The sample below illustrates the final product. If you wish to see the original Word document with edits in tracked changes, please email alice@crealitygroup.org.

USAID/MALI MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING PLATFORM

FISCAL YEAR 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

(November 10, 2022 – September 30, 2023)

Contracted under 72068823C00002

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I. PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN

[...]

To summarize, the TPM team achieved the following during the FY:

- **Approved Report:** USAID has fully approved the TPM #1 Sene Yiriwa Delta Zone report.

- **Awaiting Report Feedback/Approval:** Seven other reports were submitted to USAID during the FY and are awaiting feedback or approval. These include the reports for TPMs #2 Albarka Resilience Food Security Activity, #3 Household and Community Health Activity (Keneya Nieta), #7 GLEE, #9 Sugu Yiriwa Southern Zone (Warrantage), #10 Support to ECW, and #12 Conflict Prevention and Recovery Program.

  It should also be noted that to be responsive to USAID information needs, the MEL Platform completed TPM #12 from tool kit approval to draft report submission in six weeks. While to some extent our ability to do this was based on the request's complexity level and extent of qualitative data required, it also reflected a significant push on the part of our team and data collection partner.

- **Outbrief Completed:** Of the eight reports submitted, the MEL Platform completed outbrief presentations for six TPMs, including #1 Sene Yiriwa Delta Zone, #2 Albarka Resilience Food Security Activity, #7 GLEE, #9 Sugu Yiriwa Southern Zone (Warrantage), #10 Support to ECW, and #12 Conflict Prevention and Recovery Program.

- **Fieldwork Completed:** At the end of the FY, the MEL Platform had completed data collection for TPM #4 HSS/Keneya Sinsi Wale, and the data analysis and report writing were in process.

- **Tool Kits Awaiting Approval:** In addition to developing tool kits for all the TPM requests for which the MEL Platform has completed outbriefs and/or reports, during the FY, we also completed tool kits for the following TPMs: #5 MIHR, #6 MPHD, #11 Anka Jiko, and #13 Sugu Yiriwa Delta Zone. These tool kits had been submitted to USAID during the FY and were awaiting feedback or approval.

For the remaining two TPMs, #8 Sene Yiriwa Southern Zone and #14 EMERGE, we are awaiting meetings with the relevant IPs before finalizing the tool kits.

A.2 Verification of Outcomes of USAID Activities through Quick Beneficiaries' Surveys

Among the 14 TPM requests received, only one (TPM #9 Sugu Yiriwa Southern zone or Warrantage) included a quick beneficiary survey. For this TPM, two sites were selected for monitoring: Siramana in the Sikasso region and Leleni in the Koutiala region, where the data collection team interviewed 31 members of the respective producer organizations.

B. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT MONITORING

B.1 Activity 1. Annual Public Opinion Poll (POP)

On June 21, 2023, USAID shared with the MEL Platform the approved POP Scope of Work (SOW). In August, the MEL Platform onboarded a team composed of a Team Leader (TL) and a Local Statistical Expert (LSE). USAID approved the work plan on August 10, 2023. Following this, the team submitted the survey instrument tools on August 31, 2023, and the design report on September 15, 2023. By the end of this reporting period, the MEL Platform was awaiting complete feedback on these two deliverables from USAID.

B.2 Assumptions and Risks Tracking System (ARTS)

The MEL Platform's ARTS consolidates primary and secondary data into a single platform to ensure USAID staff have consistent access to context monitoring data that may impact programming. These data are provided to the Mission through narrative reports and a dashboard, the goal of which is to support strategic decision-making and scenario-planning for the Mission. For the primary data, the ARTS quarterly survey asks respondents the same questions every three months, thereby providing USAID staff with a quick sense of public sentiments on key issues of interest to the Mission. These are triangulated with several different secondary data sources.

In February 2023, just after the MEL Platform Chief of Party (COP) arrived in Mali, the team started working to identify secondary data sources and specific indicators relevant to each of the three themes identified for tracking through ARTS. Likewise, in the same month, the MEL Platform began working with our partner Premise to develop surveys for primary data collection that address each of the four identified themes. We held an initial meeting to discuss the tracking system objectives and approach with the MEL Platform Contracting Officer's Representative and Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative on February 28. Ahead of a follow-up meeting held on March 9, the MEL Platform shared with USAID a table of frequently collected (weekly to semi-annually) secondary contextual data to enable USAID to have a contextual pulse check. This included, under the three priority domains, data on items such as security incidents, population stability and displacement data, coronavirus disease 2019 rates, food price fluctuations, etc. Then, on March 15, we shared a comprehensive plan for using 10,000 credits with Premise to collect context data through a crowdsourcing approach over a one-year period, with primary data collected quarterly and some credits reserved for ad hoc surveys. In addition, we shared a set of proposed survey questions on political transition, resilience, and pandemic and socioeconomic conditions (the three ARTS themes) for the regular quarterly primary data collection.

On March 31, the MEL Platform facilitated a 2.5-hour workshop with USAID staff to validate the proposed ARTS primary data collection survey questions. The validation workshop went very well and was highly appreciated by Mission staff. All technical offices were represented, and feedback indicated that they found that the exercises of reviewing secondary sources triggered context indicators and that Premise primary frequent perceptions and opinions context data were very useful. On May 2, the MEL Platform shared a report on the ARTS validation workshop, updated survey questions, and proposed secondary sources. USAID approved these, including the primary data collection survey questions, on May 15.

Following USAID's approval of the survey, the MEL Platform launched the first quarterly survey primary data collection for ARTS on May 31, for the third quarter of FY 2023 (Q3 FY23), and submitted a narrative report combining data from both secondary sources and the primary data collection on June 30. Subsequently, the MEL Platform developed a dashboard capturing the data contained on the narrative report on July 28. Following the launch of the first round of quarterly primary data collection, the MEL Platform identified the Mali Elections Referendum as the subject of potential importance to USAID about which to conduct an ad hoc survey. This survey was launched on June 18. Although we did not submit a narrative report for the Election Referendum survey, we submitted dashboards for both the first quarterly report and first ad hoc survey, both on July 28.

The MEL Platform launched the second ARTS quarterly (Q4 FY23) primary data collection on August 30. Subsequently, USAID requested an ad hoc survey about the ongoing situation in Tombouctou, which has been experiencing increasing levels of violence by armed groups. The MEL Platform launched that survey on September 22.

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B.2. Baseline Performance Evaluation of Anka Jiko Activity

From April 17–21, 2023, the TL, an SI headquarters (HQ) team member, conducted a scoping trip in Bamako to review the baseline SOW, better adapt it to USAID's needs, and obtain more details about the activity's implementation from the IP. On May 2, USAID sent the MEL Platform the final approved SOW for the Anka Jiko baseline. Based on that, the MEL Platform completed recruitment of the ATL. The work plan was approved on May 30. The baseline did not require an inception report, so the second deliverable, the design report, was submitted on June 12 and approved on July 3. A Malian firm, Groupement d'Intérêts Scientifiques des Statisticiens Economistes (GISSE), was responsible for collecting data in the field and was onboarded on July 25. The MEL Platform carried out the in-brief on July 31, 2023, at USAID, and the data collection took place from August 14–28. The FY ended with data analysis and report writing underway.

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COMPONENT 3: COLLABORATING, LEARNING, AND ADAPTIVE (CLA) MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES

A. COLLABORATING, LEARNING, AND ADAPTIVE (CLA) MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Under CLA management services, the MEL Platform was expected to integrate CLA tasks into USAID/Mali's program cycle to help USAID and its partners systematize processes, generate and use evidence and learning, and tell USAID/Mali's story in accurate compelling terms. Specific activities in the annual work plan included reviewing the Mission's CLA plan, organizing the baseline stocktaking, conducting portfolio reviews, and facilitating capacity development for USAID, IPs, and local firms.

During FY 2023, as part of its CLA, capacity development, and communication services support to the Mission, the MEL Platform conducted various activities to promote learning and build USAID's and IPs' capacities and enhance Mission activities' visibility. Support under this Component started with the design of CLA, capacity development, and communication plans. Activities implemented during the FY include Mission and IP capacity development needs assessments, as well as training for Mission staff on monitoring (TPM and ARTS) and evaluation processes and IP staff on CDCS/PMP and activity MEL (AMEL) plans. The MEL Platform also conducted several training sessions for its TPM subpartner, International Consulting Firm for Research and Strategic Studies (CICORES), on branding and marking, success story writing, and photography as part of TPM induction workshops. The MEL Platform also conducted branding and marking compliance verifications and produced success stories and videos. Finally, the MEL Platform successfully launched the local firms' capacity development process by identifying five organizations that will benefit from capacity development starting in FY 2024, for USAID's approval.

A.I Mission CLA Plan Review

The MEL Platform submitted initial CLA and capacity development plans on March 14, 2023. These were developed based on the Mission's CDCS PMP, specifically its learning priorities. The CLA and capacity development plans were designed to effectively generate, capture, analyze, and share findings to support USAID's evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management. The proposed plans promoted coordination efforts within the Mission and among IPs and other stakeholders to increase synergies and facilitate collaborative learning.

A.2 CDCS Baseline, Midcourse, and Endline Stocktaking

To lay a foundation for the eventual CDCS midcourse and endline stocktaking, the MEL Platform began work on the SBS (see Component 2). In addition, the MEL Platform developed a plan, along with appropriate training materials, for the SBS workshop, scheduled for November 1, 2023. The workshop's main objectives include the following.

- To foster shared understanding of the USAID/Mali CDCS objectives
- To socialize the PMP for increased collaboration and learning
- To review and validate proposed PMP indicators for the SBS and monitoring over the course of the CDCS

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From March 15 to March 30, the MEL Platform conducted three two-day capacity development sessions for USAID/Mali IPs. The main goal was to foster shared understanding of the USAID/Mali CDCS objectives, results, and PMP among key stakeholders for increased collaboration and learning. The training provided the MEL Platform an excellent opportunity to share guidance and help IPs align their AMEL plans with USAID/Mali's learning priorities. The three sessions were attended by 59 participants, representing 30 IPs, which significantly contributed towards improving their understanding of the USAID/Mali CDCS and PMP and reinforced the MEL capacities of individual participants and their organizations.

Additionally, the MEL Platform took advantage of IP's presence to assess their capacity development needs by conducting a needs assessment survey. Based on the assessment and additional discussions with participants thereafter, the MEL Platform proposed the following capacity development topics for IPs.

- USAID branding and marking and success story writing
- AMEL plan development
- Learning and adaptive management
- Internal data quality assessment (DQA)

The MEL Platform submitted SOWs for these training sessions, but the sessions are yet to be conducted, as the MEL platform still awaits feedback on and approval of the proposed plan.

A.5 Local Firm Capacity Development

In line with USAID's focus on local systems and self-reliance, and as part of local firms' capacity development task, the MEL Platform launched a call for expressions of interest (EOIs) on Friday, September 8, 2023. To ensure a clear comprehension of the EOI and information required, the MEL Platform held an information session for interested firms on September 15. The MEL Platform received a total of 14 EOIs by the deadline of Friday, September 22. A selection committee reviewed all submissions on Friday, September 29. As a result of the review, the MEL Platform selected the following firms for the first cohort of local firms' capacity development.

- CERIPS
- CICORES
- GRAADECOM
- IDA
- AFEXG

Upon USAID approval of the five proposed firms, the MEL Platform will assess their technical and organizational capacities through the technical and organizational capacity assessment tool (TOCAT) and design tailored capacity development modules for each firm, including topics related to MEL and

financial and contractual management. Although the MEL Platform annual work plan called for firms to be selected and the TOCAT administered by May 2023, the process was delayed by a variety of challenges, including slow team recruitment and staff turnover, outlined in the lessons learned section below.

Through its ongoing TPM and ESS tasks with CICORES, the MEL Platform trained 34 data collection supervisors, 155 field data collectors, and 98 transcribers on data collection tools, USAID branding and marking, success story writing, and photography. The MEL Platform used a training of trainers approach to build the capacity of these data collectors, focusing its training on field supervisors, who then trained data collectors (see table 4 below for details). It should be noted, however, that some of the same supervisors and transcribers participated in several sessions.

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B.5 Videos

The MEL Platform also submitted two videos, one two minutes and another one and a half minutes long, made during data collection for the TPMs on ECW and the BHA Albarka activities, respectively. USAID also posted these videos on their social media. The ECW video was about the activity's support to the displaced communities of Talataye in Goa to ensure their children could attend school. Two version of the video were produced: a five-minute version, showing the community's determination to commit to their children's education, and a two-minute version that was published on Facebook. Albarka's video focused on the use of the tippy tap for handwashing in a commune of Gao. With support from Albarka, the local population learned how to make their own tippy taps. MEL Platform also produced a five-minute and a one-and-a-half-minute version of this video.

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