

EVALUATION PLAN

Introduction

Counterpart International (Counterpart) proposes a rigorous Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Plan for the proposed McGovern-Dole International Food for Education project, *Sukaabe Janngo II*. The MEAL Plan outlines our proposed evaluation approaches and methodology, the project monitoring approach and data collection and reporting for performance indicators, conducting three evaluations (baseline, midterm, final), and special research studies. The MEAL Plan also includes our strategy for collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) activities and generating and sharing learning with a diverse range of stakeholders. The MEAL Plan includes Counterpart's approach to evaluation management and working with external evaluators to ensure independent and credible evaluations. Post-award, we will refine and finalize the MEAL Plan in collaboration with USDA and the Government of Senegal's *Ministère de l'éducation nationale* (MoE) and hire an independent, third-party evaluator to conduct the baseline assessment for the performance indicators.

Program Overview

The proposed five-year project is a follow-on and expansion to Counterpart's implementation of two phases of McGovern-Dole projects in St. Louis region of Senegal, including the current round of funding for the *Sukaabe Janngo* project (2018-2022) and the *Transition d'Alimentation dans les Cantines Scolaires au Sénégal/TACSS* (2018-2020). Through *Sukaabe Janngo*, Counterpart supports 204 primary (elementary) schools and 66 pre-primary (preschools) schools. The *Sukaabe Janngo II* project will work to phase out support to these schools in St. Louis and will support 238 new primary schools and 47 new pre-primary schools in the Kolda and Sedihou regions of Casamance. To avoid duplication with the anticipated USAID *Renforcement de la Litteratie au Senegal* (RELIS) Activity¹, the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project will focus reading interventions on Grades 4-6 in the 238 primary schools in Casamance.

Counterpart will serve 119,395 primary school children and 14,942 preschool children in 555 schools with a package of activities including school feeding, nutrition, health, WASH, literacy interventions (primary schools only), and agricultural activities with their families benefiting through linked maternal and child health and nutrition actions targeting pregnant and lactating women, and children under five. *Sukaabe Janngo II* will (1) accelerate the capacity building. Counterpart has already begun with government agencies, school administrators, and local school management committees (SMCs) to fund and manage school feeding programs while overseeing nutrition, health, and hygiene improvements in schools; (2) further advance and innovate literacy teaching skills to maximize reading and writing outcomes; (3) reinforce positive social and behavior practices to sustain learning opportunities for girls (Casamance) and boys through community actions with families, and (4); enhance sustainable school feeding operations through Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) with smallholder farmers, and school-linked gardens and fields. Schools in St. Louis will fully transition to community-led school feeding under the SMCs, and Casamance schools will be positioned early for sustainability readiness. Table 1 presents, by project year (PY), proposed rollout, scale-up, and phase-out of activities in each region and associated MEAL activities.

¹ <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=333609>

Table 1: Activity & MEAL Rollout, According to Region

	Activity	PY1 (2021-2022)	PY2 (2022-2023)	PY3 (2023-2024)	PY4 (2024-2025)	PY5 (2025-2026)
St. Louis region (n=270 treatment schools, including 66 pre-primary)	School Feeding (SF) + THRs	√	√	Government-led (support of French Aid)	Government-led (support of French Aid)	Government-led (support of French Aid)
	LRP	√	√	Government-led	Government-led	Government-led
	Building & Rehab	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Literacy/ WASH/ Nutrition	√	√	Government-led	Government-led	Government-led
	MEAL	Monitoring & Learning, Final assessment of <i>Sukaabe Janngo</i>	Monitoring & Learning	Monitoring & Learning	Special Study (in PY4)	N/A
Casamance: Kolda & Sedhiou regions (n=285 treatment schools including 47 pre-primary)	School Feeding (SF) + THRs	Start-up	√	√	√	√
	LRP	Start-up	√	√	√	√
	Building & Rehab	Start-up	Start-up permissions	√	√	√
	Literacy/ WASH/ Nutrition	Start-up & literacy activities	√	√	√	√
	MEAL	needs assessment, baseline, Monitoring & Learning	Monitoring & Learning	Midline, Monitoring & Learning	Monitoring & Learning	Final, Monitoring & Learning

Evaluation Approach and Methodologies

I. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Overview

MEAL systems and activities that link monitoring and evaluation to learning, adaptive management, and accountability. Summative evaluations will build on the monitoring data and glean learnings from across all types of evidence and sources. Each evaluation will first explore and identify gaps in learning based on monitoring data and these gaps will inform evaluation research questions. We will leverage our own data sources, such as *Sukaabe Janngo* project documentation and the baseline assessment, to define and refine our evaluation questions and research questions for the planned special studies. Data collected at evaluation points (i.e., baseline, midterm, final) will draw from a range of respondent groups – those included in monitoring data and those not – with the intention to bring together multiple perspectives across time to triangulate data. Counterpart designed a tailored database to capture all project data in real time, run a multitude of reports, and produce performance analysis for all project components. This database will help all consortium partners, both management and technical

teams, to use real time data to make improvements for all activities. Counterpart will use this evidence to inform adjustments in activities.

Use participatory learning to adapt activities. The Program Evaluation & Learning Manager will follow-up data collection and analysis with **Learning to Action Discussions (LADs)** to discuss with the broader team the significance of the data, what we have learned, and what adaptations may be necessary to stay on track or make activities more effective. The Program Evaluation & Learning Manager and the Chief of Party (COP) will gather key staff and MoE stakeholders to help design or validate the questions for the mid-term and end-line evaluations.

Disseminate learning and evidence with key stakeholders. We will ensure findings from baseline, midline, and end-line assessments are shared through **dissemination events** to contribute to learning and help build the evidence base for similar USDA programs. Key stakeholders will include national-level authorities from the ministries of education, health, and agriculture, regional/departmental ministry representatives (operational-level), project schools, and non-governmental actors in school feeding, including the WFP, GRDR, FAO, etc. Any independent evaluator (IE) hired by Counterpart will be responsible for working with Program Evaluation & Learning Manager to facilitate the dissemination events. Participants in dissemination events will be asked to interpret and provide feedback to improve the design of future activities. These sessions will also support shared understanding of the project's performance and spark in-depth technical discussion.

We will use the midterm dissemination events to focus on the theme of sustainability planning and activities. The Program Evaluation & Learning Manager and the COP will organize and facilitate a series of **Pause and Reflect sessions** in St. Louis with key stakeholders and decision-makers to generate lessons and make recommendations about the sustainability plans and generate recommendations about post-graduation impact of USDA-funding.

Baseline, Midterm and Final evaluations that address OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The baseline study will establish initial values for performance indicators and enable us to set targets. All valuations will examine OECD DAC evaluation criteria²: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. *Relevance* examines “is the intervention doing the right thing?”; coherence examines “how well does the intervention fit?”; *effectiveness* examines “is the intervention achieving its objectives?”; *efficiency* examines, “how well are resources being used?”; *impact* examines, “what difference does the intervention make?”; and *sustainability* examines, “will the benefits last?”

II. Monitoring

Counterpart's monitoring approach is designed to yield data for accountability and learning in equal measure. Counterpart will approach indicator reporting as an opportunity to embed an efficient and effective CLA model. For instance, Counterpart will report against indicators from a sample of schools that allows greater emphasis on quality of evidence that is fit for purpose; the sample approach also increases availability of resources to engage with the data and extract insights routinely. By using a sample-based approach to monitoring, Counterpart will not compromise *quality* or *type* of evidence to gain a larger *volume* of data and balances hard-to-

² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

measure indicators of impact and effectiveness with numbers of schools from which data are collected.

The project's MEAL team will be led by a Program Evaluation & Learning Manager based in Dakar. In St. Louis, during the overlap of PY1 of *Sukaabe Janngo II* with PY4 of the current *Sukaabe Janngo*), a MEAL Assistant and two data analysts will be based in St. Louis and 24 facilitators throughout St. Louis to oversee data collection in the 270 schools. In PY 2, the St. Louis staff will decrease to a Data Analyst, 18 facilitators, and one Lead Facilitator all working remotely. A similar structure will be built out for Casamance, and selected MEAL staff in St. Louis will eventually be transferred to the Kolda office after PY1. In Casamance, there will be a Kolda-based M&E Officer and Data Analyst, with 20 facilitators and two Lead Facilitators covering Kolda and Sedhiou. The monitoring structure will be based on a monitoring plan for rotating samples of schools (see below for more details). Facilitators in both St. Louis and Casamance are tasked with school feeding oversight but will also support on-site data collections. Facilitators will be trained in data collection (initial workshop, annual follow-up training workshops, and periodic in-field supervision and coaching) School management committees are also trained in reporting data. Counterpart has a system of data collection with all the necessary tools (Kobo collect and tablets, data collection forms, ledgers, etc.) As facilitators will not have a direct reporting line to the MEAL staff but are best placed to act upon the data being collected, the MEAL approach includes building their capacity to ensure that reflection and response to learnings occur at all levels of the project, including at the school level.

Monitoring in Casamance will be conducted in samples of schools on a rotating basis. A rotating sample of 20 schools per year using a random sampling by department will allow greater depth in data collected and learnings gleaned, including evidence of effectiveness—such as observations of changes in behavior, changes in attitudes or extent of use of resources.

III. Evaluation

Counterpart will hire a firm to conduct independent evaluations in Casamance for the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations of the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project. Counterpart will hire a local IE in year 4 of the project to conduct a multi-part special study focused on sustainability. In both St. Louis and Casamance, Counterpart will use a *quasi-experimental impact evaluation*, comparing outcomes in project schools to outcomes in comparison schools. The logic for this methodology is elaborated below.

Counterpart will manage evaluations using a phased approach. Phase 1 starts with the IE team taking stock of available performance monitoring data, drafting, and refining tools with input from Counterpart, refining research questions with input from Counterpart and USDA, and planning analyses accordingly. Phase 2 focuses on collecting and analyzing primary data to answer the research questions and report against indicators. Phase 3 focuses on interpreting and reflecting on the data, bringing in key stakeholders, and adjusting activities.

St. Louis Evaluation Plan. Counterpart will work with these same 270 *Sukaabe Janngo* treatment schools from the current McGovern-Dole project in the new phase of the project to provide the necessary handover support to graduate these schools from USDA support. This project evaluation uses a quasi-experimental design. . The final evaluation from the *Sukaabe Janngo* project will serve as the baseline for the one year of implementation in St. Louis of this new project, which is why no baseline assessment is included in this MEAL Plan or in the

budget. The impact study will focus on project impact and sustainability, specifically for the previous five years, but essentially for the whole nine years of USDA programming in the region. Using the special study in St. Louis is a unique opportunity for USDA and Counterpart to assess impact of interventions and sustainability of outcomes after USDA support ends.

Casamance Evaluation Plan. Counterpart will also use a quasi-experimental IE design in Casamance. The evaluation will compare outcomes in 285 project schools in target clusters with outcomes in comparison schools. We will randomly select schools from within targeted “treatment clusters” in Sedhiou and Kolda and match these to schools with similar characteristics in “comparison clusters” using a Propensity Score Matching approach. This matching approach utilizes a range of variables, including school size, number of schools in the cluster, student performance data on standardized assessments (as available), and additional parameters that will be identified in the needs’ assessment. A portion of the control schools will be with canteens (we propose one quarter of the 65 schools, if possible), while the remaining schools will be without project support by other organizations. Other projects include USG-funded activities in local governance (GoLD), nutrition (Kawolor), and informal education (Passerelles), in addition to UNICEF. Counterpart plans to use a difference-in-differences (DiD) approach in addition to performance evaluation to measure impact and intermediate outcome. DiD focuses on difference in outcomes across timepoints and compares the appearance of the “first difference” in participating schools with the difference in comparison schools (the “second difference”). Counterpart has selected this approach because DiD isolates the project/activity’s impact on outcomes by identifying the treatment effect difference between groups and it enables the evaluator to attribute impact to the observed differences between groups. Findings from the evaluation will be considered with performance data from monitoring activities to help determine the effectiveness of activities and unpack the ‘how’ and ‘why’ behind the DiD results.

The three evaluations in Casamance and the one post-graduation evaluation/special study in St. Louis will be conducted by an IE. The IE will be selected based on their ability to pivot fieldwork and design based on realities in the region at the time of the evaluation and their familiarity with mixed-methods research and the proposed evaluation design. Table 2 below provides an overview of the proposed sampling and tools in St. Louis and Casamance.

Table 2. Baseline, Midterm, and Final Summary of Tools and Sample

	Project Year 1	Project Year 3	Project Year 5
St Louis			
Target grades	G4-G6 in 204 primary schools plus 66 pre-primary	No direct activities	No direct activities
Proposed sample	n/a	Special study (Y4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 4-6 • MoE stakeholders • LRP stakeholders (producer organizations, processors, purchasing groups/SMC, ANCAR, Academic Inspectors-regional/departmental, community field participants) 	N/A

	Project Year 1	Project Year 3	Project Year 5
Proposed tools	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assessment: ASER and EGRA with the same students • Surveys • KIIs, FGDs 	N/A
Casamance			
Target grades	G4-G6 in 238 primary schools plus 47 pre-primary	G4-G6 in 238 schools, 47 pre-primary <u>Note:</u> Cohort 2 G4 teachers begin literacy training	G4-G6 in 238 schools plus 47 pre-primary
Proposed sample	Baseline: Grades 4-6 in 65 target schools and 65 comparison schools (8 students per school with at least 3 who are tracked), 26 preschool (13 target /13 comparison), School Director (1), SMC (2), teachers (3), parents (2), cooks (2), households, pregnant women, health/education authorities, cohort of 650 students to track BMI (same students each evaluation)	Midterm: Same sample size 2:1 ratio of Grade 4 students to Grades 5, 6	Final: Same sample size <u>Note:</u> G6 students + teacher will be same as G4 at midterm
Proposed tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EGRA • ASER (St. Louis) • Surveys • Observations • KIIs, FGDs • BMI data 	Same	Same
Outcomes Indicators	MGD 1 (customized), MGD 2, MGD 4, MGD 6, MGD 9, MGD 10, MGD 19, MGD 20, MGD 21, LRP 7, LRP 8, LRP 12	Same ³	Same ⁴

Reading Assessment Tools. The *Sukaabe Janngo* evaluation utilizes the ASER assessment to measure project impact. The proportion of students reading at an ASER level 5 (students can read Grade 2 text) is reported against McGovern-Dole Standard Indicator #1 under the current project. While the evaluation will report the change in percentage of students who by the end of

³ In the event that a ceiling effect is observed using the Grade 2 content, the indicator will be reported against using on-grade level content. As a result, the indicator will capture learning levels after four years, five years, and six years of primary schooling.

⁴ See previous

footnote.⁵https://www.academia.edu/19630471/Senegal_Early_Grade_Reading_Assessment_EGRA_Results_from_Senegalese_Primary_School_Students_Learning_to_Read_in_French_and_in_Wolof_Report_for_the_World_Bank

grade four primary schooling respectively demonstrate that that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text at midterm and final, continued use of the ASER in the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project presents some challenges, including:

1. Ceiling effect: The ASER may have a ceiling effect among students in higher grades and therefore may under-estimate their true ability in literacy.
2. Skills assessed: The ASER does not assess skills such as comprehension or writing.
3. Language of Instruction (LOI) not accounted for: The LOI in Grades 4-6 is French while the LOI in St. Louis for Grades 1-3 is local language; the ASER assesses students' literacy ability in French on Grade 2 content. The MoE is expected to roll out bilingual instruction in the Casamance beginning in 2025.
4. ASER not aligned with USAID Activity: USAID's RELIS activity is expected to operate in Kindergarten to Grade 2 and use an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)—not ASER—to report literacy outcomes.

Given these challenges, *Sukaabe Janngo II* will utilize an EGRA with French subtasks to measure the literacy skills among students in Grade 4, 5 and 6 in oral and written subtasks in Casamance. The EGRA will include subtasks designed to (1) report against the modified McGovern-Dole Custom Indicator (to replace standard indicator #1) of reading ability at the end of four years of schooling; (2) assess the abilities of students at their grade level (i.e., Grades 4, 5 and 6) to inform project interventions; and (3) identify gaps in skills between content taught in local language in early grades and those taught in French in upper primary grades to further inform project activities. In order to have comparability between *Sukaabe Janngo I and II*, common French-language EGRA subtasks of reading passage and comprehension questions will be given at the same time as the ASER test to the same students in St. Louis.

To report against McGovern-Dole SO1, “the percentage of students who by the end of grade four primary schooling respectively demonstrate that that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text,” students in Grades 4-6 will be assessed on EGRA subtasks in French and judged against benchmarks set for their grade level. In other words, to meet the reporting benchmark, a Grade 4 student will need to read and write at a Grade 4 level passage and answer comprehension questions based on Grade 4 benchmarks on that content. The on-grade-level content will be used to assess project impact against students in non-participating schools on the same content. To the extent possible, Counterpart will examine differences in EGRA scores between children who report attending preschool and those who do not.

To adapt the EGRA and establish benchmarks for Grades 4-6, the project will collaborate with the USAID RELIS project and MoE. To assess impact and report against McGovern-Dole Standard Indicator #1 in Casamance, Counterpart proposes to adapt the French-language EGRA tool originally adapted in Senegal for a 2008 World Bank study and add subtasks as appropriate and as agreed with the MoE. Counterpart will conduct an adaptation workshop with the MoE to (1) update the 2008 French language EGRA tool⁵ to current EGRA guidance included in the *EGRA Toolkit: Second Edition* and (2) add subtasks as needed for indicator reporting and

⁵https://www.academia.edu/19630471/Senegal_Early_Grade_Reading_Assessment_EGRA_Results_from_Senegalese_Primary_School_Students_Learning_to_Read_in_French_and_in_Wolof_Report_for_the_World_Bank

assessing on-grade-level performance. The project will seek to align workshop activities and outputs (benchmarks, EGRA subtasks) to facilitate consistency of measurement tools across grade levels. For example, Counterpart will collaborate with the USAID RELIS project to establish benchmarks for Grades 4, 5 and 6 students on the required indicator.

Additional surveys, observations and qualitative tools are described further under the baseline study.

Baseline Study

For St. Louis, Counterpart will use *Sukaabe Janngo*'s final evaluation (estimated completion date is March/April 2022) as the St. Louis region's baseline measure for this new project to avoid duplication and interruption of implementation activities that would be arise if there was a separate baseline assessment. The *Sukaabe Janngo* project final evaluation in St. Louis will serve three distinct purposes: (1) to measure impact of the current project, (2) to establish a baseline measure for the new project, and (3) to generate lessons learned for transfer to implementation in the Casamance.

In the Kolda and Sedhiou regions of Casamance, Counterpart will contract an IE to conduct the baseline prior to the start of interventions. The baseline evaluation in Casamance will serve to (1) establish values for indicators with non-zero baseline values against which to measure future progress against expected results, (2) establish comparability of treatment and comparison schools in Casamance, and (3) establish questions to test the project ToC. Findings from the independent baseline will be used to revise yearly targets for the project's performance indicators and will be used as a reference upon which to measure performance every six months of the fiscal year and in the midterm and final evaluations. The findings of the baseline will also be used by the project leadership to re-examine the ToC, refine the program design with input from the project's senior technical management, and answer learning agenda questions.

Counterpart's Program Evaluation & Learning Manager will draft and share the baseline evaluation terms of reference (TOR) for Casamance with Counterpart Headquarters for input before sharing with USDA. The TOR will outline the scope of work, instructions, and criteria for applications. The IE will be responsible for performing all tasks including finalizing the mixed-method, quasi-experimental, performance evaluation methodology and design, creating or adapting the tools and piloting them with key stakeholders, training and selecting enumerators and/or experienced local data collection firms. Counterpart will ensure the autonomy of the IE and will include a base period for the baseline evaluation and optional periods for the mid/final evaluation to provide risk protection in the case of poor performance.

The baseline study in Casamance will include an EGRA and quantitative and qualitative tools administered to a range of respondents, including students, teachers, school administrators, SMC members, parents, community members, cooks, and various GoS officials.

Baseline Evaluation Questions:

1.

The evaluation will be based on the five standard evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The main evaluation questions are as follows:

1. What are the benchmarks for the indicators?

2. What are the factors influencing non-USDA funded activities in project schools and their impact? What are the mitigating factors for uptake of project activities?

Specific research questions

The following points below highlight the areas of particular interest for the baseline evaluation, they are not exhaustive and do not necessarily cover all the objectives of the evaluation. They are intended to guide the evaluator in defining the direction of this evaluation.

MGD project level performance

- Have program outputs and outcome targets been achieved? (see “MGD Outcome Indicators that Require Baseline Values” table below)

School feeding and nutrition

- ∕ What is the effect of school feeding on attendance, enrollment and attention?
- ∕ How effective are take home rations at increasing attendance among girls in 5th and 6th grades?
- ∕ What are the shares of the total recommended feeding schedule per student in project schools that are from non-USG sources (disaggregated by source)?

Education and Literacy

- How effective are reading-oriented extra-curricular activities in improving literacy?
- How effective are teacher trainings?

Health

- What is the effect of deworming medicine on student attendance?
- What is the effect of latrine quality on student attendance, especially for girls?
- How closely are students following handwashing recommendations? Are they practicing at home too?

Methodological

- What is the best way to measure the three undefined MGD outcome indicators?

School Feeding Sustainability

- What is government capacity to manage school feeding at regional and national levels?
- What commitment has the government shown on school feeding? (e.g. have they updated the school feeding policy, do they have a national strategy, plans to expand school feeding budget, etc.)

Table 3: Proposed Baseline Study Timeline

Activity	Dates
Draft baseline ToR	December 2021
Contract with independent, third-party evaluator	December 2021/February/March 2022
Third-party evaluator prepares Baseline Plan, develops data collection tools, selects study participants	March/April 2022
Baseline fieldwork	May 2022
Data cleaning, analysis and baseline report writing	June 2022
Counterpart review of draft baseline report, evaluator incorporation of feedback	June/July 2022
Baseline Report submitted to USDA	July 2022
Dissemination event	August/September 2022

Sampling

The baseline sample will be based on a two-stage random cluster sampling plan. In the first stage, schools will be selected at random from each cluster, followed by the selection of students, teachers, school administrators, SMC members, parents, community members, and cooks from sampled schools. Students will be sampled to ensure proportional gender participation. The sample size for the sample unit (student) was calculated using a continuous outcome measure. Optimal Design software was used to calculate the sample sizes with the standard 80% power, 5% significance level, and an ICC of 0.30. The required sample size is 1,800 students, or 900 students in 65 treatment and 900 students in 65 comparison schools. At baseline, the sample will be evenly distributed across grades 4-6 (300 students per grade in each group). See Table 4 for sample sizes for other respondent groups.

Table 4: Anticipated Additional Sample Sizes

Respondent Group	Proposed Sample Size in Casamance
Preschool	5 members (director, educator, cook, 2 parents)
Parent and community members	5 members
School administrators	Each of 65 treatment schools sampled and 65 comparison schools sampled
Grade 4-6 classroom teachers	Teacher in sampled class in each grade
School Management Committee members	2 in each sampled school
Cooks	2 in each sampled school
MoE district officials	3-4 per cluster
Ministry of Education, GoS regional officials	5-10 identified in collaboration with USDA and USAID

As noted, the final evaluation of the *Sukaabe Jango* project will serve as the St. Louis baseline measure for the new phase of the project. In PY4, one- to two-years post-graduation, a special study/impact evaluation will be conducted in schools sampled at baseline.

Tools

The baseline study will utilize the following tools to meet the purpose listed:

Table 5. Summary of Evaluation Tools Proposed

Tool	Respondent	Purpose
EGRA	Grade 4-6 students	Assess literacy skills in local language at the Grade 2 level and on-grade level in French in Grades 4, 5, and 6
Classroom observation tool	Grade 4-6 classrooms	Observe improvements in literacy instruction, use of materials among teachers and reading behaviors and attentiveness among students
Cook survey	Cooks in sampled primary and pre-primary schools	Assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to secure food storage, hygienic food preparations, food safety in school meals, maintenance of school kitchen/canteens
Teacher survey	Teacher and/or other school administrators in primary schools	Assess knowledge and practice of efficient management of food storage, preparation, inventory management and school feeding, including sourcing local commodities for school feeding in addition to USDA food aid commodities, benefits from THRs.
Student survey	Grade 4-6 students	Assess extent of participation in USDA-funded activities, including school meals, benefits from take home rations, in-class participation levels, use of in-class literacy materials, awareness of nutrition and use of WASH facilities
School observation checklist	Teacher and/or other school administrator, observation in primary schools	Assess extent of USDA-funded activities and facilities in place in each sampled school, including for example WASH facilities, literacy and numeracy materials, canteen provisions, and staffing
Sustainability survey	MoE officials at department and/or regional level	Examine the structures and processes that can contribute to sustained outputs and outcomes among the target communities, policies and practices that advocate for sustained school feeding and nutrition programs beyond life of project
Qualitative methods (FGDs, KIIs)	Teachers, MoE officials, parents and/or community members	Capture experiences in and benefits from participation in USDA-funded activities. Reach a wide range of respondent groups to capture perspectives not feasible through surveys

Midterm Evaluation

The purpose of the midterm evaluation will be to assess progress to date against indicators and in implementation; evaluate the relevance of the interventions; provide an early signal of the

effectiveness of interventions; document lessons learned; assess sustainability efforts to date; and discuss and recommend mid-course corrections, if necessary.

The preliminary key evaluation questions to be answered during the midterm and final evaluations are organized according to OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.

Midterm & Final Evaluation Questions

Relevance:

1. To what extent do the project's interventions meet the educational, socio-economic, cultural, and political needs of beneficiaries?

Coherence:

2. To what extent have project interventions adapted to meet the changing needs of beneficiaries since baseline?
3. To what extent are project interventions aligned with the education strategy outlined in the Education Sector Plan (2018-2030)?

Effectiveness:

4. To what extent has the project achieved its goals and targets?
5. Which interventions contributed most significantly to the expected results or objectives?
6. What value do beneficiaries place on project activities (inputs) and resulting outputs and outcomes? Which interventions are more effective than others? In what contexts and why?
7. To what extent does the project complement other projects/interventions in the region and with other stakeholders?

Efficiency:

8. To what extent have project resources (inputs) been maximized?
9. Are there alternative approaches or use of resources that could yield the results?

Sustainability:

10. What progress has been made to reach the graduation milestones?
11. Is there evidence of sustainability of outcomes?
12. Is there evidence of improved contextual factors (political, social, cultural) that contribute to sustainability of outcomes?

Impact:

13. What were the expected and unintended positive and negative effects of the intervention on children, communities, and institutions? How did these effects change relative to the design of the project?
14. How does the intervention contribute to:
 1. Improved literacy of school-aged children? (McGovern-Dole SO1)
 2. Increased use of health, nutrition and dietary practices among students and families, including the most vulnerable and at-risk groups? (McGovern-Dole SO2)

3. Improved effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement?
(Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement SO1)

15. What do beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project perceive as the effects of the intervention on themselves?

Timeline

The midterm evaluation will be completed by March 2024 and will mirror the schedule described for the baseline evaluation.

Sampling

The midterm evaluation will utilize the same sampling approach as baseline. However, the sample will be adjusted to accommodate a comparison of a cohort of students whose teachers have received the full literacy inputs from the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project. At final evaluation, project impact in literacy will be examined at the subgroup level among students in Grade 6 who were in Grade 4 at midterm, and when their teachers began literacy trainings as part of Cohort 2. As a result, the midterm sample will be increased to 2,080 to accommodate the following grade-level samples: 8 G4 students, 4 G5 students and 4 G6 students. This results in 16 students/school for 65 treatment schools, or 1,040 students and a balanced sample from comparison schools. All other respondent groups will be sampled in the same way as described for baseline.

Tools

The tools described under the baseline study will be adapted as needed and used at midterm.

Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will collect data on all performance indicators and will seek to assess if the project achieved planned results, identify strengths, successes, challenges, and lessons learned related to implementation and sustainability for the GoS, USDA, Counterpart, and other relevant stakeholders.

The preliminary key evaluation questions to be answered during the final evaluation are aligned with those mentioned above for the midterm evaluation and may be slightly adapted in relation to impact and sustainability questions, based on midterm evaluation results.

Timeline

The final evaluation will be completed by April 2026, or six months prior to the completion of the project. The final evaluation will be done at the same time of year as the baseline and midterm evaluations.

Sampling

The final evaluation will build upon the midterm sample. As the midterm sample was adjusted to accommodate a comparison of a cohort of students whose teachers have received the full literacy inputs from the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project, those students will be in Grade 6 at the time of final evaluation. As a result, the final sample will consist of 4 G4 students, 4 G5 students and 8 G6 students per school sampled. The total sample at final evaluation remains the same as midterm. All other respondent groups will be sampled in the same way as described for baseline.

Tools

The tools described under the baseline study will be adapted as needed and used at final evaluation.

Alignment with the McGovern-Dole Learning Agenda

The project will conduct a special study focusing on sustainability of interventions following the conclusion of McGovern-Dole funding in St. Louis. The special study will address the following Learning Agenda questions:

- What are the key institutions (i.e., international, national, provincial/district and local stakeholders) and governance structures required to effectively deliver, implement, and sustain school meal interventions? What relationship structures among these institutions yield the most successful and effective school meal programs?
- What are the long-term impacts (five or more years) of school meal programs on local agriculture production and food safety and what variables affect these changes?
- What community-level systems of governance and management are required for the successful implementation and sustainability of school meal programs?
- Which components of school meal programs, including food production, procurement, and preparation of meals, are the most sustainable in terms of operational efficiency and why? Does the cost-effectiveness of these programs change over time and if so, how, and why?

Special Studies

A special study in PY4 of the project will focus on sustainability and consist of three unique parts: network diagram, effectiveness, and value for money (VfM). With the phase-out of USDA-funded activities in St. Louis in PY2 and first-time implementation in Casamance, there is a unique opportunity to examine these activities from a sustainability and value-for-money (VfM) lens. Counterpart plans to hire a local IE to conduct the multi-part special study. The sample for this study will be similar to the external evaluations (between 50 and 60 schools.)

The proposed study design and focus reflect the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project design which embraces a holistic approach to school feeding and learning outcomes with the intention to promote sustainable feeding and learning outcomes. With sustainability as a guiding principle of the project, it will work with government agencies, schools, and communities to support school feeding programs and operations that are embedded and owned by communities. The project aims to transition all schools in St. Louis to community-led feeding under SMCs and in Casamance position schools early to be sustainable in the long-term. Project activities designed to reinforce positive social and behavioral practices underscore efforts to create sustained learning opportunities for girls and build back achievements for boys.

The first part of the special study on sustainability will assess whether community-led school feeding is being implemented by SMCs under the purview of the Division of School Canteens after the end of USDA funding. The findings will help USDA and Counterpart understand if community ownership is in place and if there are strong processes of procurement, preparation, and operations.

Counterpart will construct a network diagram in the first part of the study to illustrate the relationships between entities yielding successful school feeding outcomes after USDA funding has ended. The network diagram will map the processes, organizations, individuals, and resources at the local and national level that lead to sustainable school feeding outcomes. The first diagram will depict a subset of schools where students continue to receive at least two meals per week through locally supported practices and supply chains, and the second will depict

schools that are not able to sustain school feeding. The network diagrams will help USDA and Counterpart explore school feeding supply chains, women’s gardening groups, community gardens, Sustainability Action Plans, procurement processes, and capacity building in food preparation. The differences in the two network diagrams are the foundation of the second part of the special study.

The second part of the study will focus on effectiveness. The differences between the network diagrams in the first part are further examined through qualitative and quantitative tools to isolate the drivers of sustainable school feeding. Examining the relationships that emerge, entities involved, and the contextual differences will support a nuanced understanding of ‘how’ and ‘why’ one network yields sustainable feeding while the other does not. This will include unpacking the effects of SBCC under the *Sukaabe Janngo II* project to promote positive education, health, and nutrition practices.

The third part of the study will focus on VfM. Specifically, it will examine the cost drivers behind the most effective inputs identified in the second part of the study. It will examine research questions such as, “What were the costs borne by USDA, by GoS, by communities, and by others to generate effective outcomes?” and “How are those costs sustained by GoS, communities and other stakeholders?” Using a cost-effectiveness methodology, this third part will generate findings that can inform USDA programming in Senegal and elsewhere, including activities in Casamance.

Evaluation Management

Counterpart’s Program Quality and Learning (PQL) unit at Headquarters in Arlington, VA will provide ongoing technical assistance around MEAL activities. A PQL MEAL Specialist will oversee, manage, and lend support to the *in-country* MEAL team, which consists of the Program Evaluation & Learning Manager, M&E Officer, Data Analyst, two field-based Lead Facilitators, and 20 field-based Facilitators that support MEAL activities. The program’s MEAL team will lead a robust and practical routine MEAL system, supporting the independent evaluator on the three evaluation points, facilitating Learning Agenda research, and embedding the CLA approach into MEAL systems. Throughout the evaluation process, Counterpart will be coordinating with local government authorities through formal and informal mechanisms while ensuring a constant feedback loop with (and from) USDA. To strengthen accountability and monitoring measures among the teachers, academic inspectors at the department level (IEF), school directors and SMC, Counterpart will facilitate local coordination with stakeholders at the district and school levels, ensuring regular interaction between these partners and schools.

Ethics

The evaluations will adhere to international good practices related to research ethics and protocols, particularly regarding safeguarding children and vulnerable groups. This includes giving due consideration to the following:

- Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the confidentiality of those participating in research;
- Safeguards for those conducting research;
- Do No Harm safeguards for children participating in research, including child-safe physical safeguards as well as emotional/psychosocial safeguards;
- Appropriate time allocated to engage with children participating in the research;

- Parental or caregiver consent concerning data collection from children or collation of data about children;
- Participant (or parent/ caregiver if under 18) consent for use of photos in evaluations/ presentations
- Age- and ability-appropriate assent processes based on reasonable assumptions about comprehension for the ages of children and the disabilities of children involved in the research;
- Appropriate spaces and methodologies tailored in consideration of unique needs of girls and boys, including those with disabilities and for vulnerable adults;
- Appropriate language and communication for different ages and the disabilities of children involved in the research.

Counterpart respect internationally accepted ethical standards for human subjects research as well as OMB’s "Standards & Guidelines for Statistical Surveys."

Risk & Risk Management Plan

The selected IE will be required to take reasonable measures to mitigate any potential risks to research participants and the delivery of the evaluation. Therefore, the IE will be required to propose contingency to mitigate any occurrence of each of the identified risks, including COVID-19 health and logistics related risks and specific safeguarding risks for both children and adults and mitigating strategies.

Learning

Counterpart’s MEAL strategy for this project integrates data and analysis from performance monitoring, evaluations, special studies, and CLA activities to support the project’s learning and generation of an evidence base for future USDA programs. The Chief of Party and Program Evaluation & Learning Manager will work together to ensure that data and lessons learned are used formatively to influence ongoing activity modifications. CLA activities that support learning are embedded throughout the MEAL plan: LADs, Pause and Reflect sessions, evaluation workshops, and staff-wide participation in M&E activities. The leadership team will champion and support reflection and data use among project staff and engage Counterpart Headquarters as needed to build capacity for data literacy throughout the project.

Evaluation Budget

Counterpart has allocated **3.74%** of the operating budget (Grand Total Costs) towards MEAL activities. Evaluation budget information is included in the attached budget narrative and budget summary. Activities related to (1) MEAL design and monitoring (start-up workshop, partners meetings and visits, multi-stakeholder dialogues learning events, communications support) and (2) Learning (program orientation events, learning events and dissemination, learning agenda events) have been allocated to specific activities costs. The following table presents high-level costs and allocated amounts.

Table 6: MEAL Activities Budget

MEAL Activity	Unit Cost	Total Cost (with escalation factor applied)
Baseline Evaluation	\$180,000	\$180,000
Mid-term Evaluation	\$170,000	\$176,868

Final Evaluation (including impact evaluation, Casamance)	\$190,000	\$205,662
Impact Evaluation (St. Louis only)	\$90,000	\$91,800
Supplies* (Tablets for facilitators in the field, Laptop Computers)		\$17,052
MEAL Learning Events & Communications* (Project Launch and Graduation Workshops; Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Learning Events; Communications Support)		\$139,660
Total		\$ 811,042

*For itemized budget please refer to the Budget Narrative, Page 2.