Food for Peace
Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop
2015

Session 3: M&E Plan

Presented by:

By the end of the session, participants will have …

- **Reviewed** the required components of M&E plans (for Food for Peace awards)
- **Discussed** M&E Plan preparation challenges

Session Outline

- PowerPoint presentation: M&E Plan
- Discussion

Binder Contents

- PowerPoint presentation: M&E Plan

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Food for Peace Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop for FFP Development Food Assistance Projects

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

January 2016
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FANTA III FOOD AND NUTRITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE fhi360

Slide 2

Session Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will have:

1. Reviewed required FFP M&E Plan components
2. Discussed M&E Plan preparation challenges

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Acknowledgments

Special thanks to TOPS for providing many of the concepts and images used in this presentation

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M&E Plan:
Introduction

Requirements

- Submit full-length M&E plan to FFP 60 days after this workshop

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M&E Plan: Introduction

Objectives

- Illustrate how project will measure progress toward/achievements of goals and purposes
- Clarify M&E requirements
- Establish plans for data collection, analysis, use, and quality assurance
- Provide an M&E work plan
- Outline M&E roles, responsibilities, and capacity-strengthening strategies
- Serve as the project's institutional memory for M&E

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

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M&E Plan: Foundational Components

Foundational Components

- Theory of Change
- LogFrame
- IPTT
- PIRS

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

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M&E Plan: Routine Components

Annual/Routine Monitoring

- Annual Monitoring Plan
- Data Quality Assurance, Management, and Safeguard Plan
- M&E Staffing Plan and Capacity Development Strategy

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

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M&E Plan: Routine Components

Annual Monitoring Plan

- Routine monitoring systems
- Beneficiary-based surveys
- Coordination among consortium members
- Complex indicators
- Description of data collection tools
- Data flow diagram
- Beneficiary databases

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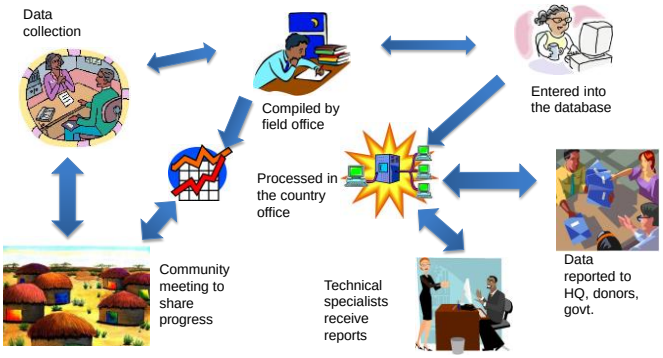
M&E Plan: Routine Components

Annual Monitoring Plan: Data Flow Diagram Example



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M&E Plan: Routine Components

Annual Monitoring Plan: Beneficiary Databases

Examples:

- I-SMART (ACDI/VOCA)
- SAMI and McAID (Save the Children)

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

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M&E Plan: Routine Components

Data Quality Assurance

- **Validity:** Measuring what is intended
- **Reliability:** Data collected using the same methodology gives the same result
- **Timeliness:** Up-to-date data available when needed
- **Precision:** Ability to minimize error (due to data collection instruments)
- **Integrity:** Data free of willful or unconscious errors due to manipulation (human or machine)

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M&E Plan: Routine Components

Data Quality Assessment

- A periodic review of the data collected and reported by the project's M&E system, including consideration of the adequacy of the data quality assurance plan
- Strategically identify 3–5 indicators (7–8 may be too many). Possible selection criteria:
  - Indicators that are complicated to measure
  - Indicators with suspected data quality issues
  - Indicators for project areas that are of high importance

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M&E Plan: Routine Components

Data Management and Safeguards

- Strategies to safeguard beneficiary confidentiality
- Systems to store/maintain original data files/project records
- Database management (backup)
- Database entry procedures
- Data management protocol
- Security protocol
- Data management coordination across partners (for consortium/partnerships)

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M&E Plan: Routine Components

M&E Staffing Plan and Capacity Development Strategy

- Identify all required positions
- Describe roles/responsibilities
- Organogram
- Capacity development strategy

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M&E Plan: Evaluations

Evaluations

- Baseline Studies
- Mid-Term Evaluations
- Final Evaluations

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The M&E Plan is…

A living document…

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

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Discussion (25 minutes)

- Break up by award. Discuss among yourselves (for 15 minutes):
  - Which components of the M&E Plan are most unclear to you? What specific questions do you have about these components?
  - Which components of the M&E Plan will present the biggest challenge to prepare and why?
- Report back to the group (10 minutes).

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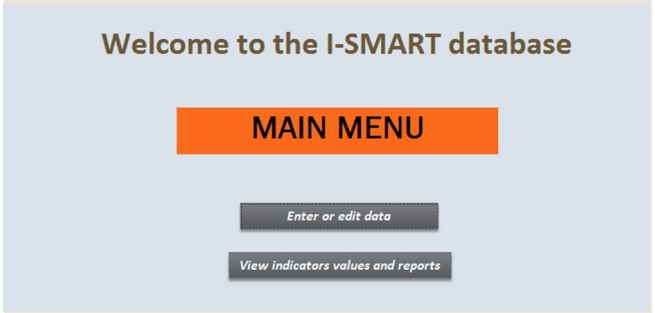
This presentation is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the support of the Office of Health, Infectious Diseases, and Nutrition, Bureau for Global Health; and the Office of Food for Peace, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), under terms of Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-12-00005, through the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA), managed by FHI 360. The contents are the responsibility of FHI 360 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

Background



In 2014, ACDI/VOCA developed I-SMART, a user-friendly, cost-effective management information system (MIS) tool capable of supporting Title II / DFAP program management and reporting. The tool, which uses MagPi and Microsoft Access software, is designed to easily capture information and create unique identifiers at all levels, including individual and household levels. The unique identifier allows a program to ensure accurate reporting in terms of beneficiary numbers and households reached. It also facilitates analysis of food security impact indicators by type of beneficiaries and intervention. The system can generate reports disaggregated by gender, age, and location. In addition, it can report information on commodities distribution.

Contact

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Information System for Management, Analysis & Reporting Timeliness (I-SMART) Version 2.0

TOPS
Promoting excellence in food security programming

ACDI VOCA
Expanding Opportunities Worldwide

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ACDI/VOCA Presents I-SMART Database and MagPi Data Collection Technologies

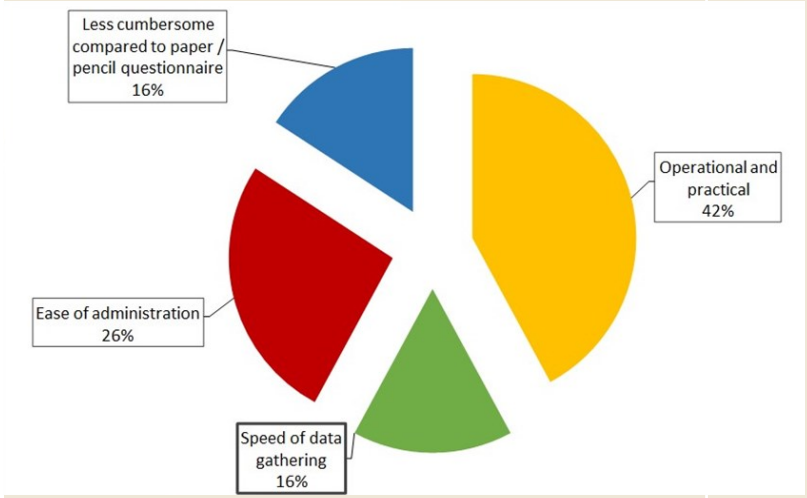
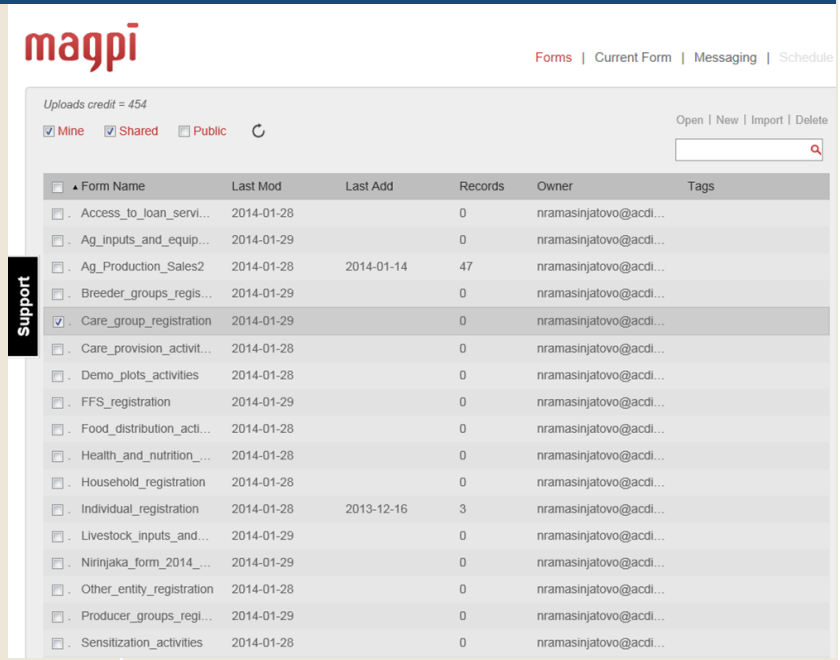
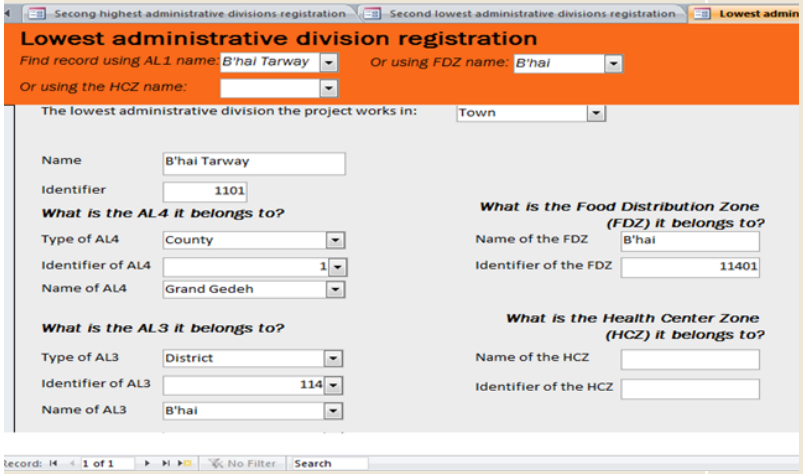


Chart: The Benefits of Smartphones

At the end of I-SMART Version 1.0 in 2014, ACDI/VOCA held a dissemination workshop in Washington, D.C., where it demonstrated how the I-SMART technology worked by utilizing smartphones for data collection and the MS Access database for data storage and analysis. The database and its user manual were shared with the general FFP community via the FSN network. Also, the food security community provided useful feedback to improve the database, such as focusing more on distinguishing categories of beneficiaries (i.e., pregnant, lactating women, and child). After the workshop, the greater food security community was invited to participate in a working group on the TOPS Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Network to update I-SMART.





Proposed coding

XX XX XX XX XX XX

|___| District

|_____| Chiefdom

|_____| Section

|_____| Communities

|_____| Household beneficiary

|_____| Individual Beneficiary

As a result, I-SMART 2.0 was conceived to refine the I-SMART tool more broadly. The enhanced tool was field-tested in three sites by partners PVOs: Save the Children in Zimbabwe (emergency), OIC International in Liberia (Title II), and ACDI/VOCA in Burkina Faso (Title II). I-SMART Version 2.0 was highly rated on efficiency, user-friendliness, accuracy (fewer errors), real-time data availability to all with database access, language capabilities, and the ability to capture disaggregated data. However, there are a few limitations, including that it was designed to work with MS Access 2010 and not earlier or later versions and needs to be centralized to avoid operating parallel versions of the database.

Overview

Save the Children identified the need for a systematic tool that would facilitate collection, validation, management, reporting, and analysis of timely, reliable data during implementation.

The tool, developed in Winforms and ASP.NET, runs on Microsoft software platforms and server with Google Maps interface. The tool is installed on each program staff member's computer with data entry forms in Spanish. When connected, data syncs with the web application that rolls up data for management, analysis and reporting per location, intervention, timeframe, population demographics, etc.

Using SDK biometric fingerprint recognition or other unique identifiers (like photos and government issued ids), an individual and household is easily located in the system files, facilitating real-time access to data, for example, on children's growth patterns, allowing the system to alert staff to provide on-the-spot guidance (See alert below). The system is also key in the distribution of food rations, ensuring the food reaches the right individuals.

Overall the system assures the reliability and integrity of the data reported on number of individuals and households reached and facilitates analysis of food security impact indicators by type of interventions.

COLOR CODED ALERT SCREEN

Background

In August 2012, USAID Food for Peace awarded cooperative agreement No. AID-FFP-A-12-00007 to Save the Children in partnership with Project Concern International to implement the six year program PAISANO. The program serves 198 communities in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. PAISANO focuses on increasing household access to food, reducing malnutrition of children under five years of age, and improving community resilience.

Contact

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or
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This monitoring information system has been made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Save the Children and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Sistema Automatizado de Monitoreo de Información

An Automated
Monitoring Information System

Save the Children

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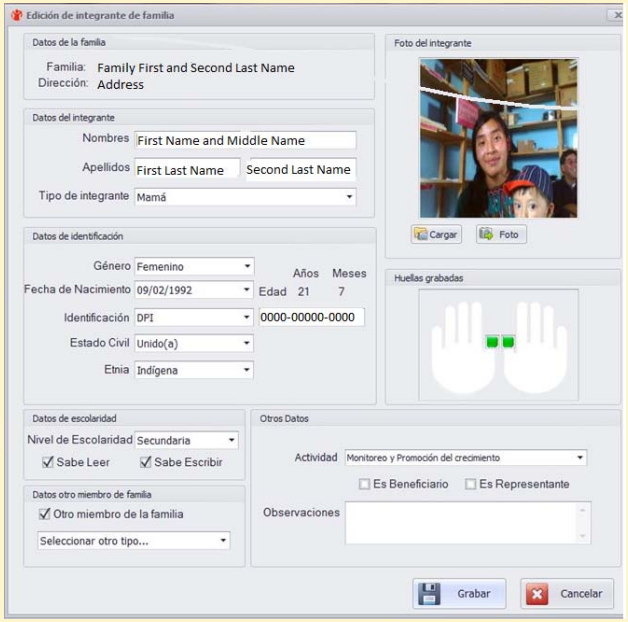
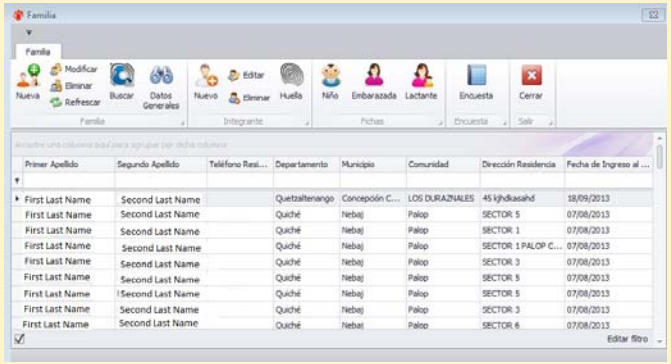
Save the Children presents SAMI Personal Computer and Web Applications

Staff collect household registration data along with fingerprints and photo

Individual participant data monitored per activity



Personal computer database entries store data on all services provided: ration, weight measurement, seeds distributed, livelihood interventions, health controls, and community risk mapping exercises, etc.

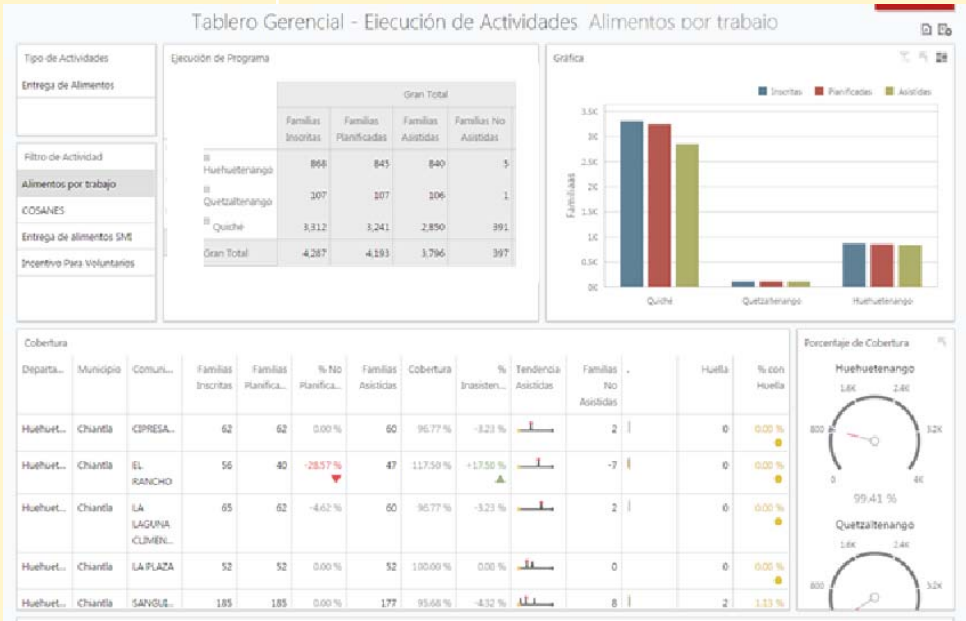


Personal computer database entries sync with web app when connected. This web app enables storage in the cloud of files, photos, and video and allows surveys, data, and tasks to be deployed to field staff computers.

SAMI web application screen shot (above) displays reach summary data and geographic location points of all registered households in the program, which can be filtered on the left menu per location, activity intervention, and timeframe for analysis and reporting.

SAMI web application screen shot (right) displays dash-board of activity implementa-tion progress (*here Food for Work activities shown*) for management to analyze and improve implementation.

Other reporting functions are enabled in the web app to fa-cilitate analysis and reporting to USAID per the Detailed Implementation Plan and the Indicator Performance Tracking Table.



Planning for a Management Information System (MIS)

An MIS is a computerized database of financial, administrative and programmatic information organized and programmed in such a way that it produces regular reports on operations for every level of management in an organization. The main purpose of the MIS is to give managers feedback about their own performance; top management can monitor the organization as a whole. Information displayed by the MIS typically shows "actual" data over against "planned" results and results from a year before; thus it measures progress against goals.

Below is a list of steps to follow when planning to adopt an MIS.

1. Define Outcomes

Investments in management information systems can help strengthen your project/organization, but there are limited resources. Make a clear articulated case to secure funding and prioritize the effort.

- Identify tangible benefits that an MIS will bring to your organization
- Define the scope of the MIS (organizational level, regional level, country level)
- Develop measurements to assess whether MIS is successful

2. Form your team

The successful implementation of an MIS requires a combination of people and technology.

- Determine resources and skills needed for each of the three phases of an MIS (develop, scale, and sustain)

3. Define what your system needs to do

Documenting system requirements and communicating them well is a crucial. Lack of understanding between the future users of a system and the people who design it is one of the main causes of frustration, delays and cost overruns in IT projects.

- Conduct a self-inventory to map out what information systems and reporting relationships already exist
- Develop shared measures and outcomes (if they don't exist already)
- Establish common benchmarks, and harmonize reporting requirements
- Describe high-level business requirements and how key types of individuals (e.g. managers, directors, auditors, donors) will use the MIS data.
- Determine technical requirements for your specific context. E.g., if electricity and/or Internet connectivity is a problem in your context, plan for:
    - Offline data entry
    - Automatic transmission of data to a central database when communication networks are available
- Identify how newly computerized processes link to retained manual and paper-based processes

4. Find the right solution

There is a range of potential solutions depending on your resources and needs. This includes buying or building your system, selecting open-source or proprietary systems.

- Identify the best system for your organization depending on your resources and expected use. Software models can range from custom-developed software (i.e. build a software system from scratch) to Software as a service (SaaS) (i.e. a database and application hosted on remote servers, and software is sold (or offered freely) as a service that can be contracted per user and per month or year).
- SaaS applications are particularly useful because they:
    - Eliminate need to invest in local servers
    - Eliminate need for in-house IT staff
    - Incorporate on-demand training and support
    - Often incorporate a pay by the drink cost model (obviate large up front investments)
    - Easier to transfer to local institutions

5. Select the right vendors

Asking the right questions when selecting a vendor will help you select the best vendor for your needs.

- Evaluate the merit of each proposal
- Evaluate the cost of each proposal and select a vendor
- Make a contract or memorandum of understanding

6. Estimate implementation and operating costs

Estimate project cost for pilot, scale up, and maintenance

- **Pilot**: the functional, technical, and organizational complexity of the project drives costs. Costs do not vary significantly for a large or a small country.
- **Scale**: the number of future users and the cost per user to deploy it are the most important variables. The cost per user depends on the way in which users will access the system (for example, desktop computer, mobile phone, paper) and their training needs.
- **Sustain**: Apart from the number of users, the selected technology is critical here. For example, any solution that requires local software installation and maintenance will be more expensive than a centralized system, such as a web-based or cloud system.

7. Create an implementation plan

Develop an implementation plan for the MIS development, pilot, and scale up.

- Define work plan for development, pilot. and scale up. Don't forget to include training of MIS users.
- Track milestones

8. Understand and manage project risks

The seven steps above should lower project risk by aligning requirements to organizational objectives, understanding costs, planning appropriately, and choosing the right vendors. In addition, consider the following type of risks below.

- **Lack of governance:** Many cite lack of leadership buy-in as the most important factor for project failure.
- **Poor management:** The management team lacks the technical capacity or the organizational authority to provide the project the stability it needs.
- **Development risk:** Relates to changing user requirements and a misunderstanding of the technology that is being used.
- **Deployment risk:** Stems from a failure to manage the changes that will affect the organization because of the new information system.
- **Operational risk:** Arises when the organization is not ready to support newly introduced technologies over the longer term.

Adapted from:

- *2013, Planning an information systems project, WHO, PATH. Available at http://www.path.org/publications/files/TS_opt_ict_toolkit.pdf*
- *MID Readiness Checklist. National League of Cities. Available at http://goo.gl/74YyiI*
- *2015, TechChange, Technologies for Monitoring and Evaluation course.*