

Adapting for Adaptation: Tailoring Light, Moderate and High-Intensity Outcome Mapping Models



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What is Outcome Mapping (OM)?

OM is both a process and a methodology for determining and demonstrating progress toward results. It is a participatory monitoring and evaluation method most often utilized in complex, dynamic operating environments. It involves the 3 stages and 12 major steps.

Issue Faced:

Because of the number of steps, the intensive engagement with stakeholders, and overall resources required, Pact MERL Officers hesitated to undertake OM in its complete form.

Solution:

Pact developed supplemental guidance on when to use OM and how to tailor OM based on the needs and resources of a project while still maintaining rigor. This is done by considering how intensely a project can involve partners based on: time, proximity, language barriers, financial resources, technological access, and capacity.

Decision Tree: Determining Your Project's Need for OM Tailoring

1 Determine whether your project needs a low intensity approach (significant tailoring of the original OM approach), moderate intensity approach (moderate tailoring of the original OM approach), or a high intensity approach (little to no tailoring of the original OM approach) by reviewing and circling where your project falls in the factors listed in the table below. The column with the most circles is the most appropriate OM intensity to aim for.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN TAILORING OM	MINIMAL OM INTENSITY (Significant Tailoring to original approach)	MODERATE OM INTENSITY (Moderate Tailoring to original approach)	HIGH OM INTENSITY (No Tailoring, Original Approach)
Current location in project cycle	Baseline or midline	Baseline or midline	Baseline
Time available for baseline/midterm/endline	1-2 months	3 months	4-5 months
Extent to which vision and criteria of success are already set and required by donor	Donor is not willing to refine or view alternative criteria or vision for success; existing criteria are specific	Donor is willing to refine or supplement some criteria or vision for success, but the main components must remain the same (such as core objectives and intermediate results); existing criteria are relatively specific	Donor is open to changing the criteria of success or vision for the project, or the existing criteria are not specific or weak (and therefore there is room to refine through OM)
Resource availability and ability to replace or supplement existing donor required MEL framework	Donor or Project Team is not willing to allocate project resources for participatory OM activities to supplement the existing MEL plan	Donor or Project Team is not willing to allocate project resources for an entire separate, OM MEL plan, but is willing to include OM activities to supplement the existing MEL plan	Donor or Project Team is willing to allocate project resources for an OM MEL plan
Partner reporting LOE availability	Partners are not able to collect qualitative data and/or submit written narrative in Word document form on a semi-annual or annual basis	Partners are able and expected to collect qualitative data and submit written narrative in short Word document form on a semi-annual or annual basis.	Partners are able and expected to collect qualitative data and submit in written narrative in short Word document form on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.
Partner in-person workshop LOE availability	Able to attend 2-4-hour workshop or participate in remote communication, at least 1 time	Able to attend 1+ day workshop at least 1 time	Able to attend multi-day at least 1 time
Planned Events (Ability to schedule time with partners vs tack onto existing project events)	Cannot plan multi-day event, but have existing planned events with partners on which you can add 2-4 hours for OM	Cannot plan multi-day event, but have existing planned events with partners on which you can tack 1+ day of OM work	Can plan a 2+ day events with partners focused on OM
Language of Partners	Some share a common language (local or English)	Many share a common language (local or English)	Most share a common language (local or English)
Project staff lead and LOE availability	Project MEL person and HQ M&E technical support	Project MEL person and program person and HQ M&E technical support	MEL team and program team co-lead. Project leadership are champions of process. HQ M&E supports.

2 After determining the appropriate level of intensity, all 12 steps of the OM methodology can be modified. See the table at right below for an example. Please note that where partner engagement is recommended, this is ideally done in person, but could be carried out asynchronously via email, text messaging, or by phone.

Example of a Pact democracy and governance

Project's approach to OM. The Pact project reviewed the Decision Tree and determined that the Light Intensity approach was the most applicable to its project resources, stakeholders, and operating context. This visual shows a snapshot of the Tailoring Options table, which provides detailed guidance on how to implement OM in light, moderate or heavy intensity manners for each of the 12 OM Method's steps. The orange highlight identifies where this Pact project lies for steps 1-3. You can also see what the Medium and High Intensity approach would entail.

OM METHOD STEPS 1-3:	LIGHT INTENSITY OM APPROACH	MODERATE INTENSITY OM APPROACH	HIGH INTENSITY OM APPROACH
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop program Vision Develop program Mission Identify Boundary Partners 	Developed by Pact; identified through project theory of change; sent to partners for input and validation via email/ phone	Developed and validated by partners remotely (email, phone calls, survey, virtual workshop), or short (1+ day) workshop	Developed during in-person workshop by partners, facilitated by Pact (3-5-day Intentional Design workshop)* Note on boundary partners: Partners may find more value in tracking their particular end beneficiary/boundary partner vs at project level (warning: unwieldy) –more difficult for analysis. If BPs shared among the group, plan time to discuss, define, categorize BPs