



Getting started with the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) platform

What is results based management?

Results based management is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and higher-level goals or impact). The strategy is widely adopted by the research and development communities, including WorldFish, to enable the improved efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of research and development initiatives, and to promote organizational transparency and accountability for the use of resources. It aims to improve the way in which organizations

operate throughout the life-cycle of their research or development intervention. For this reason, results based management helps to introduce critical improvements in the key phases of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the effective implementation of activities.

Monitoring, Evaluating & Learning (MEL) platform

[MEL](#) is a modular and collaborative platform that supports results based management of CRPs, centers and projects. It allows working with several results and indicators frameworks (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals, Strategic Results Frameworks) and helps in building nested pathways from System Level Outcomes to Intermediate Development Outcomes, outcomes,

outputs, and deliverables. It was launched in 2014 with the overall intention to create synergy between research and development partners in order to bridge competencies in a results-oriented platform. The customizable, all-in-one online platform facilitates management processes like planning, budgeting, monitoring, knowledge sharing, reporting and risk assessment.

The flexibility of the platform allows the implementers to re-shape it to meet specific needs (e.g. impact pathways and results frameworks) to WorldFish and the CGIAR Research Program on Fish. The platform enables research staff, scientists and managers to input, archive, extract, and share research data and knowledge products, including budget and financial information. It captures the necessary information required to ensure effective results-based management and implementation of research projects from start to finish. This includes, but is not limited to, research outputs, outcomes, expected deliverables, indicators, impact pathway and theory of change, scientists' staff time allocation, budget expenditures, partners, risk register and management, gender results, communications stories, and more. It provides aggregated data per site (country) allowing synchronization of interventions with national and international partners.

MEL safeguards intellectual property and provides full credit to the authors of knowledge reported, making use of international metadata standards such as Dublin Core. The platform has been aligned with HR management, internal finance and internal sharing systems (e.g. One Corporate System – OCS, SharePoint). Further, the platform also comes with an integrated Open Access repository called [MELSpace](#) that boosts the projects' outreach. Carved in the system is the Knowledge Share toolset, which includes an internal discussion forum, a technical assistance chat, project dedicated webpages, and a communication-friendly module to write and disseminate project related blogs or stories.



Benefits and Access

Benefits

The platform's primary purpose is that of facilitation and automatization of technical/program implementation allowing timely and informed decision-making, timely and transparent donor reporting, and timely and cost-efficient administration.

MEL saves resources and time, reduces paperwork, facilitates administrative steps, quickens project related communications and enables near real-time data collecting to inform decision-making. Its research planning, reporting and monitoring tool has customizable workflow and chain of approvals, and avoids double reporting for centers and CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). For example, common indicators are pre-loaded in the system to reduce burden of data collection and facilitate comparison and analysis across interventions. Open databases are linked to the platform in order to define proxy indicators for planned research outcomes.

MEL provides a collaborative space with partners where they can contribute to management processes and assess the quality of their collaboration. It also enhances the transparency and enables timely production of different types of customized reports based on needs and requirements of different target users (e.g. donors, partners, media and general audience).

Access and utilization

Every user can benefit from the use of the platform in various ways, depending on their role and purpose of use. The main types of users, as well as how they will utilize the platform, are:



Scientists

Submits inputs and has full overview of research work plan, outputs, outcomes and financial information within their domain and in specific sites (i.e. countries). They can archive their research products and share them with external stakeholders, and through MEL can also enable group discussions to generate new research proposals and share results.



Flagship & Cluster Coordinators

Benefit from an overall view of scientists' products and are able to synthesize information, plan joint research in the flagship, monitor progress on research implementation, manage risks and make adjustments as necessary. They receive aggregated flagship data to involve partners in research activities.



Project Managers

Can access timely information on program/project deliverables with smart search engine to organize meetings and produce synthesis reports for donors, partners, and stakeholders.



Communication, Capacity Development & Gender Focal Points

An overall view for CRP planned and delivered products per flagship or per Center helps to support knowledge sharing, capacity development and overall institutional strengthening. It also supports gender-focused research and mainstreaming and increases visibility of CRP activities and research outcomes. They receive synthesized information to help their positions inform and engage stakeholders, generate new project proposals, raise funds, increase visibility and more.



Finance & HR Focal Points

Can find an overall view of the planned and delivered products per scientist or project to mitigate delivery risk and measure staff performance. They can receive synthesized information for annual planning and reporting – for example, by center, CRP or project.



Intellectual Property (IP) & Legal Manager

Benefit from an overall view of all legal mechanisms in place to ensure CRP/ project partnerships are properly managed and key legal aspects are covered in the agreements. The platform contains a module that indicates the intellectual assets, knowledge, technologies, and information that are used from other organizations and that are generated.



CRPs Admins and Directors, Center DGs and DDGs

Benefit from overall view of the planned and delivered products in each CRP flagship, including staff allocation and financial information. They receive synthesized information to enable better decision making and CRP reporting and presenting to high-level meetings.

Getting started

To reach the platform, all that is needed is access to an internet browser, such as Google Chrome, and internet connection. If already registered, you can [log in](#) using your CGIAR account. If you have not registered, just click register and provide your email, name, user name, organization, and country. If you experience any [trouble logging in](#), you can click on forgot password and a password resetting link will be sent to the provided email. Check your email – including the Spam folder – and proceed as per instruction. Also, it is recommended to synchronize the account with your ORCID ID, if you have one. Otherwise, please create an [ORCID](#) account, as this is quite important for automatically harvesting publications. These will then show on your MEL profile homepage under Publication.

Help

For more information and help, please first refer to the [MEL user guide](#) and the [FAQs](#). Alternatively, numerous training webinars have already been conducted and are available on the [MEL YouTube channel](#). Support is always available on the platform through the [technical assistance chat](#). This chat can be accessed by the icon in the lower right corner of the homepage. While working, users may sometimes encounter issues such as system malfunction due to some sort of bug. To [report a bug](#), click on the icon in the lower left corner of the homepage.



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For more details
Please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about MEL