

LASER PULSE M&E Reporting Instructions for LASER Awards

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Introduction

This document provides guidance and instruction to Principal Investigators (PIs) on how to provide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data and other information from LASER Research Awards to LASER PULSE M&E personnel for ultimate reporting to USAID and usage internal to LASER. It is organized by the key tools listed below; internal bookmark links are provided to quickly jump from here to a given section:

- **Reporting Form 1: Project Tracker Spreadsheet in Google Sheets**
 - [Team Roster](#) : Worksheet that reports LASER Research Award personnel
 - [Deliverables Tracker](#) : Worksheet that details the deliverables for which a given LASER Research Award is responsible
 - [Embedded Research Translation Progress Tracker](#) : Worksheet that serves as a guide for project teams to monitor their progress in implementing their research translation project
 - [Reporting Tracker](#): Worksheet that serves as a guide for teams to monitor all reporting requirements through the life of the award.
 - [Achievements and Milestones](#): Worksheet that details any achievements or milestones of the project that does not fall under a deliverable.
- **Reporting Form 2: Overview of the Main M&E Data Collected from LASER Awards (pg. 8)**

New content will be added to this manual periodically in order to better assist Research Award PIs with the reporting process and with regard to research translation activities. If you have any questions about reporting responsibilities or procedures, please contact frossi2@nd.edu for help.

Form 1: Project Tracker Spreadsheet

LASER provides each Research Award with a “Project Tracker” file based upon a Google Sheets template. It is an organizational tool for the PI and LASER to curate important information about the research project. In addition to tracking deliverables, this file also contains worksheets to organize personnel, research translation information, and important communications. It is the responsibility of the PI to update it when important changes occur, and to make sure it is current during the bi-annual M&E data reporting periods.

Note that most of the data fields (columns) in the worksheets are self-explanatory. However, the following subsections of the present document are intended as a reference for project team members to consult for details regarding a specific field, should question(s) arise about what info is to be provided. The last sheet in this file has contact information for LASER PULSE personnel. [Here is a blank template for reference.](#)



Team Roster: Guidelines for Reporting Information on Research Award Team Composition

With regard to the Research Award Team Composition (Team Roster), the information required is a listing of the key contributors involved in the Research Award. Information should be updated whenever a key personnel change occurs, such as the addition of a new team member – regardless, all information should be current at the time of end-of-period reporting (March 31; September 30). Note that some projects may have a slightly different format from the structure described below, but the overall intent is the same. As such, PIs should do the best they can to accurately portray the project team roster; please direct any questions to frossi2@nd.edu if uncertain about an item.

1. Blue section:

- Add the research question and research aims so that LASER PULSE can be quickly reminded about the project.

2. Columns:

- A. Name:** Only list people who are doing a significant amount of analytical and/or research work. This includes data collection – as long as the person in question has input into the development of the survey materials and/or implementation plan. A good benchmark to use for inclusion is someone who would later be listed as a co-author on technical reports, articles, etc. that are produced. (This is not definitive, though.)

The person listed should be paid from the award to do the work, although that alone is not a sufficient condition. For example, Notre Dame hired students to help search and compile private sector engagement (PSE) literature and fill in a PSE document matrix – but this is not a significant intellectual contribution to the PSE Project overall, so these students do not appear in the roster.

As implied in the first paragraph of 2.A. above, a data enumerator hired solely to collect info would not be listed either – only someone that also had input into the questionnaire development, survey plan, etc. would be considered as a collaborator.

- B. Organization:** The place of primary employment
- C. Title:** Position title at primary place of employment
- D. Team role:** This the LASER PULSE designation of the team members Translation Partner generally means someone working outside of an institute of higher education.

Primary Co-PI: This is the person most involved/knowledgeable about the Research Award other than the PI. This person is the proxy for the PI, and ideally (and in most cases) will be with an organization different from the PI's organization. If more than one Co-PI can be considered as the Primary Co-PI, then the project team must select one or defer to the LASER PULSE Management team to make the selection.

Students: There must be an intellectual contribution for a student to qualify for inclusion on the personnel roster (see 2.A above). For instance, a given person listed is a graduate student gaining experience in research (e.g. on methods development, implementation).



- E. Email address:** Best email address for LASER PULSE to contact each individual with information requests.
- F. University type:** This field only needs to be filled in if the individual listed in the row is primarily working at a university; all other people can leave this column blank.
- G. Practitioner or researcher:** The LASER PULSE project aims to bridge researchers and practitioners. "Practitioner" for LASER PULSE is defined as someone working for a non-governmental organization, government agency, or in the private sector. Occasionally a person working in academia may be considered a practitioner, but this is rare and should be discussed with the LASER M&E Specialist (frossi2@nd.edu) if this possibility is being considered.

Individuals from USAID are counted as a development practitioner (especially those who represent the mission or bureau that contracted LASER) if they are providing significant input into the effort. Think in terms of "co-creation" and whether or not you would consider them to be a collaborator. Please identify the specific USAID operating unit for all USAID personnel listed.
- H. Sex:** How the individual in the row identifies.
- I. Comments:** Use this column to note anything relevant to the individual listed. For example, if there is a change in staff then note when the person left the project and who took their place; then note the start date for the new individual.

3. Red section: Oversight

- A. Name:** The individuals listed below this red bar provide general oversight of the Research Award, from USAID and LASER PULSE, and the other columns follow the same instructions as listed above.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

P PURDUE
UNIVERSITY



INDIANA UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

Deliverable Tracker: Guidelines for Listing Anticipated Research Award Outputs

This is the second worksheet in the “Project Tracker” file. To toggle between the different worksheets in the spreadsheet you can find the names at the bottom of the screen. The deliverable tracker worksheet allows LASER Research Award teams to better track and prepare for various deliverables that they will generate, including convenings that they plan to host or attend.

Although LASER management has pre-filled some of the items (obtained from the project description), we understand that changes may be made to a given Award’s scope of work and anticipated outputs – it is for this reason that we request all PIs to validate and/or revise the list and update it whenever warranted. If an existing, pre-filled item in Column A is not a part of your project, feel free to delete the row if you wish to streamline the list of deliverables.

Some of the required fields are self-explanatory; for those that are not, the following numbered items provide content guidance for the key fields of information displayed in the file:

1. Blue Section:

- **Project start date:** The day the project officially begins, according to the Award Subrecipient Agreement (ASA) document.
- **Project end date:** The day the project ends according to the ASA. If there is a no cost extension, list the change of end date here.

2. Columns

- A. Deliverable Name/Title:** Items listed here were initially taken from the project proposal and/or ASA – there may be redundancy or other issues requiring revision, such as important items not listed.

It is very important to list various convenings (i.e., dissemination events) planned by your Research Award to transmit project results to policy-makers, donors, and other information brokers who can facilitate the wider uptake of lessons learned, other advancements in knowledge, improved processes, etc.

Phases: If possible list the deliverables in the order they will be produced beginning with the planning phase, followed by the inception phase, and finally the implementation phase. Anticipated outputs refers to project deliverables otherwise not represented under one of the other sub-headings.

Feel free to rename and/or reorganize the sub-headings in this column to best reflect the specific circumstances of your project.

Links: If the deliverable is electronic, please embed the link to the document in the name listed in this worksheet.

- B. Person responsible:** This is the individual that is coordinating the deliverable; use the last name and first initial (e.g. Gilmour, D.) format.
- C. Lead Author:** If the coordinator and the lead author are different, please note here who the document will officially be credited to (e.g. Waters, R.) as the principal author.

- D. Deliverable Type:** Choose, from the drop-down menu in Column D, the type of deliverable that best describes the specific item that is listed in Column A. For convenings (i.e. dissemination events), select “presentation” and then add additional detail (e.g. webinar, workshop) in the “Notes” field of Column O.
- E. Output Category:** Use the drop-down menu in Column E to indicate the general category of research to which the deliverable belongs; select “Other” if the item in question is not research *per se* (e.g. it is an IRB protocol) or is not really research-related (e.g. it is an inception report). If you are unsure of the category, leave the cell blank and note this condition in Column O.
- F. Project description deadline:** In most cases the project proposal and/or Award Subrecipient Agreement (ASA) has a deadline; list that date here for deliverable only if it is stated in these documents. If this date changes due to a delay, then use Column G to indicate the new date.
- G. Due Date:** Use this column to provide an anticipated date (month, year) of completion for the deliverable or convening in question if there is no date in Column F, or if the date in Column F needs to be revised. Note that a rough estimate is OK if there is uncertainty regarding when the deliverable will actually be completed, but at least make sure there is some information provided. In some instances, a very general date (e.g. FY2) is already provided in terms of expected fiscal year; this was done for management planning purposes. If you have a more precise estimate, please update the cell into the month / year format.
- H. Status:** Use the drop-down menu in Column H to indicate the current status of the deliverable or convening. The principal choices are “On Track”, “Delayed”, “Completed”, “USAID revising”, and “Final”. Leave the cell blank if work on the item in question has not been started. “Completed” indicates the deliverable has been sent to LASER for review and comments.
- I. Delivery date:** *this information will be entered by LASER personnel, and the column header is shaded yellow to denote this fact. Shading also applies to Columns M and N.*
- J. Dissemination date:** LASER PULSE strongly encourages the dissemination of research products produced by Research Awards. If the deliverable is disseminated to a target audience then note the date here.
- K. Dissemination event:** A dissemination event could occur via a webinar, workshop, or website launch. Briefly note the event name and place here.
- L. Dissemination audience:** If a dissemination event occurred then note, in general, who attended the event and/or the intended audience of the research product (e.g. USAID, Ministry of Education staff).
- M. Post to DEC?:** For those PIs familiar with USAID reporting, you may know whether or not a given output will ultimately be uploaded by LASER to theDEC (USAID’s “Development Exchange Clearinghouse”). If so, please select “Yes” or “No” from the

drop-down menu for a given item. If you do not know, or are uncertain, select “not sure”.

- N. **Date posted to DEC:** *this information will be entered by LASER personnel.*
- O. **Notes:** Use this column to include any explanatory comments or notes that jcan clarify uncertainties about a given field, and/or provide additional relevant details about a deliverable or a convening.

ERT Progress Tracker: Guidelines for Reporting Information on Research Translation

LASER PULSE defines Embedded Research Translation (ERT) as an iterative co-design process among academics, practitioners, and other stakeholders in which research is intentionally applied to a development challenge. Core to this approach to translation are four pillars: partnership, process, product, and dissemination. Additional information on the Embedded Research Translation model can be found on the [LASER PULSE website](#). Given that ERT is an iterative process, project PIs are encouraged to monitor their progress in implementing their research translation strategy and make revisions in collaboration with their translation partner(s) and in consultation with the LASER PULSE Research Translation Team to ensure impact.

The Embedded Research Translation Progress Tracker serves as a guide for project teams to monitor their progress in implementing their research translation project. Additionally, this tracker serves as a communication tool between the PIs and the LASER PULSE Research Translation team during the initial meeting (if applicable) and any additional one-on-one consultations.

The LASER PULSE Research Translation Team will be available throughout the project to advise on Embedded Research Translation through one-on-one consultations and provide support and resources as needed. If you have any questions about ERT reporting or procedures, please contact laura.riddering@crs.org.

The ERT Progress Tracker is the third worksheet in the Progress Tracker spreadsheet. This is an example of the template that will be provided. Some of the required fields are self-explanatory; for those that are not, the following numbered items provide content guidance for the key fields of information displayed in the file:

1. Blue section:

- **Key stakeholders:** An Embedded Research Translation project will ultimately result in a co-design product to be translated for impact. The stakeholders are the organizations that will use the products after the project is completed. Stakeholders should be consulted so that the research solution is custom generated for the development challenge and the outcomes are more readily adapted and applied by practitioners. Check the LASER PULSE ERT website for tools, like Stakeholder Analysis, to support this.

2. Rows on Four Pillars:

The four pillars are designed to guide the ERT approach; there are no strict expectations of what activities should fit into each pillar. LASER PULSE designed the Progress Tracker around the four



pillars of the Embedded Research Translation model (partnership, process, product, and dissemination) to reinforce the iterative nature of our model and to encourage projects to plan for each of these translation components in a concrete, practical way.

This Progress Tracker may identify additional activities that are required for implementing a research translation strategy that were not a part of a project's original work plan, particularly for those activities associated with partnership and process, such as establishing regular meetings and partnership check-ins between the researchers and practitioners on a team.

- **Partnership:** This refers to any activities that establish a partnership through the integration of researchers and translation partners early and throughout the research collaboration.
- **Process:** This refers to any activities that establish processes to ensure that the research team has a solid foundation to work together effectively on development research.
- **Product:** This refers to any activities that result in a co-designed translation product that informs policy and/or practice.
- **Dissemination:** Any activities that enable wider application and scale-up beyond the initial translation partnership and toward a larger uptake of relevant findings in the field or region.

3. Columns:

- A. Work Plan Activity Number:** This monitoring tool directly links the activities in a project's annual work plan to the project's Embedded Research Translation strategy to ensure that the planned activities and deliverables, and their associated timelines, are aligned to maintain the project on a path for development impact.

It is possible that there may be more activities listed here than are in the workplan. In that case, there is no need to list the activity number. PIs are invited to add rows or edit tasks based on their work plans and should update the status column throughout the project.

- B. Activity Description:** Provide brief details on the activity.
- C. Output:** List if there is an activity, tool, or document created as an output from the activity. If it is an electronic item, link the source to the name of the output. Some of these outputs may also be listed in the deliverable tracker. Most likely there will be more outputs here than in the deliverable tracker.
- D. Timeframe:** Provide an anticipated time range date (month, year) for the activity. A rough estimate is OK if there is uncertainty regarding when that may be, but at least make sure there is some information provided.
- E. Lead person:** The person coordinating the activity.



- F. **Status:** Use the drop-down menu to indicate the current status of the activity. The principal choices are “planning”, “on track”, and “completed.” Leave the cell blank if work on the activity has not been started.

Reporting Tracker

This is the fourth worksheet in the “Project Tracker” spreadsheet. This serves as a guide for teams to monitor all reporting requirements through the life of the award. The PI or co-PI should fill in the form to make sure all reporting requirements are met. Add the date completed, and file location link if needed. The Research Project Manager can answer questions as they occur.

1. Columns:

- A. **Item:** reporting requirement (form, survey, submission of template, etc). The underlined items have links to instructions, templates, or email addresses.
- B. **Due date:** When the reporting item is due.
- C. **Date completed:** When the reporting item was completed.
- D. **File location:** If applicable, paste the link to the file in google drive.

Achievements and Milestones

This is the fifth worksheet in the “Project Tracker” spreadsheet. This serves as a location whereby any achievements or milestones of the project that does not fall under a deliverable can be documented. There are many occasions that can be documented during a research project to demonstrate learnings, successes, and achievements. The PI or Co-PI should add as many rows as possible to highlight to LASER PULSE what has occurred through your work. LASER PULSE will read this sheet to learn about the project in ways that may not be captured in other worksheets in the tracker. If in doubt, write it down because it may be of interest for a blog or newsletter article about your project.

1. Columns:

- A. **Description of Achievement or milestone.** Examples include blog posts, news articles, conference presentations, stakeholder engagement events, meetings with policymakers, dissemination events, write up on field work, partnership activities, etc.
- B. **Due occurred:** Date that the milestone occurred
- C. **Link to file if possible:** link to event, if available
- D. **Contact person:** name and email of person who will be able to provide additional information if needed

Form 2: Research Award Data Reporting Form

A Qualtrics survey ([link here](#)) is the main vehicle for M&E reporting by LASER Research Awards. The survey is designed both for new Awards (i.e., first time reporting) and for those Awards that have previously conducted M&E reporting. For the latter group, the survey will skip certain questions if the PI indicates that a given data field does not require any update to previously reported information. Note that only data specific to the given reporting period (either October 1 to March 30; or April 1 to September 30) should be reported.

The survey contains 3 sections (General Information, Indicator Data, Narratives) and a total of 60 questions, although many questions will be skipped over for a given Research Award. Within the form itself, supplemental information and/or examples are provided for questions that, on their surface, seem ambiguous and/or contain certain nuances (situational or otherwise) that pose difficulty in answering without further clarification.

The items listed below identify the type of data collected via the reporting form:

1. General Information

1. Research Award name – validate or revise (i.e. define) the designated “short title” name of the Award.
2. Brief 2-5 description of the subject, purpose, and approach of the Research Award.
3. Number of women researchers, or US-based minority researchers, serving as a PI or Co-PI for the Research Award.
4. Focal country/region.
5. PI and Primary Co-PI name, sex, name of institution.

2. Indicator Data

1. How many development/policy actors are significantly contributing to this Research Award?
 - This question refers to Research Award team members not affiliated with a university, and responses are disaggregated (d/a) by gender, organization type, and region.
 - The data reported here should be derived from, and match (in summary form), the personnel listed in the team roster worksheet (see Section 1) for your Research Award. Please review (and update if necessary) your Award team’s roster beforehand.
2. How many primary research products (i.e., non-translated research) to report?
 - List title(s) of research outputs completed during the reporting period; d/a by type.
3. How many translated research products to report?
 - List title(s) of translated research outputs completed during the reporting period; d/a by type and gender.

4. How many different types of translated research outputs produced by this Research Award were shared with community-of-practice (CoP) networks, policy-makers, pvt sector, and/or donors?
5. How many convenings with decision-makers to disseminate research for use and/or develop policy recommendations? (d/a by region)
6. How many participants at convenings with decision-makers to disseminate research for use and/or develop policy recommendations? (d/a by gender, region)
7. How many students trained in research experiences during the reporting period?
 - o A given student can only be counted as trained once per year; therefore, only count a student if they have not already been counted for the present year.

3. Narratives

1. Provide a brief summary (2-3 paragraphs) of the progress made during this reporting period.
2. Provide a projection (2-3 paragraphs) of the work yet to be completed under this Research Award.
3. Provide a brief summary of impacts, if any, due to the response to Covid-19 situation.

4. Program or Policy Changes

1. Impacts on programs or policies of other organizations resulting from the project's work?

5. Photos

1. Provide, if available, any good pictures that can visually represent the project well.