



Developing Evaluation Indicators

What is an indicator?

It is a marker of accomplishment/progress. It is a specific, observable, and measurable accomplishment or change that shows the progress made toward achieving a specific output or outcome in your logic model or work plan.

Common examples of indicators include: participation rates, attitudes, individual behaviors, incidence and prevalence. The indicators you select should answer your evaluation questions and help you determine whether or not your program objectives have been achieved.

Key Elements	Examples of key elements of an indicator
Specific	<p>Provides a clear description of what you want to measure, i.e.</p> <p>“In-school adolescents aged 13–18 who test positive for Chlamydia”</p> <p>Instead of “youth who have an STD”</p> <p> TIP: See ‘specific’ criterion of SMART objectives from Step 2.2 on pages 51–52 of the manual.</p>
Observable	<p>Focuses on an action or change, i.e.</p> <p>“The proportion of school-clinic staff who can list two risk factors for Chlamydia”</p> <p>Instead of “the proportion of school-clinic staff who can identify the risk factors for Chlamydia”</p>
Measurable	<p>Quantifies change and generally reported in numerical terms, such as counts, percentages, proportions or ratios</p> <p> TIP: See ‘measurable’ criterion of SMART objectives from Step 2.2 on pages 51–52 of the manual.</p>

For more information and examples, see Step 4.1 in the Practical Use of Program Evaluation among STD Programs manual.
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/program/pupestd.htm>

How do you develop appropriate indicators?

1. Involve your program stakeholders in indicator development.

Bring stakeholders together to identify meaningful indicators. This will help ensure the buy-in for your evaluation findings. Consider consulting existing literature and other relevant resources to assist with identifying indicators.

2. Review evaluation questions and use your logic model as a template to develop indicators.

Link *process* indicators to your logic model *outputs*, Link *outcome* indicators to your logic model *outcomes*.



TIP: See the “indicator matrix template” on pages 179 and 182 of the manual.

3. Review indicators to ensure they are specific, observable, and measurable

Example: “The proportion of gonorrhea cases among women 14–19 years of age interviewed within 7 days from the date of specimen collection”

Specific: “gonorrhea cases among women 14–19 years of age”

Observable: “interviewed within 7 days from the date of specimen collection”

Measurable: “proportion of gonorrhea cases”

4. Include baseline data for inputs and outcomes if you are trying to measure change.

For example, increased adherence of clinical staff to STD guidelines from time period 1 to time period 2.

5. Determine whether the indicators:

- Provide useful information that can measure processes and outcomes and answer evaluation questions
- Are feasible in terms of data availability and timely data collection
- Are adequate to capture the information you need. You may need to develop more than one indicator, but avoid creating too many indicators because they can detract from the evaluation’s goals.

Keep in mind, some information that is important to track may not have indicators associated with them. For example, some aspect of the program may be qualitative (e.g. describing the nature of a partnership). Sometimes what is important isn’t always quantifiable.

