

Learns is Learning

Quarterly Review of Progress

USAID Learns

Monitoring, Evaluation,
Collaborating, Learning
& Adapting

January -
March 2021

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Photo: USAID Learns organized the quarterly Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Officers (MELO) Event for officers from USAID-funded activities in the South of Vietnam. March 2021/Ho Chi Minh City

Our Why.

About USAID Learns



We exist to help USAID/Vietnam achieve better development results.

To effectively implement the USAID/Vietnam Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2020-2025, the Mission has contracted an institutional support mechanism, USAID Learns, to act as a force multiplier for the Mission and over 40 activities. USAID Learns staff and consultants provide ongoing technical assistance in Program Cycle processes: strategy, project design, and implementation; activity design and implementation; monitoring; research and evaluation; collaborating, learning & adapting (CLA); and building the capacity of USAID and partners in said processes.

The ultimate 'why' of USAID Learns is to contribute to more sustainable and locally-owned development results in USAID's programming. Our team does this by:



Advancing evidence-informed decision-making



Strengthening collaboration between USAID, Implementing Partners (IPs), and local stakeholders



Improving staff knowledge and skills in monitoring, research and evaluation, and CLA



**ADDITIONAL
RESOURCE**

For more information on USAID Learns' services and who to contact if you need support, please [click here](#).

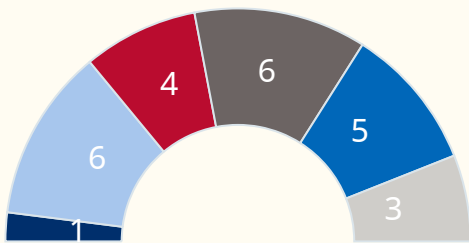
Our Key Accomplishments by the Data







51 Program Cycle services

completed on behalf of USAID, cumulative for Q1 and Q2 of fiscal year (FY) 2021

Program Cycle services completed this past quarter ranged from support on data quality assessments (DQAs) and activity monitoring, evaluation & learning plans (AMELPs) to capacity building sessions, data management and use, conducting research, and facilitating collaborative Pause & Reflect events.

Types of services Learns has provided in the second quarter of FY21

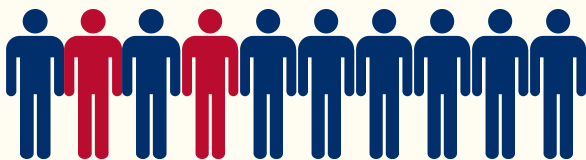


 Capacity Building	4%	 Monitoring Plans	24%
 DQA	16%	 Data Management	24%
 Research & Evaluation	20%	 Pause & Reflect	12%



Word cloud: 35 survey respondents tell Learns three words that best describe their recent experience with the contract. The larger words are the most frequent. 100% of the words used by survey respondents were positive.

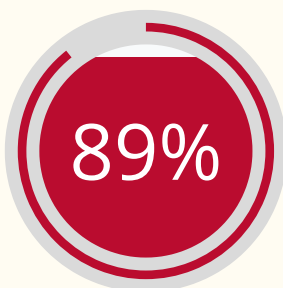
USAID Learns surveyed USAID and IP staff on the quality of services provided. Results include:



8 out of 10 respondents said they would **highly recommend** USAID Learns to a colleague



10 out of 10 respondents said that USAID Learns' support was **helpful to the completion of the task**



of participants reported they experienced **effective collaboration** as a result of USAID Learns' support (153/171 respondents)



Net Promoter Score (NPS) measures our clients' perception about the contract's performance. As of Q2, **USAID Learns' NPS is 76, higher than average** for the professional services industry at +43.

Our Key Accomplishments by the Stories

Additional examples of Learns' support and value-add include:

1



Socializing the Mission's Performance Management Plan

Over the past few months, USAID Learns supported the Mission to update its Performance Management Plan (PMP) in line with internal updates to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS).

In addition, the USAID/Vietnam and USAID Learns team provided an orientation to the PMP for USAID's IPs during the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Officer (MELO) quarterly gathering at the end of March. Three sessions were held: two in Hanoi and one in Ho Chi Minh City.

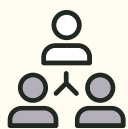
Learns also helped produce several key documents that are being distributed to USAID staff and partners, including a pocket guide with the Mission's key strategic approaches and learning priorities and the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS). In addition, Learns helped create lists of indicators per development objective for USAID staff and partners to draw from to align with Mission priorities and external reporting requirements.



NEXT STEPS

As part of the implementation of the PMP, implementing partners will submit their updated Activity MEL Plans with required indicators and a beneficiary feedback plan by May 15. If you have questions about this, please contact [USAID Learns](#).

2



Establishing an online community of practice for MELOs

USAID Learns has created an online community of practice for MELOs to widen their network and share experiences, challenges, and solutions related to MEL. This initiative was proposed by participants during the previous quarterly MELO event. The group is now live on Facebook with members already using the space.



CONNECT

Join the [MELO Facebook group](#) and become part of the community!

Our Key Accomplishments by the Stories

Additional examples of USAID Learns' support and value-add include:

3



Facilitating knowledge transfer between closing and new USAID environment activities

The Vietnam Forests and Deltas (VFD) activity is closing after 8 years of implementation. To capture the invaluable knowledge gained during this time, USAID Learns facilitated a two-day learning event with USAID/Vietnam, VFD, and new IPs - Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and Biodiversity Conservation (BC). The second day also included national and provincial Government of Vietnam (GVN) partners.

Together, participants reflected on both challenges and achievements and discussed how to best co-manage activities between USAID, the IPs, and GVN. Based on the evaluation of the VFD activity, they co-created recommendations to improve future implementation.

Ninety-eight percent of participants agreed that they benefited from the sessions.



APPRECIATION

Learns appreciates the insightful contributions from the Management Board of Forestry Projects under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as the VFD team who created an open learning spirit for all participants.



Very valuable experience. I could have read 10 reports and not received the insightful information provided today.

- Learning Event participant



4



Data quality assessment (DQA) tools get streamlined

Following the pilot of the DQA tools and process adapted for USAID/Vietnam, USAID Learns facilitated an After Action Review to draw out best practices and the biggest challenges. As a result, USAID Learns revised the tools, process, and guidance documents (accessible on USAID Vietnam's website [here](#)), enabling USAID/Vietnam to implement more streamlined DQAs with greater involvement of USAID technical staff.



APPRECIATION

Special thanks to all IPs and A/CORs who joined the DQA pilot for their contributions to improve the process and better serve the data needs from practical and managerial perspectives.



It is a great thing that [the] DQA team developed a checklist that includes clear examples to make it easy to understand.

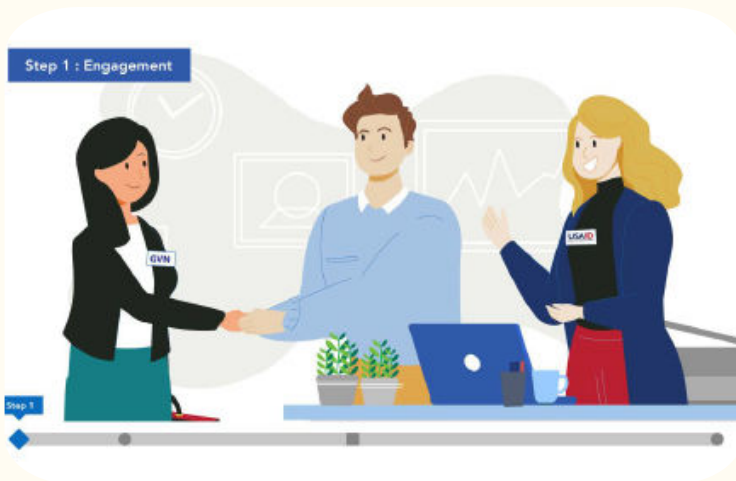
- Pilot participant



Our Key Accomplishments by the Stories

Beyond the numbers, USAID Learns has identified several accomplishments that demonstrate our value as a contract. One story, in particular, brings together aspects of our support: research, facilitation, and adaptive management throughout the Program Cycle.

Influencing USAID's design and procurement processes to ensure greater local ownership



A scene from the soon-to-be-released animation video sharing the study's lessons on obtaining project approval

USAID/Vietnam commissioned a study to understand the challenges that IPs face when obtaining GVN project approval. To ensure evidence uptake, Learns integrated CLA into the study process.

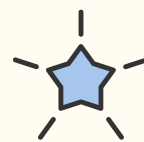
A validation event helped USAID/Vietnam and IPs collectively make sense of the study results, leading to new tools that highlight how to better collaborate with GVN. A utilization workshop then helped USAID staff incorporate recommendations throughout the Program Cycle.

As a result, USAID/Vietnam updated the Mission Order on design and instituted a new protocol to better align awards and GVN priorities, with five co-creation processes currently underway.



TOOLS & RESOURCES

The study Team Leader is available to provide advisory support to Mission staff and IPs seeking project approval (please contact trang.dinh@socialimpact.com). The [USAID/Vietnam website](#) includes all resources on obtaining GVN project approval.



APPRECIATION

Special thanks to Bruce Gelband, Bryan Moody, Cris Fentross, Aaron Brownell, Dung Pham Thi Le, and Giang Le Tong for spearheading utilization of the GVN project approval study within USAID/Vietnam.

Our Plans for Next Quarter

The following table is an illustrative list of upcoming tasks for USAID Learns during the third quarter of FY21.

	Research & Evaluation	Facilitation, Design, and Overall Capacity-Building	Monitoring	Governance Integration
Mission-Wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counter-Trafficking in Persons Reimbursement process for Value Added Tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Operation Exercise Hosting of the CLA Case Competition Mission capacity-building needs assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Information Solution (DIS) dashboard DIS and AMELP alignments with PMP AMELP resource updates MELO event MEL trainings 	Most Significant Change pilot competition
Economic Competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade facilitation midterm evaluation Higher education sustainability review 	Vietnam National University (VNU) co-creation	AMELP support	
Infectious Diseases	Tuberculosis private sector landscape analysis		AMELP and DQA support	
Environmental Security	Countering Wildlife Trafficking (CWT) contextual analysis	CWT co-creation	AMELP and DQA support	CWT and Collective Impact governance integration
War Legacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabilities quality of life baseline Disabilities private sector landscape analysis 	Disabilities Annual Stakeholder Meeting	AMELP support	