# Lesson Plan: Developing a Monitoring Plan for an SBC Strategy

Achievement-based learning objectives

By the end of this task, participants will have:

* *reviewed the six main elements of a plan to monitor their SBC strategy;*
* *reviewed the definitions, guidance, and examples of those five elements; and*
* *reviewed illustrative indicators to measure each of the five elements for a given nutrition-sensitive agriculture practice being promoted*
* *seen a matrix to help summarize changes in priority practices and the barriers and enablers for those practices.*

Monitoring an SBC strategy involves tracking indicators related to implementation of communication and non-communication SBC activities, including changes in:

* the ***reach*** of your practice promotion efforts,
* the ***quality of practice promotion***,
* the ***recall*** of the messages you are using,
* the ***barriers to and enablers***of practices,
* the ***practices*** you are promoting, and
* the ***higher-level*** ***outcomes*** you expect to achieve.

For example, rather than just monitoring the number of individuals or groups receiving messages, the monitoring plan would capture whether your priority group can recall the messages, and whether the constraints to adoption are being reduced, regardless of whether they are beliefs about a certain practice (motivation), the skills needed (capability), or access to resources necessary to do the practice (opportunity). As with other project activity monitoring, data gathered through an SBC monitoring plan can be used to document changes, improve activities, and change the focus of the activities as individuals and groups change their practices.

Let’s define each of these six things that you should monitor in an SBC monitoring plan.

**Monitoring and evaluation of SBC strategies often assess these SBC elements:**

* **Reach**: This includes if members of your priority group or influencing group had contact with the person who promotes project messages, whether they heard mass media messages, whether they saw printed materials (e.g., brochure, billboard), etc., during a given short timeframe. Given that people are not as accurate about remembering things the more time that has passed, it’s best to keep the recall period for measuring these sorts of things short – for example, in the past two weeks. For events that are more memorable (e.g., “did you install a new latrine in the past year?”), longer recall periods are more acceptable. An **example** of measuring reach would be measuring *the proportion of female rice farmers who say that they attended an educational session on new rice varieties in the past two weeks*. Or *measuring the proportion of sweet potato farmers who say that they heard radio spots on the advantages of planting orange-fleshed sweet potato in the past two weeks*. In general, it is best to measure this by surveying people in your priority group. This is also one of the few ways that can be done when using mass media. When this is not possible, and you are promoting practices through face-to-face contact, you can look at project monitoring data, such as attendance records kept by project workers.
* **Quality of practice promotion:** You should also measure the quality of the promotion of the practices that are being promoted in your project. Using checklists while observing development workers promoting a practice is one way to do this. For example, if development workers are promoting a practice in a small group setting, you could use the Food Security & Nutrition Network’s Quality Improvement & Verification Checklist for practice promotion which is available [here](http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/cdw_practice_promotion_qivc_english_1.doc).
* **Recall of messages**: This is the proportion of the people in your priority or influencing group who are able to accurately recall (repeat back) the key messages that the project is promoting. While few projects monitor this, questions to measure this can be added to periodic (e.g., annual) surveys. For example, you could measure the *proportion of coffee growers who say that they heard the organizations’ radio spots and can name three of the four advantages of collective marketing promoted by the project.* Like reach, you should only ask people to recall an event that would have happened or a message they would have heard in the recent past. You can also ask questions to see (1) whether people understand the message, (2) from whom they heard the message, and (3) whether they shared it with others. When you find that people have heard a message, but cannot recall it accurately, you may need to either shorten the message, simplify it, or make it more memorable (“sticky”). There are entire books written on how to make messages more memorable, such as [Made to Stick](http://www.amazon.com/Made-Stick-ideas-others-unstuck-ebook/dp/B0031RS2XG) by the Heath brothers.
* **Constraints & Facilitators (a.k.a., barriers and enablers) of practices**: After conducting formative research to identify constraints and facilitators of key practices promoted during a project, surveys can then be used to monitor whether there are changes in the proportion of people who mention each of the most important constraints and facilitators of a behavior. For example, a project may find through a Barrier Analysis study that Non-doers say that father-in-laws and other older farmers do not approve of vaccinating chickens against Newcastle Disease (feeling it is a waste of time) more so than Doers. These older farmers are exerting a significant influence on farmers’ adoption of the practice. After working with the older farmers and convincing them of why chickens need the vaccination, the project could survey of father-in-laws (during an annual survey) to determine *the proportion of older farmers who approve of vaccination of chickens*. Over time, you would want to see this increase. Another example: If the cost of fertilizer is found to be a constraint to adoption of fertilizer use (per formative research), the project staff may monitor the cost of that input over the life of the project, and offer free delivery of fertilizer when the cost of the fertilizer goes above a certain level. (One tool for conducting small-sample surveys to look at a few indicators of this type is the [Mini-KPC using Lot Quality Assurance Sampling [LQAS]](http://www.fsnnetwork.org/care-group-lqas-example).)

Measuring changes in each of these four SBC elements can help you to better pinpoint where the system is breaking down when adoption is not occurring or not occurring fast enough:

* It is that people are *not even hearing* the message? **(Reach)**
* Or do they hear it, but the quality of the practice promotion is poor? **(Quality of Practice Promotion)**
* Or do they hear it, and the quality of the promotion is generally good, but the messages are constructed in such a way that people are *unable to understand it, remember it and transmit it to others*? **(Recall)**
* Or do they hear it, understand it, remember it and transmit it to others but *have constraints that prevent them from adopting the practice* (including the approval of others)? Or does the practice *does not appeal to them* since it does not connect with their current capabilities, opportunities, or motivations/values? **(Constraints and Facilitators)**

Including these types of indicators in operations research, regular monitoring, and baseline, midterm and endline surveys helps explain *why* a project did or didn’t meet its objectives, and contributes to the larger evidence base for SBC and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. While this cannot be done for *all* of the practices that you may promote, it can be done for the *key* practices that you want to change – those which will help people the most. Depending on a project’s scale and resources, the implementation context, and the type of key practices being promoted, change may occur very fast. A year is often enough to show improved nutrition-sensitive outcomes when you have the right coverage plan for reaching beneficiaries, the intensity of contact with them is adequate, and you have tailored your messaging and project activities to reduce constraints and utilize facilitators of the practice.

**In addition to these four elements of an SBC monitoring system, there are two other things that you should measure in social and behavior change:**

* **Practices**: Obviously, one of the main things that we want to measure – and often do measure – is whether or not adoption has taken place, and whether people are maintaining the practice over time. It is not uncommon with some practices that you can achieve a large uptake in the practice, but then people abandon it after a time due to new constraints or diminishing facilitators. This can be from a lack of continued external promotion of – or incentives for – the practice, a lack of continued internal motivations (e.g., the practice did not appear to be “paying off”), recognizing previously unknown negative aspects of a practice, or other causes. In some of the best projects, adoption of the key practices are measured not just at baseline, midline, and endline, but more continuously throughout the project (e.g., annually or several times a year). Having a better idea of the adoption pattern of each key practice can help the project staff to modify their plans when a practice is initially adopted but then begins to drop off, or when after repeated promotion, large-scale adoption never happens. While our usual inclination when this drop-off happens is to do “more of the same” (e.g., repeating messages), this is a great time to look at what has changed and not changed, and to get input from your priority group about why they are abandoning the new practice. An ***example*** of this measurement of a practice would be to measure the *proportion of farmers who planted a leguminous crop in the same field as their staple crop during the last growing season.*
* **Higher-level Outcomes**: Sometimes the practice you are promoting is the outcome you want to measure. At other times, you will need to measure a higher-level outcome separately from the practice you are promoting. For example, you may be measuring regular participation in savings group meetings as one outcome, but that outcome leads to a higher-level outcome that you want to monitor, as well – such as the proportion of people who have taken out a loan for agricultural purposes in the past growing season.

Some projects also measure two additional things.

* **Acceptability**: When a new agricultural technology, product or service is introduced, it can be helpful to monitor the degree to which people find it acceptable, and what they like and do not like about it. This can be done in small-sample surveys with people who have had experience with the technology, product, or service. Project staff can then use that information to make changes to increase acceptability over time. Principles from User-centered Design (also known as Human-centered Design) can be useful if your project is working on improving acceptability of a new agricultural technology, product, or service.
* **Quality of goods and services**: In addition to monitoring the acceptability of a technology, product or service as it is perceived by your priority group, it is sometimes important to measure the objective quality, as well. For example, you may test lots of seeds that are being promoted in a project to see if their germination rates live up to the manufacturer’s claims.

**Here is a table of illustrative indicators which could be used to measure each of the elements in a Monitoring Plan**

| **Indicator Description** | **SBC Monitoring Plan Element** |
| --- | --- |
| *The percentage of savings and loan group members who attended a group meeting where the benefits of joint decision making with spouses on use of loans were discussed during the past quarter* | **Reach** |
| *The percentage of Savings and Loan Group facilitators who scored at least 75% on the Quality Improvement & Verification Checklist for practice promotion.* | **Quality of practice promotion** |
| *The percentage of savings and loan group members who can remember hearing messages on the benefits of joint decision making with spouses on use of loans in the past month and who can mention three advantages of doing so* | **Recall** |
| *The percentage of savings and loan group members who say that their pastor or imam approves of their jointly making decisions with their spouse regarding how to use loans* | **Barriers/Enablers** |
| *The percentage of savings and loan group members who have taken out a loan and have jointly decide with their spouse/partner how to spend the money they’ve borrowed* | **Practices** |
| *Percentage of family income devoted to the schooling, health care and feeding of children under two in the past two weeks.* | **Higher-level outcomes** |
| *Percentage of new users of micro-drip irrigation who say that they are “very pleased” with their decision to adopt micro-drip irrigation.* | **Acceptability** |
| *Percentage of micro-drip irrigation systems that were clog-free in the past month.* | **Quality of goods and services** |

**Here is a Summary Matrix which a project can use specifically to monitor changes in priority practices, and their determinants (barriers and enablers).**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority Practices** | **Indicators** | | **Barriers and Enablers (Determinants)** | **Indicators** | |
| **Baseline** | **Current** |  | **Baseline** | **Current** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |