



Simplified Approval Process

Annex 2C: Monitoring Evaluation Assessment and Learning (MEAL) Plan

WATER_ RES Enhancing the ability to address the risks of water scarcity in areas most affected by climate change and water shortage in Syria

Acted, Syria, April 6, 2026

Acted MEAL Plan

1. Monitoring Approach

Acted uses its own standardized and custom monitoring tools, approaches and procedures in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality & Accountability. Acted's comprehensive project monitoring platform in Syria is managed and implemented by the Acted Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) department, which has dedicated MEAL staff in each of Acted Syria's bases and a MEAL Capital Office in Damascus, led by the Country MEAL Manager. Acted's global MEAL tools and approaches will be appropriately adapted to the specific operational contexts in Syria. The MEAL Unit will provide robust monitoring coverage of Acted's programming during implementation over the life of the project.

Acted uses a multi-layered results-based management approach that will ensure that progress and lessons are continually fed back into implementation to improve project management and implementation and to provide critical support for Project Management decision-making. In addition to the arrangements set out in the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA), the project will apply project-specific monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements designed to track progress against the logical framework, assess climate results, monitor implementation quality, and support adaptive management throughout the project cycle.

The project monitoring and reporting system will be structured around: (i) baseline, midline and endline measurements for selected outcome and output indicators; (ii) routine results-based monitoring of implementation progress and climate results; (iii) participatory monitoring, reflection and learning processes at institutional, community and farmer levels; (iv) annual progress reporting; and (v) independent external evaluations at mid-term and project completion. Monitoring data will be collected through household surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), on-site monitoring, administrative and technical records, pre- and post-tests where relevant, and participatory monitoring tools such as governance scorecards, reflection sessions and site inspection reports. Where relevant, pre- and post-tests will be used to assess changes in knowledge and capacity resulting from training and technical support activities.

The system will also include annual assessments led by the MEAL Unit to review progress against outcome and output indicators, assess implementation quality, and inform adaptive management. A participatory approach will be applied throughout implementation to institutionalise stakeholder feedback, joint reflection, and adaptive decision-making within local governance, community, and technical structures.

Project Management

Acted's MEAL Unit will ensure close collaboration and coordination with the Project Management Unit team. The MEAL Unit will align the design of the Project Work Plan with the Project Management Framework (PMF) tool to plan and monitor implementation activities on a weekly basis and to enable the Country Management Team, the Country MEAL Manager, and Project



Manager(s) to assess progress and highlight blocking points early. Quality of implementation, progress, and challenges faced will be reported during weekly coordination meetings held at field level and escalated to appropriate channels. For this project, the PMF will also be used to track implementation of the Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP), the Gender Action Plan (GAP), and other cross-cutting commitments relevant to delivery of the project's climate resilience outcomes.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning

The MEAL Unit will provide a comprehensive and coordinated set of monitoring tools and approaches covering Acted's programming and activities. The MEAL Unit is independent from the project teams and reports directly to the Country MEAL Manager. The MEAL Unit is dedicated to improving the relevance, quality and accountability of Acted's programs by ensuring that project monitoring and reporting are responsive to all assigned indicators. Acted also utilizes the MEAL Unit as a functional learning instrument to extract and organize key findings and relevant information and experience from both the MEAL Unit and Project Management teams.

The Acted Country MEAL Manager will oversee all aspects of project monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning to ensure coherence between project activities and reporting on indicators. The MEAL Unit will ensure that tools and methodological approaches are harmonized across monitoring activities in the geographical areas of intervention. MEAL Unit team members will ensure that project data is collected, cross-checked, consolidated, analysed, reported on, and shared on an ongoing basis according to the PMF and work plans. Under the direction of the Country MEAL Manager, MEAL Officers will directly implement monitoring tools themselves or supervise trained enumerators to capture data and information on the technical aspects and results of interventions.

The monitoring and reporting system will be used to assess the climate results of the project by tracking progress against climate-relevant outcome and output indicators in the logical framework, including changes in institutional capacity for climate-resilient water management, improvements in access to climate-resilient water services and infrastructure, uptake of climate-resilient agricultural practices, and the functioning of data, governance, and accountability systems established under the project. Quantitative indicator tracking will be complemented by qualitative analysis from KIIs, FGDs, reflection sessions, and participatory monitoring processes to assess behavioural change, institutional performance, local ownership, and emerging adaptation benefits.

Core MEAL Unit staff will ensure coordination among MEAL officers in providing critical monitoring for project activities, but will also be primarily responsible for producing tailored Open Data Kit (ODK) tools through Kobo e-survey and database platforms. They will also be responsible for producing analysis for narrative reports, monitoring checklists, and case management under the Acted Feedback Mechanism (AFM), which provides a functional oversight tool allowing beneficiaries to directly contact Acted regarding feedback, complaints, or reports of irregularities, fraud, waste, abuse or sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) encountered in relation to programmatic activities.



Activity monitoring will occur throughout project implementation and will be aligned with the PMF, work plans and timeline, with a focus on managing risks in the achievement of programming objectives. The MEAL Unit activities for beneficiary registration and verification will assist in providing assurance that selection is inclusive and reaches the most vulnerable within targeted communities. The MEAL Unit will also produce various analyses assessing programmatic quality within routine reporting cycles. The project will leverage Acted global MEAL tools and approaches in order to effectively monitor and verify information. A comprehensive MEAL Framework will provide an outline of planned MEAL activities relative to the applied indicators. The MEAL Unit will be responsible for indicator measurement and tracking during project implementation. Project activities will be monitored extensively through MEAL data collection activities. Data for specific activities and tools such as the AFM will be consolidated across all locations in order to enable a holistic view of program performance.

Monitoring of Gender Integration and Gender Mainstreaming

Gender-specific data will be captured and disaggregated for key project indicators during monitoring activities and the analysis of program data, providing insight into potential gender biases in the uptake or effect of the different programming modalities. Recognising gaps in quantitative baseline data, Year 1 will include a dedicated Gender and PSEAH baseline assessment integrated into the overall project baseline and workplan. This assessment will establish disaggregated baselines on women's participation in governance and project activities, empowerment and workload indicators, perceptions of women's participation, and SEAH risks and referral pathways. Based on the findings, GAP indicators and targets will be validated and adjusted as needed. The exercise will be led by the Gender and Safeguarding Specialist in collaboration with the MEAL Unit and implemented under existing MEAL and safeguarding budget allocations, ensuring alignment with GCF requirements.

In addition, the MEAL Unit will undertake targeted stakeholder consultations during the inception phase to address inclusion gaps. As part of the project's broader monitoring and adaptive management approach, these consultations will help validate baseline assumptions, identify representation gaps, refine baseline understanding, and ensure that the perspectives of underrepresented groups are reflected in project implementation, the Gender Action Plan, and, where relevant, the validation and adjustment of logframe indicators and targets. These consultations will map and engage community-based organisations (CBOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), women-led CSOs/WLOs, disability-focused organisations, and other relevant intermediaries representing persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups. At national level, targeted consultations with women-led CSOs/WLOs will complement institutional consultations to ensure broader gender and inclusion perspectives are reflected in national policy and governance processes. Where direct engagement is constrained by contextual sensitivities, perspectives will be captured through trusted representative bodies or intermediaries. Findings from these consultations will inform updates to the Gender Action Plan and, where relevant, validation and adjustment of logframe indicators and targets. During implementation, women-led CSOs/WLOs will also be engaged in national governance, advisory and knowledge-sharing processes under Outputs 1.2, 1.3 and 3.1.



The AFM will also track gender-disaggregated data related to complaints received and will provide a minimal level of trend analysis where certain disparities in the delivery of critical programming modalities emerge, particularly regarding safeguarding and protection through the identification of sensitive complaints involving SEA or SGBV.

Data Management and Processing

The MEAL Unit is bolstered by a Database Officer who will assist with the management of information flows, data cleaning, and analysis. The Officer will ensure that project data and information are collected and collated within standardised MEAL data management tools and platforms. Data and information will be consolidated at the national level within Acted Mission Offices. The MEAL Unit will ensure that information, AFM and reporting continually feed back into project management decision-making, increasing the flexibility and adaptability of programmatic approaches and interventions.

Monitoring data will be consolidated in a central project database and used to generate periodic internal dashboards, indicator tracking sheets, annual progress reports, and inputs to GCF reporting requirements, including Annual Performance Reports (APRs). The system will allow for regular comparison of baseline, midline, and endline values, disaggregated analysis by sex, age and vulnerability status, and triangulation between quantitative findings, qualitative evidence and administrative records.

Finance, Logistics, Administration and Transparency (FLAT)

Acted's internal compliance departments will provide a final level of control, ensuring compliance with internal and external procedures and internal audit. In accordance with Acted's Standard Financial Procedures, an accounting system called SAGA will be used to track all expenditures and ensure frequent and robust monitoring of program expenditures. With support from Acted's Country Finance Department, Compliance Officers will monitor logistics and other compliance processes through quality checks for contracts of a certain size, thus ensuring high quality and compliant materials are transparently sourced and used. Acted's Standard Procurement Guidelines will be applied.

Project and Programmatic Learning

In order to continue the practice of improving programming from lessons learned and to ensure a robust humanitarian response, Acted will conduct learning sessions with relevant stakeholders. Acted will also rely on established coordination structures to share information and will continue to facilitate a collaborative, flexible environment that promotes timely communication amongst relevant actors.

One structured learning session will be conducted annually, accompanied by the production and dissemination of learning briefs to capture and share key insights and lessons learned. Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning approaches will be integrated across institutional, community, and farmer levels. Monitoring findings will be reviewed through structured joint reflection sessions involving Water User Associations, farmer associations, community structures, and national institutions to identify what is functioning effectively and where adjustments are required. This participatory approach will ensure that monitoring findings are not



only collected from communities and local institutions, but are also jointly reviewed with them to validate results, identify gaps, and inform implementation adjustments. Documented feedback and adaptive decisions will be incorporated into planning cycles, operational procedures, and technical prioritisation, ensuring that monitoring results directly inform implementation adjustments and strengthen local ownership of project outcomes.

2. Baseline, Results-Based Monitoring and Annual Progress Monitoring

Baseline data will be collected by the MEAL Unit at the outset of implementation through household-level surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Baseline data will then be compared to midline and endline assessments to assess change over time in behaviours, practices, institutional capacities, and climate resilience results attributable to the project. Baseline data will be disaggregated by sex, age, and vulnerability status to ensure inclusive representation.

Results-based monitoring will consist of regular follow-up of outcome and output indicators in the logical framework to ensure the project remains on track and to adapt activities and methodologies depending on implementation experience and contextual developments. The Programme team will update results regularly, while the MEAL Unit will complement this process through periodic field monitoring, including On-Site Monitoring (OSM), household surveys, FGDs, KIs, pre- and post-tests where relevant, and participatory monitoring tools. Monitoring and evaluation data will be collected, analysed and reported on a bi-annual and annual basis to inform project progress reporting and support evidence-based recommendations for improved implementation.

Annual progress monitoring will combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. Household-level surveys will generate quantitative evidence of change, while KIs with community leaders, local authorities and institutional stakeholders, as well as FGDs with women, youth, farmers and other relevant groups, will provide qualitative evidence on lived experience, barriers, unintended outcomes, and perceptions of change. Success stories and case studies will also be documented annually to capture lived experience and illustrate causal change attributable to the project, including intended and unintended outcomes, and to demonstrate how project interventions contribute to resilience outcomes and paradigm shift potential.

3. Interim and Final Evaluations

The project will commission an external mid-term evaluation and a final external evaluation before the end of the project. The evaluations will be carried out by teams of external independent experts at mid-term in Year 3 and at the final stage in Year 5. The evaluations will assess project performance against its intended paradigm shift, outcomes and outputs, climate results, implementation effectiveness, and sustainability.

Acted will apply the six evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for these evaluations and will also follow the guidelines and criteria of the GCF Evaluation Policy. The mid-term evaluation



will primarily serve as an interim learning and accountability exercise, assessing implementation progress, effectiveness, early outcomes, risks, assumptions, and any corrective measures required for the remaining implementation period. The final evaluation will assess the overall performance and results of the project, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, contribution to climate resilience, paradigm shift potential, and lessons for future programming.

In addition to these external evaluations, Acted will carry out internal interim reviews through annual progress monitoring, periodic reflection sessions, and routine analysis of monitoring findings, beneficiary feedback, and implementation data. These internal reviews will support adaptive management and timely adjustments throughout implementation.

3. Reporting Structure and Relationships

Acted, as the Accredited Entity (AE), will be responsible for overall project oversight, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and for ensuring compliance with GCF requirements, including APR submission and reporting under the Accreditation Master Agreement. The AE will consolidate monitoring data, implementation progress, evaluation findings, and financial information for reporting to the GCF.

Acted will maintain regular reporting relationships with the National Designated Authority (NDA)/Focal Point and will share key project progress updates, annual performance information, major evaluation findings, and relevant strategic issues in accordance with national coordination arrangements and GCF requirements.

Where relevant, Executing Entities (EEs) and implementing partners will report to the AE on progress against agreed workplans, budgets, safeguards, gender commitments, and project indicators. This will include periodic narrative and quantitative reporting, submission of activity and financial updates, participation in coordination and review meetings, and provision of evidence and supporting documentation required for AE consolidation and reporting. The AE will review, validate and consolidate information received from EEs and ensure that any reporting obligations from the EE to the AE are clearly defined in implementation agreements and reflected in routine project management procedures.

At project level, reporting relationships between the MEAL Unit, Programme team, PMU, senior management, and technical specialists will ensure that monitoring findings are reviewed regularly and translated into management decisions. Key findings will be discussed in monthly coordination meetings and escalated as needed through appropriate management and governance channels.

4. Accountability to affected populations

Accountability is one of Acted's organizational principles. Acted is striving to meet the highest quality in its humanitarian and development projects and seeks to work with affected communities and populations in the best way possible, in an open and responsible way which builds trust and respect.



Ensuring accountability to affected populations is thus at the core of Acted's programming. Acted's approach is aligned with the IASC's Five Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations: leadership/governance; transparency; feedback and complaints; participation; design, monitoring and evaluation.

Acted is committed to establish and maintain a system that gives beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries the possibility to formulate comments, suggestions, compliments or complaints on its work, as well as the work of Acted contractors. The Acted Feedback Mechanism (AFM) ensures this can be done in a secure, appropriate and accessible way, and that complainants receive a timely response. Multiple communication channels may be used, including WhatsApp, complaint boxes, complaint desks, email and direct engagement with Acted project or MEAL staff in the field.

The AFM will also form part of the project monitoring and reporting system by providing real-time feedback on access, inclusion, quality of implementation, accountability, safeguarding and unintended effects. AFM findings will be analysed periodically and integrated into adaptive management, annual reporting, and learning processes.

Complaints will be recorded confidentially in COMPFU under restricted access and classified according to Acted's five sensitivity levels. The longest response time for any complaint to be addressed and a response to be made to the complainant is 15 working days, as per international standards. Follow-up documentation, status and corrective measures for each complaint will be recorded in COMPFU and reviewed regularly.

5. Learning

Acted ensures that information collected through monitoring and evaluation processes is systematically used to inform programmatic decisions and strengthen project implementation. A structured learning cycle is applied throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that monitoring findings, beneficiary feedback, and operational observations contribute to continuous improvement.

At the start of each project, cross-departmental kick-off meetings are organized to review key lessons learned from previous interventions. These discussions allow program, MEAL, and support teams to integrate relevant findings and recommendations into the design and implementation of new projects.

During project implementation, monitoring findings, including results from beneficiary verification, on-site monitoring, baseline, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), pre and post tests, endline assessments, and feedback received through Acted's Accountability and Feedback Mechanism (AFM), are regularly shared with project management teams through internal reporting and coordination meetings. These findings support adaptive management by helping identify operational challenges, improve targeting processes, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and enhance the quality and accessibility of assistance.



At the mission level, Acted's Whole of Syria mission has established a structured learning strategy to ensure that insights generated through MEAL activities directly inform both current implementation and future programming. Lessons learned are systematically collected throughout the project lifecycle, from implementation to project closure, through monitoring reports, coordination meetings, and staff feedback.

These insights are documented in a centralized Sectorial Learnings Database and Dashboard, where lessons are categorized by project, sector, and department. Lessons are validated by senior management and classified as either project-specific lessons or organization-wide learning points, ensuring that operational improvements can be applied both at the project level and across the broader mission.

To ensure effective documentation and participation across teams, each project maintains an online learning document that is shared with Area Coordinators, Project Coordinators, and relevant support departments. Inputs from these teams are consolidated and integrated into the centralized learning dashboard, which is regularly used to inform internal planning processes, coordination meetings, and donor reporting.

Acted also promotes transparency and collaboration by engaging donors in the learning process. Validated lessons learned and relevant summaries may also be shared with the NDA/Focal Point, GCF, and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to strengthen dialogue, support evidence-based programming, and ensure that future interventions are informed by implementation experience.

Through this structured data utilization and learning approach, Acted ensures that monitoring findings are translated into actionable improvements, contributing to a continuous cycle of learning, adaptive management, and strengthened humanitarian response in Syria.

6. Data Management

The MEAL Unit will ensure the quality and reliability of data collected throughout the project through a combination of routine monitoring and formal data verification processes. Informal data quality assurance includes regular reviews of monitoring data by the Project Manager and MEAL team as part of project oversight and reporting. This includes identifying inconsistencies, addressing discrepancies, and ensuring that monitoring findings are aligned with project activities.

Formal data quality assurance processes will also be conducted by the MEAL Unit through verification exercises with a sample of selected beneficiaries to confirm that targeting criteria were correctly applied during the beneficiary selection process and that assistance reaches the intended vulnerable households.

To minimize errors and improve efficiency during data collection, electronic data collection tools will be used. Monitoring tools will be programmed into smartphones using Kobo-based applications, enabling enumerators or MEAL staff to directly enter data during beneficiary interviews and monitoring visits. Where enumerators are deployed, they will be trained and supervised by MEAL staff to ensure that data collection methodologies, sampling procedures, and



ethical standards are correctly applied. MEAL Officers will oversee data collection processes and conduct preliminary data checks and cleaning following each monitoring activity.

A Database Officer will play a key role in managing and maintaining project data. The Database Officer will be responsible for consolidating datasets, conducting additional data cleaning and validation checks, and supporting data analysis. All monitoring data and reports, including beneficiary verification data, on-site monitoring reports, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) datasets, and endline assessment results, will be systematically stored and organized within Acted's Management Information System (MIS). This centralized database system ensures that datasets remain well-structured, accessible for analysis, and securely archived throughout the project cycle.

The project M&E system is based on Acted's MEAL Handbook, Acted Syria internal MEAL tools and database templates, the project logical framework, relevant procedures of national project partners, and GCF Annual Performance Report requirements.

Aggregated and anonymized monitoring data and reports may be shared with OCHA upon request, ensuring transparency and facilitating coordination and donor oversight, while strictly protecting any personally identifiable information.

Acted teams play an important role in project cycle management by collecting, analyzing, storing, and sharing information related to the populations served by the project. Given the sensitive nature of this information, Acted is committed to ensuring strict protection of personally identifiable information (PII). Access to beneficiary databases will be restricted to authorized staff only and used exclusively for project implementation and monitoring purposes.

In accordance with Acted's Data Protection Policy, all staff, both national and international, are bound by strict confidentiality obligations under Acted's Code of Conduct and Human Resources policies. Acted also recognizes that data breaches may occur despite preventive measures. For this reason, all staff are required to immediately report any suspected or confirmed breach of privacy or data protection to their line manager and the Country Director. To strengthen responsible data management practices, Acted staff regularly receive training and sensitization on secure data handling, ethical data collection, and the use of secure communication channels.

7. Monitoring Limitations and Mitigation measures

The following limitations and mitigation measures have been identified with respect to the project monitoring plan:

Limitations	Mitigation
Access and security constraints. The evolving security context and administrative access constraints in certain areas of Syria may occasionally limit the ability of monitoring teams to conduct in-person data collection or field visits. These constraints may affect the timing or methodology of monitoring activities.	Acted's monitoring methodologies will remain flexible and adaptive to the context. Where physical access is constrained, the MEAL Unit may conduct remote monitoring through phone-based interviews with beneficiaries while maintaining data quality and confidentiality standards. Throughout implementation, Acted's security management system continuously monitors the context in

	coordination with field-level teams to ensure staff safety and continuity of program activities. Acted also coordinates with local actors, NGOs, UN agencies, and community leaders to better understand and anticipate operational risks.
Population mobility and displacement dynamics. Beneficiary households may relocate temporarily or permanently due to changing security conditions, livelihood needs, or displacement dynamics, which may limit their availability during monitoring surveys.	The MEAL Unit will account for potential non-response by slightly oversampling during surveys where necessary. When beneficiaries are not available for in-person interviews, phone-based follow-ups may be conducted when feasible to maintain representative monitoring data.
Respondent bias during interviews. Data collection processes, particularly household surveys, may be influenced by respondents' expectations regarding humanitarian assistance or perceptions that their responses may affect eligibility for future assistance.	Enumerators will clearly explain the purpose of the data collection and emphasize that responses will not influence eligibility for assistance. Standardized questionnaires will be used, and responses will be triangulated with program records, monitoring observations, and other available data sources where possible.
Limited availability of reliable secondary data. In some areas, the lack of recent demographic or contextual data may limit the ability to fully contextualize monitoring findings or conduct comparative analysis.	Acted will triangulate information from multiple sources, including program records, monitoring findings, coordination mechanisms, and information shared by humanitarian partners and local stakeholders, in order to strengthen the accuracy and interpretation of monitoring results.
Potential under-representation of vulnerable and marginalised groups in consultations and monitoring processes	The project will undertake targeted inception-phase consultations and ensure disaggregated data collection, inclusive sampling approaches, and ongoing monitoring of participation in order to identify and address representation gaps during implementation.

8. Staffing and Budget

The MEAL budget includes both personnel and operational costs required to implement monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning activities throughout the project. Staff involved include the Country MEAL Manager, Country MEAL Specialist, Area MEAL Senior Officers, Area MEAL Officers, Area MEAL Assistants, Area MEAL Enumerators, MIS Officer, Accountability Officer, and Accountability Assistants/Clerks.

In addition to staffing costs, the MEAL budget covers key activities including beneficiary verification, on-site monitoring, baseline, pre- and post-tests, post-distribution monitoring (PDM), midline reviews where relevant, and endline assessments. Operational costs include enumerator recruitment, training, transportation, vehicle hire, and accountability-related communication materials and awareness activities.

The dedicated Gender and PSEAH baseline assessment in Year 1 will be implemented under existing MEAL and safeguarding budget allocations, in coordination with the Gender and Safeguarding Specialist, and will not require a separate budget line. External mid-term and final evaluations will be budgeted as independent evaluation exercises in line with GCF requirements.



Adequate resources have been allocated to support the effective implementation of MEAL activities across all project locations. Gender-sensitive approaches are integrated into MEAL activities, and field monitoring exercises will, where possible, include female MEAL staff or enumerators to facilitate participation of women beneficiaries. The Protection Technical Coordinator will provide guidance to the MEAL team on the integration of gender-sensitive questions and analysis within monitoring tools, and the dedicated Protection Unit will manage any protection or GBV cases identified during MEAL activities.