whom the police engage in the problem identification and solution processes must be carefully selected to ensure they are legitimate representatives of the community. The strategy should focus on establishing long-term, mutually beneficial, and collaborative relationships among community members and police officials. In order to build trust, practitioners and officials must be sincere and transparent in their efforts to engage communities. Most importantly, the program should demonstrate increased police effectiveness and improvements in the community's quality of life as a result of the new partnership to earn the people's trust and confidence.

Questions to Consider

- How effective are the police in preventing, detecting, and solving crime in the target community? Do the police protect members of the community from violence or perpetrate violence against them?

¹⁸ Others include At Risk Youth Programs, Prison Rehabilitation and Reintegration, or Victim/Survivor engagement

- What is the current public perception of the police, what are the roots of this perception, and how does it affect the relationship between police and the community they serve?
- Are there particular policies, practices, attitudes, perceived biases, or other behaviors that are commonly associated with the police that could lead to a performance disincentive?
- What types of accountability mechanisms are in place within the police organization that ensures reasonable accountability of individual police personnel such as an effective code of conduct? Can these mechanisms be improved to increase individual and institutional accountability?
- Is it be feasible under current circumstances to expect low echelon police personnel to begin developing partnerships with the community considering recruitment and selections standards, type of training, quality of first-line supervision, and police culture in place, and the limited discretionary authority the police organization has conferred upon them?
- Are there credible local partners available with whom to develop productive relationships in order to further project implementation and is there a sufficient basis upon which to conclude these organizations are qualified and respected in the community?
- Are there specific impediments to building trust between selected partners and the police? If so, what are they and what actions are required to overcome them?

Project Principles:

- Community policing projects should thoughtfully select partners based on the extent to which their organizational goals align with those of the host nation and their historical relationships with the community in which they will be working. A helpful approach is to find support and motivate existing community-based groups who are already active in improving the quality of life in the desired area to become partners with the police thereby increasing their own effectiveness.
- Effective community policing projects are implemented in environments in which the police organization routinely confers rank-and-file police with the necessary discretionary authority to use their individual judgement to determine the best course of action, and interact with and develop relationships with community groups. Effective community policing programs could also be redirected to utilize higher-ranking (commissioned) police officers as the focal point for establishing and working with these groups to identify and solve community problems.
- Relatively few police forces, in particular those in strategically important CVE countries, confer lower echelon personnel with the discretionary authority necessary to implement community policing projects. An organizational shift of the magnitude necessary to establish such a paradigm requires a long-term commitment.

Risks

- Heavily militarized police organizations can pose an obstacle to implementing community policing, as street-level (rank-and-file) police personnel may have very little discretionary authority to act independently of direct supervision. Granting this authority creates a risk that it may be abused and requires proper training and effective first-line supervision. A project designer must consider the tension between empowering low-ranking police to engage more comprehensively with the community and respecting the existing organizational structure.

- Community policing projects can easily be mistaken for intelligence gathering efforts or erroneously be identified as such by individuals wishing to destroy such a program. Therefore, community engagement, project messaging, and close monitoring of community attitudes must be included in the design phase to identify unintended consequences during initial stages of implementation.

Illustrative Activities

- Development of police communication, problem solving, and skills-building
- Formation of legitimate, representational community police advisory councils
- Development of relationships with other governmental service providers and NGOs to serve as resources for solving community problems
- Establishment of a system to capture accurate crime statistics
- Professionalization of human resource practices for merit-based structures
- Creation of environment for open dialogues between citizens and law enforcement
- Review and modification of a police code of conduct, citizen complaint process, and other accountability mechanisms
- Enhancement of media relations capability to build transparency and tell a positive police story
- Awareness campaigns targeting corruption/police conduct
- Anti-corruption efforts
- Human and civil rights protection efforts

Sample Indicators

- Change in the number of citizen-initiated contact with police, generally (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Change in the number of citizen initiated contact with police, specifically to report crimes (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Changes in response time to citizen requests for police (Progress, Low- Outcome)
- Level of trust in local police officers reported by the community (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Changes in level of local crime (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Reported level of physical safety (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Communities' perception of law enforcements' ability to prevent crime (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Change in public perceptions of police effectiveness in assisting in the prosecution of a criminal (Progress, Mid-Outcome)

Civic Education and Participation

Civic education and participation provides a positive framework for a collective civic identity by fostering productive political relationships and by bringing individuals together as citizens motivated by the desire for societal change. This project model can decrease the push toward violent extremism among citizens by increasing community knowledge of peaceful and effective mechanisms for societal change. By doing this, it can also encourage the use of those mechanisms, and ultimately give citizens a voice, thereby decreasing the divide between citizens and their government. Government transparency and trust among officials and community members is vital for encouraging community participation and promoting government credibility. While limited information is available on the use of civic education in CVE, civic education is necessary for communities looking to create legal and lasting changes in their societies.

Questions to Consider

- What type of existing relationship does the government (local and/or national) have with the local community?
- What is the likelihood that corruption will be an obstacle for efforts of civic engagement?
- What is the community's level of understanding of government roles, responsibilities, policies, and practices?
- What is the community's level of understanding of their individual roles and rights as a citizen?
- What is the likelihood that government will actually follow-through with statements made regarding citizen engagement?
- In what ways can project gains be sustained post-project, especially regarding turnover of elected officials?

Project Principles

- Government buy-in for civic education and participation projects is crucial when avoiding risks that can emerge when institutions intended to provide a platform for action do not have sufficient capacity.
- Effective government engagement strategies require long-term resourcing and investment.
- Governments need to foster relationships with community leaders at all levels of society to increase credibility.

Risks

- A government's inability to follow through on commitments will likely further degrade the community's perception of the government.
- If appropriate avenues for social change are corrupt or not functioning, the community's frustration with the government could increase.

Illustrative Activities

- Use media outlets to increase awareness of civic procedures and legal mechanisms for community change.
- Engage students by imparting civic knowledge through active classroom techniques such as discussions or roleplay.

- Offer the community a clear point of contact to open a regular channel of communication and gain information from the government to learn about new projects, initiatives, and policies.
- Create space for community dialogues between communities and government officials.
- Implement service-learning projects that foster a sense of community as individuals work together for the common good.

Sample Indicators

- Level of coordination between each identified group (Progress Indicator, Mid- Outcome)
- Perception of government accountability (Progress Indicator, Mid-Outcome)
- Perception of government sponsored messaging (Progress, Low-Outcome)
- Perception of government responsiveness (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Percentage of participants who advocate for peaceful social change via legal government channels (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Level of participants' understanding of government mechanisms (Progress, Low-Outcome)
- Level of participants understanding of government language/messaging (Progress, Low-Outcome)

Alternative Narratives and Counter-Narratives

Violent extremists are highly active in promoting their cause, justifying their activities, and gaining new recruits through a variety of online, in-person, and media platforms. Common sources of violent extremist messages include: (1) the groups themselves; (2) supporters; and (3) individual fighters. The most powerful content tends to use video rather than text, takes full advantage of the linguistic skills of members, and uses music in the message.¹⁹ Violent extremist groups use a diverse range of supports, including women and men, to spread these messages, suggesting that an equally diverse group must craft a response. Generally, these types of messaging projects fall into three categories: government strategic communications, alternative narratives, and counter-narratives.²⁰ The most common project types used for CVE are alternative and counter narratives. Narrative projects are intended to decrease the pull of violent extremist groups’ propaganda and mitigate the push of relevant, local drivers by providing a range of products that include well-researched counter narratives to positive examples of tolerance and social values.

In designing or reviewing this type of proposal, project managers must be mindful of the Establishment Clause, which requires that that federally funded programs and activities have both a secular purpose and a secular effect (i.e. not a principal or primary effect of advancing religion). This approach requires neutrality, inasmuch as federally funded programs should not promote, endorse, or favor religious beliefs over non-religious beliefs, nor should they disparage religious beliefs in any way. They should not express a judgment with regard to religious and non-religious beliefs, or seek to change the religious and non-religious beliefs of participants. If there are any doubts about these issues, project managers are encouraged to consult the Guidance on Application of the Establishment Clause to Department of State Diplomatic Engagement, Public Diplomacy and Foreign Assistance Programs Overseas in developing these programs and to reach out to the Office of the Legal Adviser, Office of Legislation and Foreign Assistance early in the process to ensure appropriate consideration of potential Establishment Clause concerns.

Table 6: Types of Communication

What	Why	How	Who	Target	Distribution Options
Government Strategic Communications	Action to get the message out about what government is doing, including public awareness activities	Raise awareness, forge relationships with key constituencies and audiences and correct misinformation	Government	Generalized target, interested parties in government activities	Talk radio, street/TV dramas, short message service (SMS), social networks, mapping, crowdsourcing,

¹⁹ Briggs, Rachel and Frenett, Ross. Policy Briefing: Foreign Fighters, the Challenge of Counter-Narratives. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. 2014.

²⁰ Briggs, Rachel. Feve, Sabastian. “A Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism: What works and what are the implications for government?” Institute for Strategic Dialogue. 2013.

Alternative Narratives	Undercut violent extremist narratives by focusing on what we are “for” rather than “against”	Positive story about social values, tolerance, openness, freedom and democracy	Civil society or government	Sympathizers of violent extremist groups, tacit supporters	newspapers, public service announcements
Counter-Narratives	Directly deconstruct, discredit and demystify violent extremist messaging	Challenge through secular ideology, logic, fact, or humor	Civil Society	Individuals, groups, and networks further along the extremist path, active supporters	

Questions to Consider: The Message

- Is the message grounded in change and committed to action?
- Is the message authentic and credible?
- Is the message proactive, flexible, and responsive to current events?
- Does the message target the community’s main drivers of VE?
- Is the message tailored to fit the context and audience?
- Do you have messages that use music and imagery?

Questions to Consider: Message Receiver

- Who is the correct audience for this type of message?
- Does the audience have any preconceived notions about the message sender?
- Are messages reaching those with limited media accessibility or low levels of education?
- Is the audience grasping the intended message?

Questions to Consider: Message Sender

- What is the level of trust between the government and local community?
- Is it possible or sensible to facilitate two-way communication between the two?
- Is the message sender considered trustworthy?
- Is it possible to get an influential person or authority figure to send the message?
- What local partners or community members can be leveraged to assist with message formation?
- Can you find locals with production skills or audience targeting expertise?

Project Principles:

- Messages must use superior arguments but also appeal to the senses by using effective messages and leveraging imagery and music
- Hard-hitting counter-narratives are more successful in planting seeds of doubt in the target group rather than attempting to win the argument
- One-on-one messaging proves ineffective in group-settings, allowing dominant voices to shut down opposing or alternative opinions
- Consider setting up a content review board to review messages before public consumption. Message review boards should be comprised of local citizens of the target population that can reflect the probable response of the greater intended audience

- U.S. government-supported activities and messaging must be consistent with the requirements of the Establishment Clause.

Risks

- The effectiveness of narrative projects against violent extremist messaging is unproven.
- Messages may be perceived differently than intended due to the local context and customs, which can lead to unintended project consequences.

Illustrative Activities

- Online platform creation for dialogue
- Media campaigns
- Social media training
- Communication training
- Technical media content development training
- Training of trainer for communication capacity-building within civil society
- Translation of peace promoting voices into strategic languages
- Translation of ex-combatant media content into strategic languages
- Digital disruptions that block would-be VE actors with extremist content

Sample Indicators

- Perception of the trustworthiness of available information sources (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Level of acceptance of alternative viewpoints (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Number of peace-promoting public voices in the area of implementation (Progress, Low-Outcome)

Intergroup Dialogue

The intergroup dialogue project model is imbedded in decades of research as part of the Contact Hypothesis. This hypothesis posits that hostility between groups is fed by unfamiliarity and separation, and that dialogue between those groups can be effective at reducing animosity and prejudice, and promoting more-positive attitudes. Intergroup dialogue can be used in a preventative context to help foster relationships between groups by facilitating communication and cooperation among leaders, thereby reducing the prevalence of conflict and social intolerance. In the CVE context, increased tolerance produced from these dialogues could decrease push factors toward violent extremism, given the right target group and appropriate application. Project design can scope dialogues at any level of society, from local actors to societal elites. Dialogues should be as inclusive as possible but not every dialogue needs to incorporate every stakeholder. Depending on the context, a phased approach may be most appropriate.

Design Questions to Consider

- What are the community's local priorities and major grievances?
- Can you find a neutral facilitator with training in conflict mediation and with strong contextual knowledge of the local groups and their issues?
- Can you find a neutral space to conduct the intergroup dialogue or conflict mediation?
- Should religious leaders be utilized or consulted in the facilitation of the dialogue?
- Are all groups equally represented and can all voices be heard?

Project Principles

- Before attempting intergroup dialogue, it is critical to understand the drivers of social fragmentation. It is also important to understand how a country's history of group conflict, identity politics, political systems, access to power, and access to resources affects social cohesion.
- Intergroup dialogue facilitation is a unique skillset that must be learned and practiced. The facilitator should be a neutral figure from the community. Before beginning an intergroup dialogue project, the probability of finding such a person should be assessed. Entering into an intergroup dialogue unprepared and with the wrong facilitator can have unintended negative consequences.
- International actors should play minimal to no role in facilitating community-level dialogues.
- State the purpose of the dialogue at the beginning of the discussion. While the overall purpose is social cohesion, narrower objectives may be more achievable and could lead to social cohesion in the end.

Risks

- It may be more important to handle certain local grievances prior to seeking to build social cohesion through intergroup dialogue, as marginalized groups suffering from injustice or unequal access to resources may be less receptive to forming relationships with other, more advantaged, groups.
- Religious leaders should be consulted or utilized so long as their religious identity can be used for relationship building and not the hardening of religious identities. Bringing together people with extreme or inflexible viewpoints may only increase the hardening of

ideas and opinions and those who are likely targets of such activities may decline to participate.

- Community and political elites can sometimes try to dominate the conversation and disregard or trivialize the comments made by minority groups. In some cases, marginalized groups may not feel comfortable airing their grievances in an intergroup dialogue and may want to elect a representative to speak for them.

Illustrative Activities

- Intergroup dialogue is a very specific technique that should be facilitated by experienced experts. However, in a project context it is possible to couple these intergroup dialogues with the following activities:
 - Organize community service activities
 - Interfaith meetings open to the public
 - Awareness campaigns that promote religious/ethnic tolerance
 - Training in conflict prevention and resolution

Sample Indicators

- Percentage of participants who report socially engaging with members of another faith/ethnicity (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Percentage of participants who report willingness to accept members of another faith/ethnicity into their family (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Level of acceptance for interfaith cooperation (Progress, Low-Outcome)
- Number of statements promoting tolerance issued by key leaders to their constituencies (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Level of trust reported between groups (Progress, Mid-Outcome)
- Number of issues resolved through intergroup dialogue (Progress, Low-Outcome)

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B6
B7(F)

Clear: CT/CVE - [REDACTED] - OK
CT/P - [REDACTED] OK
CT/AAEA - [REDACTED] - OK
CT/SCAN - [REDACTED] - INFO
CT/MA - [REDACTED] - OK
J - [REDACTED] - OK
CSO/APPL - [REDACTED] OK
DRL - [REDACTED] - OK
INL - [REDACTED] - OK
R - [REDACTED] - INFO
R/GEC - [REDACTED] - OK
D - [REDACTED] INFO
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S/P - [REDACTED] - INFO
H - [REDACTED] - INFO
F - [REDACTED] - INFO
L - [REDACTED] - OK
AF - [REDACTED] - OK
EAP - [REDACTED] - OK
ECA/P - [REDACTED] - OK
EUR/PPD - [REDACTED] - OK
EUR/PGI - [REDACTED] - OK
NEA/AC - [REDACTED] - OK
NEA/RMA - [REDACTED] - OK
SCA - [REDACTED] - OK
S/SECI - [REDACTED] - INFO
IO - [REDACTED] INFO
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S/GWI - [REDACTED] - OK
USAID/CVE - [REDACTED] - OK
INR - [REDACTED] - OK
A/OPE/PD - [REDACTED] - OK
PA - [REDACTED] - Ok