



## A STUDY OF THE SUSTAINED UPTAKE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION

How does developmental evaluation work in the USAID context, what factors help and hinder its success, and what is its value to stakeholders?

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

D2FTF	Digital Development for Feed the Future
DE	Developmental evaluation
DEPA-MERL	Developmental Evaluation Pilot Activity-Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning
DFS	Digital Financial Services
DI	Digital Inclusion
EIA	Office of Evaluation and Impact Assessment
iDesign	Innovation Design and Advisory team
PSP	Program and Strategic Planning Office
Search	Search for Common Ground
SOGE	Scaling Off-Grid Energy
Uptake DE	Sustained Uptake Developmental Evaluation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDI	William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan

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## CONSORTIUM INFORMATION

The DEPA-MERL consortium consists of Social Impact, the prime awardee; Search for Common Ground; and the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Developmental Evaluation Pilot Activity-Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (DEPA-MERL)—situated in the US Global Development Lab’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Innovations Program at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—is testing the effectiveness of developmental evaluation in the USAID context. Developmental evaluation (DE) was created to evaluate innovative programs that operate in complex environments and are thus expected to adapt over time. From March 2017 to December 2018, DEPA-MERL conducted a DE with the US Global Development Lab (hereinafter, “the Lab”). The Sustained Uptake DE (hereinafter, “the Uptake DE”) was conducted in service of the Lab’s mission to source, test, and scale development solutions. The Uptake DE helped several of the Lab’s teams to collect, analyze, and disseminate learnings regarding the sustained uptake<sup>1</sup> of innovations these teams seek to promote within and beyond USAID.

### EVALUATION BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

DE is an evaluative approach aimed at facilitating continuous adaptation of interventions. In this context, it involves having one or more Developmental Evaluators integrated into the implementation team, usually on a full-time basis. This report seeks to facilitate learning on the implementation of DEs in the USAID context. Readers of this report include USAID stakeholders, organizations funding or implementing DE, and Developmental Evaluators themselves. Using the information collected, the DEPA-MERL consortium aims to build on existing literature and offer readers targeted data and guidance to improve the effectiveness of DE. Additionally, the findings from this study will be compared to findings from other DE pilots conducted by DEPA-MERL. A cross-case comparative report is expected to be released in September 2019.

### METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

During all 22 months of the Uptake DE, the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI) team collected data to answer the following three research questions:

- **Research Question 1:** How does DE capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings in support of ongoing programming in a complex system, in the USAID context?
- **Research Question 2:** What are the barriers and enablers to implementation of DE in the USAID context?
- **Research Question 3:** What do key informants consider to be the value (added or lost) of conducting a DE compared to a traditional evaluation approach?

To answer these questions, the WDI team used mixed methods, which included [outcome harvesting](#). The WDI team conducted a document review, held semi-structured interviews with the Developmental Evaluator and stakeholders, and administered an electronic survey to stakeholders. Limitations of the study included resource constraints (time and funding), respondent selection bias, funding bias, and lack of a counterfactual.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “sustained uptake” refers to the adoption of Lab-team-promoted innovations by USAID Missions (or external stakeholders) beyond the direct period of engagement with those Lab teams.

## FINDINGS

### Research Question 1: How does DE capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings in support of ongoing programming in a complex system, in the USAID context?

A systematic review of the 22 harvested outcomes revealed that the Uptake DE used many approaches to *capture, promote, and enable the utilization* of emergent learnings. The Developmental Evaluator documented emails, meetings, and one-on-one conversations she had with stakeholders to capture this information. She conducted key informant interviews and facilitated workshops with all relevant stakeholders to gather and promote emergent learnings and data. She attended meetings and shared recommendations both formally and informally to enable the utilization of emergent learnings for program adaptations, with the goal of increased impact. The WDI team presents these key takeaways:

1. The most frequent types of changes were from outcomes that affected stakeholders' knowledge and capability (41%, 9 of 22 outcomes) and their team's strategy (36%, 8 of 22 outcomes).
2. The DE provided value to Lab teams across all areas, but the largest percentage of outcomes (32%, 7 of 22 outcomes) from the DE, resulted in improved operations for the stakeholder teams.
3. For the majority of outcomes (68%, 15 of 22 outcomes), the Developmental Evaluator helped stakeholders make changes based on DE data or recommendations by either offering advice or providing co-implementation support.

### Research Question 2: What are the barriers and enablers to implementation of DE in the USAID context?

Data from interviews with the Developmental Evaluator and with stakeholders revealed:

1. Several factors that influenced the implementation of the Uptake DE served as both barriers and enablers, including *integration of the Developmental Evaluator, DE readiness, skills of the Developmental Evaluator, USAID dynamics, and data utilization*.
2. Overall, *skills of the Developmental Evaluator and data utilization* were the top enabling factors. *USAID dynamics and stakeholder relationships* were the largest barriers to DE implementation.
3. With the exception of *skills of the Developmental Evaluator*, the prevalence of key factors varied over time. Further analysis showed that each factor was composed of different sub-themes that varied in importance over time.
4. Despite various USAID-specific barriers, the USAID Team Leads and award management staff played a role in ensuring the successful use of DE data and recommendations. For example, Lab teams did not wait until the end of the evaluation to use data from the Developmental Evaluator.

**Research Question 3: What do key informants consider to be the value (added or lost) of conducting a DE compared to a traditional evaluation approach?**

Based on the analysis of the Value of Developmental Evaluation Survey, which included responses from 16 stakeholders (70% response rate)– the WDI team found:

1. The majority of survey respondents thought the Developmental Evaluator addressed the needs of their organizations while incorporating an awareness of their complexities and also helping to facilitate adaptations to their programming. Of the 15 respondents who answered the question, 11 (73%) said that the Uptake DE was *much better* than traditional evaluation because it integrated the complexities of the local environment and provided timely feedback.
2. Respondents shared similar thoughts on the value of the Uptake DE, regardless of whether they had self-identified as being *somewhat involved* or *very involved* in the Uptake DE.
3. When reporting how the Uptake DE was most valuable, respondents emphasized the Uptake DE's ability to integrate data into strategy, decision-making, and adaptation; provide dedicated attention from a skilled evaluator; and improve stakeholder communication and relationships.
4. Of the 12 respondents who answered the question, 100% of them said that they would recommend the DE approach to other organizations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the combined findings of the three research questions outlined above, the WDI team identified eight key recommendations. These recommendations are organized into themes that follow the order in which one would execute a DE, from deciding whether to select DE as the evaluative approach, to launching a DE, to closing out a DE successfully.

Theme	Recommendations
<b>Selecting</b> DE as the evaluative approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm that a learning culture exists within the organization before selecting the DE approach.</li> <li>2. Determine the scope of work based on the time frame to best meet stakeholder needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Launching</b> a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Select the right Developmental Evaluator for your team.</li> <li>4. Develop familiarity with stakeholders to include them in DE design and implementation.</li> <li>5. Produce quick wins for stakeholders to increase buy-in for the DE.</li> </ol>
<b>Implementing</b> a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Acknowledge that the role of the Developmental Evaluator will evolve over time and expect it to do so.</li> </ol>
<b>Utilizing data</b> for decision-making in a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Be prepared to help mobilize stakeholders to make data-driven changes.</li> </ol>
<b>Closing out</b> a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Take active steps to close out the Developmental Evaluator's integration with the stakeholder teams.</li> </ol>

## INTRODUCTION

### THE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION PILOT ACTIVITY

Programs in complex settings or with untested theories of change often face a challenge when trying to use a traditional mid-term or end-term evaluation to assess their impact. In such programs, traditional evaluations<sup>1</sup> may fail to provide useful information in a timely fashion or capture important outcomes not defined at the outset. To help address this issue, the US Global Development Lab’s (hereinafter, “the Lab”) Office of Evaluation and Impact Assessment (EIA) at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded the Developmental Evaluation Pilot Activity-Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (DEPA-MERL)—a mechanism to pilot the use of developmental evaluation (DE) and assess its feasibility and effectiveness in the USAID context. DEPA-MERL is an initiative under the Lab’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Innovations Program and is implemented by Social Impact (prime awardee), Search for Common Ground, and the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI).

DE is an evaluative approach aimed at facilitating continuous adaptation of interventions. In this context, it involves having one or more Developmental Evaluators integrated into the implementation team, usually on a full-time basis. These Developmental Evaluators contribute to modifications in program design and targeted outcomes throughout implementation. They participate in team meetings; document decisions, processes, and dynamics; and collect and analyze data, feeding it back to the Lab teams on a regular basis. DEs are methodologically agnostic and utilization focused. They adjust research questions and methodological and analytic techniques as the project changes, and deliver contextualized and emergent findings on an ongoing basis.

### THE DEPA-MERL LEARNING AGENDA

The WDI team’s role in the DEPA-MERL consortium is to facilitate learning on the implementation of DEs in the USAID context. To accomplish this objective, the WDI team analyzed the Uptake DE during its 22-month duration, from March 2017 to December 2018. Using the data collected, the DEPA-MERL consortium aims to build on existing literature focused on the practice of DE.<sup>1</sup> Readers of this report—including USAID stakeholders, other organizations implementing DE, and Developmental Evaluators themselves—can use the data and recommendations to strengthen their own use of this approach. Additionally, the findings from this study will be compared to findings from two other pilots conducted by DEPA-MERL. A cross-case comparison report is forthcoming in September 2019.

### THE SUSTAINED UPTAKE DE

Over the course of its history, the Lab has evolved its programming related to scaling, adoption, acceleration, and sustained uptake.<sup>2</sup> This evolution occurred in response to its mission to source, test,

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, “traditional evaluation” refers to any formative or summative evaluation approach. This includes evaluations that measure the difference between pre- and post-program activities on a sub-set of the population that receives a treatment or intervention, or “one-off” evaluations that provide a snapshot or cross-sectional analysis of a program.

<sup>2</sup> The term “sustained uptake” refers to the adoption of Lab-team-promoted innovations by USAID country Missions offices (or external stakeholders) beyond the direct period of engagement with those Lab teams.



and scale development solutions and was also informed by previous lessons. Following the conception of the Lab-wide Priorities, the Lab agreed to undertake active learning to get smarter about the viability of different approaches to scale and sustain uptake.

The DE approach, implemented by DEPA-MERL, helped several Lab teams and offices—including Digital Development for Feed the Future (D2FTF), Scaling Off-Grid Energy (SOGE), Digital Financial Services (DFS), Digital Inclusion (DI), and EIA—to collect, analyze, and disseminate learnings regarding the sustained uptake of innovations Lab teams seek to promote within and beyond USAID. The DE appealed to the Lab teams, given its innovative and rigorous nature and, most importantly, its emphasis on providing on-demand, and utilization-focused deliverables.

### OVERVIEW OF TIMING AND PHASES OF THE SUSTAINED UPTAKE DE<sup>3</sup>

DEPA-MERL conducted the Sustained Uptake DE (hereinafter, “the Uptake DE”) for 22 months, from March 2017 to December 2018. The Uptake DE was conducted in three phases. In the first two phases, the DE was implemented with four teams at the Lab, namely:

- The **D2FTF** team seeks to promote the use of technology to accelerate the outcomes of the Feed the Future program, which is spearheaded by the Bureau for Food Security.
- The **SOGE** team works with internal USAID and external stakeholders to increase the use of off-grid energy solutions throughout the sub-Saharan African.
- The **DI** team facilitates the expansion of internet access in countries with a USAID presence to accelerate the Agency’s development objectives.
- The **DFS** team works to create inclusive financial sectors that serve the needs of governments and underserved populations.

The Uptake DE’s final phase examined the work of two additional teams under the Lab that are engaged in sustainability planning implementation and training:

- The Innovation Design and Advisory (**iDesign**) team sources, tests, and integrates innovative design practice through training and development of knowledge products. It also collaborates with the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning; Office of Acquisition and Assistance; and others to improve overall program design guidance, policy, and opportunities for USAID.
- The Program and Strategic Planning Office (**PSP**) supports teams across the Lab, providing guidance on monitoring and semi-annual portfolio reviews, and serving as the Lab’s program and budget office.

Importantly, in all three phases, EIA played a significant role, helping to guide the technical direction of the pilot, using and promoting DE results, and—in the final phase—directly benefiting from implementation of key recommendations.

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<sup>3</sup> For more details on the goals and activities of each phase of the Uptake DE, please see the [Developmental Evaluation Pilot Sustained Uptake: Final Report](#).

## FOCUS AREAS OF THIS REPORT

This report discusses evaluation results from the DEPA-MERL consortium’s learning agenda, led by the WDI team. This report includes an explanation and analysis of outcomes that occurred during the Uptake DE. This is followed by a detailed analysis of barriers and enablers to DE implementation, including an explanation of the top five priority factors affecting implementation and the role of USAID staff. Finally, the report shares stakeholders’ perceptions of the value of DE and concludes with recommendations.

## METHODOLOGY

The WDI team used mixed methods to understand the effectiveness of the DE approach, how it can be strengthened in practice, and what value it provides for its stakeholders within the USAID context.<sup>ii</sup> **Table I** lists the research questions developed by the DEPA-MERL consortium and the associated data collection methods.

*Table I: DEPA-MERL assessed the Uptake DE based on three research questions and a mixed-methods approach*

Research question	Methods	Data sources
1: How does DE capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings in support of ongoing programming in a complex system, in the USAID context?	Outcome harvesting (qualitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly reflection interviews with the Developmental Evaluator (n=21), with relevant program document review as required</li> <li>Substantiation interviews with keys stakeholders at endline (n=18)</li> </ul>
2: What are the barriers and enablers to implementation of DE in the USAID context?	Semi-structured interviews (qualitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly reflection interviews with the Developmental Evaluator (n=21)</li> <li>Substantiation interviews with keys stakeholders at endline (n=18)</li> </ul>
3: What do key informants consider to be the value (added or lost) of conducting a DE compared to a traditional evaluation approach?	Survey (quantitative and qualitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of Developmental Evaluation Survey with stakeholders at endline (n=16)</li> </ul>

The WDI team conducted over 55 hours of interviews and analyzed nearly 250 pages of qualitative data, including 100 pages of monthly reflection interview data, 126 pages of substantiation interview data, and approximately six pages of survey data. To DEPA-MERL’s knowledge, research of this kind—a systematic evaluation of DE—has been conducted only in a handful of other instances.<sup>iii,iv,v</sup>

## METHODS AND DATA TREATMENT

### RESEARCH QUESTION I

*How does DE capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings<sup>4</sup> in support of ongoing programming in a complex system, in the USAID context?*

<sup>4</sup> “Emergent learnings” are programmatic or environmental developments, including new information and changes in existing stakeholder relationships.

To answer this question, the WDI team used the outcome harvesting approach because of its usefulness in understanding how individual outcomes contribute to system-wide changes, particularly for complex programming with unclear cause-and-effect relationships.<sup>vi</sup> Using this six-step approach, researchers “collect (harvest) evidence of what has changed (outcomes) [in a program] and then, working backwards, determine whether and how an intervention has contributed to these changes.”<sup>vii</sup> (See **Appendix A** for a diagram of the six steps.) The WDI team defined a DE outcome as any change in the behavior, relationship, action, policy, and/or practice of stakeholders that the Uptake DE contributed to, either directly or indirectly. Contributions of the Uptake DE included documentation provided by the Developmental Evaluator, data collected, recommendations, or the promotion of ideas or best practices.

For each outcome harvested, the WDI team created written outcome descriptions to summarize what had changed (in stakeholders’ behavior, relationships, strategy, and/or policy, etc.), the contributions of the Uptake DE, and the significance of the change for stakeholders. Outcomes were substantiated through document reviews and interviews. The WDI team worked with the Developmental Evaluator to select and schedule interviews with 18 stakeholders. After all interviews were completed, the WDI team updated the outcome descriptions to align with what each substantiator had shared, to make the outcome descriptions as accurate as possible. For example, in some instances, the WDI team edited outcome descriptions to reflect how a stakeholder’s behavior had changed or how key deliverables of the Uptake DE were being used. After the substantiated outcomes were updated by the WDI team, the Developmental Evaluator and the DEPA-MERL consortium reviewed them for accuracy. The following sources were used to gather data during outcome harvesting:

- **Monthly reflection interviews:** The WDI team conducted 21 monthly reflection interviews<sup>5</sup> with the Developmental Evaluator via phone to harvest 22 outcomes. On these calls, the WDI team gathered the following information: details on high-priority emergent learnings, resulting changes (or lack thereof) to the teams, the significance of emergent learnings for the Lab teams, and relevant actions of the Developmental Evaluator related to these learnings or changes. As needed, the Developmental Evaluator shared supplemental documentation.
- **Substantiation interviews:** In October and November 2018 (after the conclusion of the second phase of the Uptake DE), the WDI team conducted substantiation interviews with 18 stakeholders. The DEPA-MERL consortium selected substantiators (i.e., persons who substantiated the outcomes through interviews) who were both knowledgeable and independent of the harvested outcomes. These substantiators discussed the harvested outcome descriptions, the outcome’s significance to their team, and the Uptake DE’s contribution to the outcome. The WDI team also asked substantiators if there were other contributing factors to the outcomes.

## RESEARCH QUESTION 2

*What are the barriers and enablers to implementation of DE in the USAID context?*

During the monthly reflection and substantiation interviews, the WDI team asked open-ended questions to learn of barriers to and enablers of the implementation of DE. These could include factors that the interviewees experienced or faced that were particular to the program and/or factors due to the local

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<sup>5</sup> The final monthly reflection interview conducted with the Developmental Evaluator included data from Month 21 and Month 22 of the DE.

context. The WDI team used the NVivo software and conducted line-by-line coding<sup>6</sup> of interview summaries for barriers and enablers. The WDI team ensured an inter-coder reliability of 80-90% on all codes or factors and discussed any coding-related discrepancies during internal weekly meetings. Before the launch of the Uptake DE, the WDI team conducted a literature review to identify 13 factors that could influence the implementation of DE (using a deductive approach). The WDI team also identified and added new factors by carefully reviewing the incoming data itself (using an inductive approach).

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3

*What do key informants consider to be the value (added or lost) of conducting a DE compared to a traditional evaluation approach?*

The WDI team administered an anonymous online survey to answer Research Question 3. The WDI team distributed the Value of Developmental Evaluation Survey to 23 stakeholders, of which 16 responded fully or partially (70% response rate). The Developmental Evaluator identified stakeholders who should receive the survey based on their role in the Uptake DE, with the objective of selecting persons from different Lab teams and different levels of involvement with the Uptake DE.<sup>7</sup> The data were analyzed using Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel software.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The WDI team faced challenges in collecting data during the Uptake DE. These are related to:

- **Resources (time and funding):** Due to the time-intensive nature of interviews with the Developmental Evaluator and substantiators, the WDI team could not interview all participants.
- **Selection bias:** The WDI team used purposive sampling to select stakeholders who had robust knowledge of the Uptake DE when identifying substantiation interview participants and end-line survey respondents. To reduce the possibility of selection bias, the WDI team worked with the Developmental Evaluator to co-select persons who would have both positive and negative perceptions of the Uptake DE.
- **Funding bias:** Several different funding structures were used across the participating Lab teams. Some teams contributed funds, while others did not. Hence, any responses related to cost-effectiveness of the Uptake DE may have been biased because of these differences.
- **Lack of a counterfactual:** There was no counterfactual available for this study. As an alternative, the WDI team triangulated data through verification from multiple sources, conducted ongoing data collection to reduce recall bias, and asked substantiators about other contributing factors (besides the Uptake DE) that may have influenced the harvested outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> Coding is an analytical process in which data, in qualitative form (such as interview transcripts), are categorized to facilitate analysis. See Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

<sup>7</sup> The DEPA-MERL consortium validated this list of stakeholders, but it was not reviewed by any stakeholders themselves.

## PILOT FINDINGS

Findings and their associated key takeaways are organized by the three research questions in this report.

**Research Question 1: How does DE capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings in support of ongoing programming in a complex system, in the USAID context?**

### RESEARCH QUESTION 1: DATA FINDINGS

#### HARVESTING AND SUBSTANTIATING OUTCOMES

During the Uptake DE, the WDI team harvested 22 outcomes. Of these outcomes, 16 were carefully selected for substantiation, with the remaining six substantiated via documentation. The WDI team used three levels of substantiation: *fully*, *partially*, and *disagree*. Of the 16 outcomes, 10 were *fully* substantiated, and six were *partially* substantiated. A partial substantiation meant that the substantiator did not *fully* agree or *fully disagree* with the outcome description and/or the contributing role of the Developmental Evaluator. Notably, none of the substantiators *disagreed* with any outcome descriptions.

#### CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

The WDI team classified each outcome of the Uptake DE into six categories of analysis:

1. **Role of the DE:** Did the Uptake DE capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning in the particular outcome?
2. **Type of change:** Did the outcome reflect changes primarily related to the knowledge and capabilities of stakeholders? To the strategy used by a participating Lab team? To the Lab team's engagement and relationships with other operating units at USAID? Or did more formal institutional and policy changes occur?
3. **Orientation of change:** Did the outcome result in a primarily positive or negative change in the short term—or did it effect both positive and negative changes?
4. **Level of change:** What part of the system did the particular outcome affect in the short term: the program, two operating units, the Lab, or USAID?
5. **Level of implementation support:** Was the Developmental Evaluator involved in the implementation of a DE recommendation? Did the Developmental Evaluator guide the participating Lab team, co-implement with them, do it by herself, or have no role?
6. **Value to program:** What kind of value did the outcome provide to the program or team? Did the outcome improve the Lab team's engagement with country Mission offices, operational efficiency, evaluation capacity, sustainability planning, or knowledge management?

(See **Appendix B** for the full list of harvested outcomes, along with their assigned categories.)

## OVERVIEW OF OUTCOMES BY TEAM

The WDI team also organized harvested outcomes based on their relevance to the four teams involved during the first two phases of the Uptake DE:

- **D2FTF:** Four outcomes harvested. Outcomes primarily focused on the processes and results related to sustainable exit planning for D2FTF.
- **SOGE:** Five outcomes harvested. Outcomes concentrated on changes to how the SOGE team envisioned its sustainable path toward acceleration of the off-grid energy sector, including the team’s close out and collective impact model for partnership.
- **DFS:** Four outcomes harvested. Outcomes predominantly captured changes related to the refinement of the DFS ecosystem theory of change, including operationalization of strategic programming and budgetary decisions.
- **DI:** One outcome harvested. Outcome captured the DI team’s increased desire to consult with the Developmental Evaluator to help facilitate a stakeholder mapping exercise.

In addition to the outcomes for the above teams, there were five outcomes related to improvements either for the Lab or for USAID headquarters. These outcomes included any instance where the changes from the Uptake DE had direct implications for a wider range of USAID stakeholders. The increased standardization of Mission engagement practices, as spurred by the Uptake DE’s *Mission Engagement Playbook*, serves as a prime example of an outcome in this category. The three remaining outcomes—including outcomes that involved all four teams (i.e., those not disproportionately affecting one team)—were categorized as “other.”

## ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES

The analysis showed diversity in the harvested outcomes of the Uptake DE. Throughout the 22-month engagement, the Uptake DE was able to *capture* (n=3), *promote* (n=5), and *enable the utilization of* (n=14) emergent learnings.<sup>8</sup> The outcomes affected multiple types of changes and varied in the value they provided. Of the 22 harvested outcomes, 17 had positive (77%) impacts, and five (23%) had both positive and negative impacts on stakeholders in the short term.

**Table 2** displays the distribution of the harvested outcomes by the different categories. Regarding the level of change, 12 of 22 outcomes (55%) occurred at the program level, which supports existing literature stating that most DE findings help enable programmatic or process-level adaptations. Some of the outcomes also created changes across the Lab and USAID. Additionally, six of 22 outcomes (27%) contributed to changes in more than one Lab team.

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<sup>8</sup> The “role of the DE” is incremental in nature because each subsequent sub-category builds off the previous category. For example, if the role of the DE was to *enable the utilization of* an emergent learning, the DE needed to first *capture* and *promote* that learning. Each outcome was categorized as one category. For example, if the DE *captured* an emergent learning and then subsequently shared or *promoted* a related recommendation, the outcome was categorized as *promote*, not *capture*.

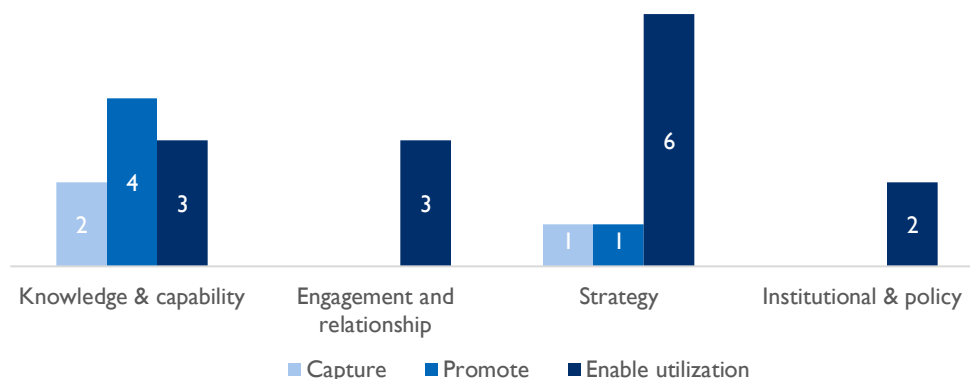
Table 2: Uptake DE outcomes were diverse based on their classification across six categories

	Role of the DE			Type of change				Orientation of change			Level of change			Level of implementation support provided by DE				
	Capture	Promote	Enable utilization	Engagement and relationship	Institutional and policy	Strategy	Knowledge and capability	Positive	Negative	Both	Program	Inter-OU	Lab	USAID	No role	Advised	Co-implemented	Self-implemented
# outcomes	3	5	14	3	2	8	9	17	0	5	12	6	2	2	7	9	5	1
% of all outcomes	14%	23%	63%	14%	9%	36%	41%	77%	0%	23%	55%	27%	9%	9%	32%	41%	23%	4%

	Value to program					
	Mission engagement	Operations	Evaluation capacity	Sustainability planning	Knowledge management	N/A
# outcomes	2	7	4	4	3	2
% of all outcomes	9%	32%	18%	18%	14%	9%

As shown in **Figure 1**, the Uptake DE catalyzed several different types of changes. These included behavioral changes (such as stakeholders’ engagement, relationships, knowledge, and capabilities) as well as operational changes (such as the Lab teams’ strategies or policies). The most frequent types of changes were outcomes that affected stakeholders’ knowledge and capability (41%, 9 of 22 outcomes) and their team strategies (36%, 8 of 22 outcomes).

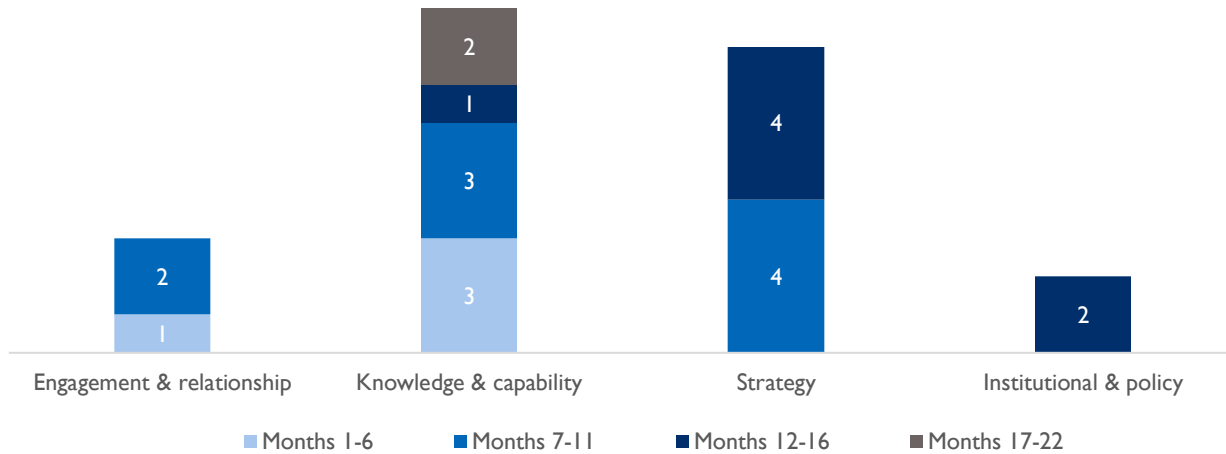
Figure 1: The majority of outcomes contributed to changes in the Lab teams’ strategies and their knowledge and capabilities, which substantiators indicated would have impacts that lasted beyond the timeline of the Uptake DE



Because outcomes were harvested on a monthly basis, the WDI team could pinpoint when the Uptake DE contributed to various types of changes. For example, as shown in **Figure 2**, the Uptake DE

contributed to knowledge and capability changes throughout the duration of the Uptake DE. In contrast, changes in the Lab teams' strategies, institutions, and policies occurred a year into the Uptake DE.

Figure 2: Changes to teams' knowledge and capabilities occurred throughout the evaluation, whereas strategy, institutional, and policy changes occurred about a year into the pilot



As shown in **Figure 3**, the largest number of outcomes (32%; 7 of 22 outcomes) resulted in improved operations for the teams and occurred when the Uptake DE enabled the utilization of an emergent learning (as opposed to only capturing or promoting the emergent learning). Additionally, four outcomes (18%) improved teams' sustainability planning, and four strengthened their evaluation capacity (18%). Three outcomes improved the teams' knowledge management (14%). Outcomes that occurred at the strategy level had the most diversity in terms of the value the Uptake DE offered (**Figure 4**).

Figure 3: While the largest number of DE outcomes provided value to the teams' operations, the Uptake DE provided value in other areas as well

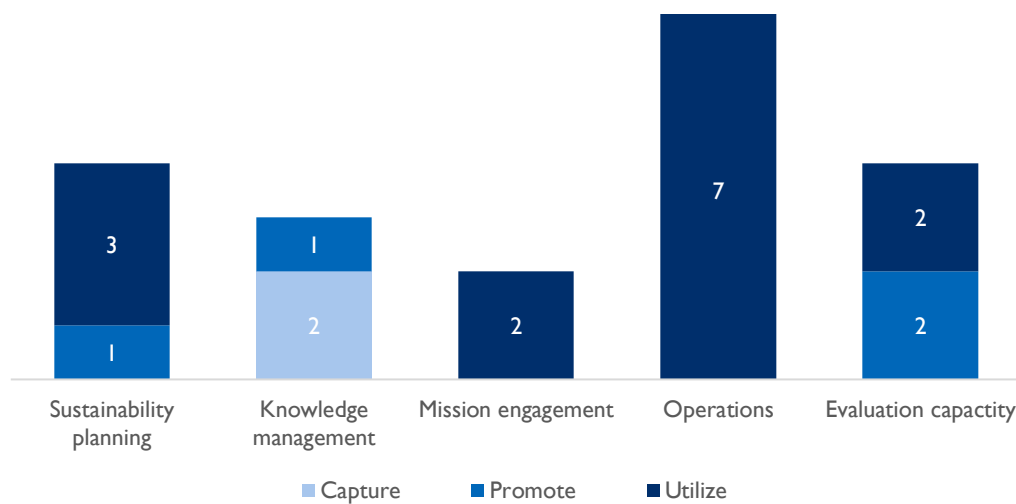
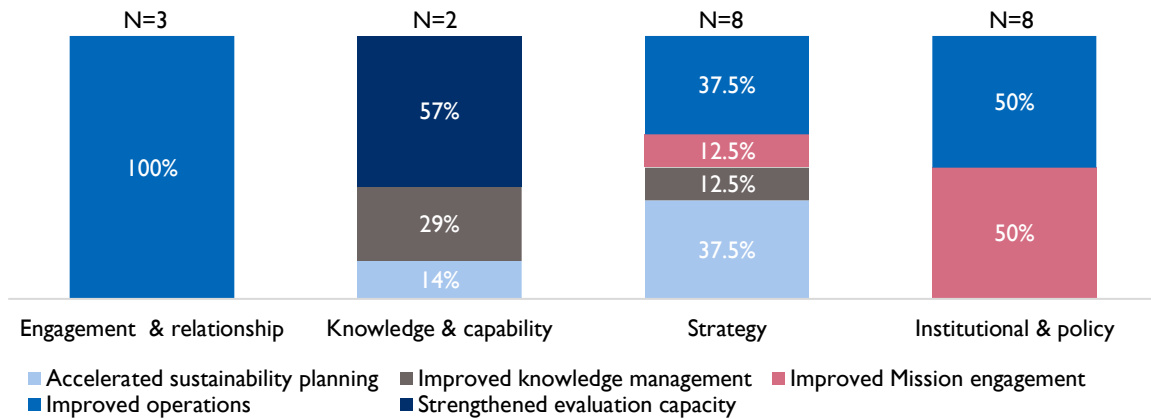




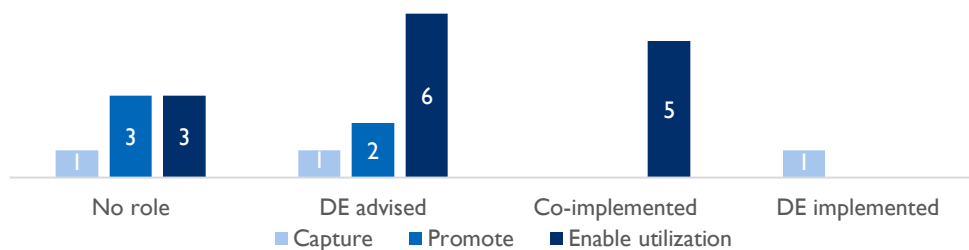
Figure 4: Outcomes that occurred at the strategy level had the most diversity in terms of the value to the team or program



### HOW DID THE DE CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRAM ADAPTATIONS?

Overall, the Uptake DE used a variety of approaches to capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings across the four Lab teams. In particular, the Developmental Evaluator captured emergent learnings by documenting emails, meetings, and one-on-one conversations that she had with stakeholders. The DE also drew on several different evaluative methods, including key informant interviews, process tracing, positive deviance case studies, and the outcome harvesting approach (which was later pivoted to include outcome-oriented theory of change exercises). To promote findings, she engaged stakeholders in one-on-one meetings and shared these in group meetings. When stakeholders needed advice, she offered it. When they requested help executing next steps, she facilitated workshops and created space for relevant stakeholders to reflect on how the data from the Uptake DE should influence their decision-making. In the evaluator’s words: *“My job is not over when I hand someone the recommendations. ... I help them by scheduling a strategic learning debrief. I am there to expressly facilitate action, to facilitate change and adaptation. If I only collect data and share findings, I’ve done 10% of my job.”*

Figure 5: For the majority of outcomes, the Developmental Evaluator helped stakeholders make changes based on DE data



For the majority of outcomes (68%, 15 of 22 outcomes), the Developmental Evaluator helped stakeholders make changes based on DE data or recommendations. The Developmental Evaluator “advised” teams when she offered guidance related to a recommended change or action (41%, 9 of 22 outcomes). She “co-implemented” a change when she took an active role in executing an action (23%, 5 of 22 outcomes). Interestingly, for nearly a third of the outcomes (32%, 7 of 22 outcomes), the

Developmental Evaluator had no direct role in helping to implement a change that was recommended based on the Uptake DE data. In these cases, the teams took on implementation of DE recommendations on their own. And, as shown in **Figure 5** above, even when the Uptake DE only captured or promoted an emergent learning, stakeholders still approached the Developmental Evaluator for advice.

### SYNTHESIS OF OUTCOMES HARVESTED: STAKEHOLDER GROUP EXAMPLE

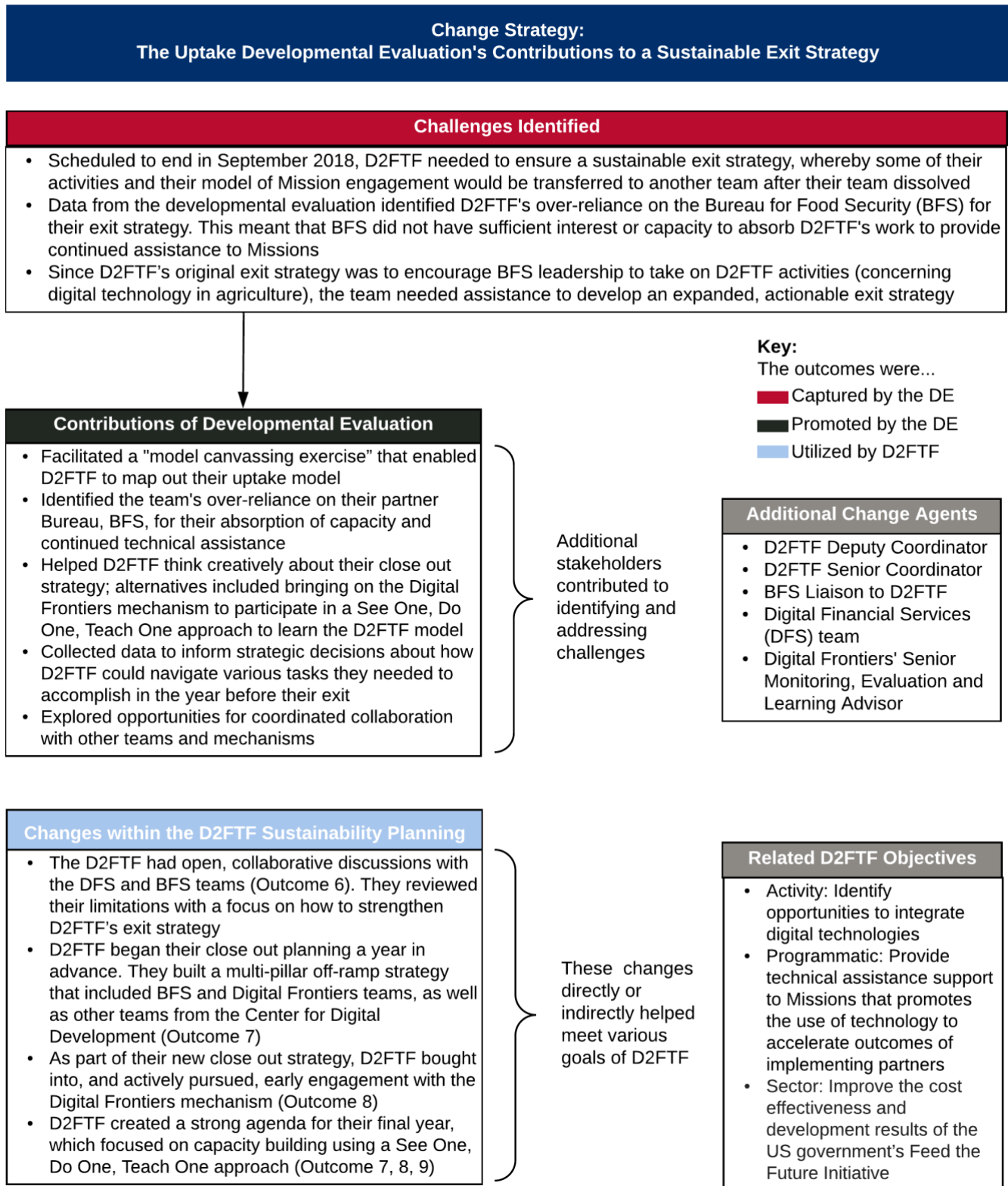
**Figure 6** demonstrates how the Uptake DE was able to capture, promote, and enable the utilization of emergent learnings within the context of the D2FTF team. With a specific focus on the refinement of the team’s exit strategy, **Figure 6** explains the evolution of the outcomes related to the D2FTF team by pinpointing challenges identified during the Uptake DE, contributions of the Uptake DE to promote change, additional change agents<sup>9</sup> who contributed to the outcomes, the resulting changes within the D2FTF team,<sup>10</sup> and related team objectives that were affected.

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<sup>9</sup> “Additional change agents” refers to individuals besides the Developmental Evaluator who influenced outcomes during the DE: They co-identified challenges and helped create change.

<sup>10</sup> “Changes within D2FTF” refers to the team leadership’s activities and decisions related to the challenges identified and the contributions of the DE to address the challenges.

Figure 6: The DE contributed to changes in the D2FTF team's sustainable exit strategy



**Key:**  
The outcomes were...

- Captured by the DE
- Promoted by the DE
- Utilized by D2FTF

## RESEARCH QUESTION 1: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Based on the analysis above, the WDI team identified the following key takeaways:

- 1. The most frequent types of changes were from outcomes that affected stakeholders' knowledge and capabilities (41%, 9 of 22 outcomes) and their teams' strategies (36%, 8 of 22 outcomes) (Figure 1).** Outcomes that affected teams' knowledge and capabilities occurred throughout the Uptake DE, whereas outcomes that affected strategy happened about a year into the Uptake DE (Figure 2). These data may inform how DE funders and implementers select the scope of work based on the time frame available to conduct the DE.
- 2. The DE provided value across all areas, but as shown in Figure 3, the largest percentage of outcomes (32%, 7 of 22 outcomes) resulted in improved operations for the stakeholder teams.** Other outcomes improved teams' sustainability planning (18%), evaluation capacity (18%), knowledge management (14%), and Mission engagement (9%). Also, as discussed with the Developmental Evaluator and the substantiators, the teams received key value in their progress toward becoming more learning-oriented and in their ability to use qualitative data for decision-making.
- 3. For the majority of outcomes (68%, 15 of 22 outcomes), the Developmental Evaluator helped stakeholders make changes based on DE data or recommendations by either offering advice or providing co-implementation support (Figure 5).** To serve in this manner as an internal member of the team, the Developmental Evaluator had to develop trust and have common values with the team. However, the Developmental Evaluator also strived to maintain objectivity in terms of her assessment of the teams' effectiveness, because she considered neutrality toward stakeholders' effectiveness as part of her functional role.<sup>viii</sup> The Developmental Evaluator also acknowledged the difficulty in maintaining objectivity, because each new evaluative effort she undertook would inevitably be influenced by the previous data and relationships she had developed as part of the Uptake DE.

During a call with Michael Quinn Patton, who is considered the founder of DE, the WDI team further discussed this idea of a Developmental Evaluator maintaining objectivity while also co-implementing recommendations. Patton emphasized the importance of all evaluators maintaining neutrality toward the effectiveness of a change, but he also recognized that in global systems, there is no place for an evaluator to remain external. "Evaluators," he said, "must have skin in the game" to evaluate a program. Patton suggested that a Developmental Evaluator's role is not to make top-down recommendations, but rather to facilitate conversations around the data gathered and offer scenarios and/or alternate pathways for stakeholders to co-create actionable recommendations themselves. He also shared that as a Developmental Evaluator builds trust with stakeholders and further integrates into teams, their role can evolve or change based on the stakeholders' needs and can be discussed and negotiated with the team.

## Research Question 2: What are the barriers and enablers to implementation of DE in the USAID context?

### RESEARCH QUESTION 2: DATA FINDINGS

The WDI team identified 13 factors with the potential to influence the implementation of DE.<sup>11</sup> (See **Appendix C** for definitions of the factors; examples will be shared in the “Comparing Stakeholders’ Perceptions of the DE” section.) The WDI team coded all monthly reflection and substantiation interviews and identified how frequently each factor was perceived to affect the implementation of the Uptake DE. The most frequently referenced factors were *skills of the Developmental Evaluator* (n=177), *data utilization* (n=158), and *data sharing* (n=149). In contrast, the least frequently referenced factors were *political dynamics* (n=16), *local and international dynamics* (n=11), *cultural norms* (n=8), *funding dynamics* (n=2), and *geography* (n=0).

*Table 3: Skills of the Developmental Evaluator was the biggest enabler, while USAID dynamics was the biggest barrier to DE implementation*

Factor	Percent of all enablers*	Percent of all barriers*
Skills of the Developmental Evaluator	17%	10%
Data utilization	14%	8%
Data sharing	12%	7%
Integration of the Developmental Evaluator	11%	10%
Leadership	11%	10%
Stakeholder relationships	9%	12%
DE readiness	8%	9%
USAID dynamics	6%	16%
Data collection	4%	2%
Funding dynamics	3%	7%
* Percentages do not total 100% because only the top 10 (of 13) most frequent factors are shown.		

**Table 3** displays the 10 most frequently coded factors and the corresponding percentage of total enablers and total barriers. *Skills of the Developmental Evaluator* accounted for 17% of all the enablers coded—this was a key factor across all monthly reflection and substantiation interviews. Other significant enabling factors included *data utilization* (14%), *data sharing* (12%), *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* (11%), and *leadership* (11%).

*USAID dynamics* served as the most substantial barrier, accounting for 16% of all barriers coded. Other barriers included *stakeholder relationships* (12%), *leadership* (10%), and *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* (10%). Notably, all factors served as both barriers and enablers in the implementation of the

<sup>11</sup> These factors were selected and applied across all three DEPA-MERL DEs. Some factors were more or less relevant, depending on the context of each particular pilot. For example, *cultural norms* was coded less often in the Uptake DE than in the Family Care First in Cambodia pilot.

Uptake DE. The factor *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* offers a prime example. For instance, stakeholders were *communicating and sharing information openly* with the Developmental Evaluator, which served as an enabler. On the other hand, *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* also served as a barrier in the later stages of the evaluation, as stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator learned how to navigate ending the Developmental Evaluator's integration during the close of the Uptake DE.

## COMPARING STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DE

To understand differences in perceptions between the Developmental Evaluator and stakeholders on factors that influenced the Uptake DE, the WDI team conducted a side-by-side comparison of the two perspectives (**Figure 7**).

**Perceptions of enabling factors:** Substantiators (i.e., persons who substantiated the outcomes through interviews) identified *skills of the Developmental Evaluator* and *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* as the two biggest enablers to implementing the Uptake DE. For example, substantiators felt that the Developmental Evaluator was very assimilated into their teams: “*She was a part of all of our meetings, she read all of our emails and was in all of our documents.*”

In contrast, *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* was only the seventh (out of 10) most frequently mentioned enabling factor by the Developmental Evaluator, while *data utilization* and *data sharing* topped her list. For example, during a typical monthly reflection interview, the Developmental Evaluator talked about how the success of the evaluation was enabled by the Team Leads' commitment to not only sharing information openly, but also engaging in proactive discussions about how to apply the insights directly in their work. To do this, Team Leads would often request separate meetings with the Developmental Evaluator to revisit the Uptake DE findings and “*to set up the plan and determine what, if anything, needed to be done before the larger meeting.*”

During substantiation interviews, stakeholders reflected on the various *skills of the Developmental Evaluator*, such as how “*evaluatively minded*” she was. One commented that the Developmental Evaluator had the “*capacity to crunch a lot of data points—that we didn't even realize were necessarily data points—and make sense of them.*” Substantiators also considered the Developmental Evaluator's skills in systems thinking, stakeholder mapping, and theory of change creation to be invaluable. In addition to noting her evaluation skill set, stakeholders focused on how the Developmental Evaluator used strong communication and facilitation skills to help their teams develop and act on next steps and actions required based on Uptake DE data. They considered these facilitation skills to be very important. One substantiator said the Developmental Evaluator “*contributed by being a great facilitator and allowing us the space to experiment with our thinking. And push the boundaries around where we should be going [as a team].*”

**Perceptions of barriers:** Both substantiators and the Developmental Evaluator identified *USAID dynamics* as the biggest barrier to implementation of the Uptake DE. According to one substantiator, this factor was attached to “*the culture of risk*” at the Agency and to conversations about whether USAID staff would be open and accepting to using the DE approach on a large scale. For example, one substantiator said, “*We have staff in our bureaus who have strong quantitative backgrounds, who are not dismissive but skeptical of [the] qualitative research [approaches that might be used in a DE].*”

Figure 7: The Developmental Evaluator and stakeholders had unique perceptions about which enablers of and barriers to the implementation of the Uptake DE occurred most frequently (listed in descending order)

Enablers		Barriers	
Developmental Evaluator (Monthly reflection interviews, n=21)	Stakeholders (Substantiation interviews, n=18)	Developmental Evaluator (Monthly reflection interviews, n=21)	Stakeholders (Substantiation interviews, n=18)
Data utilization	Skills of the Developmental Evaluator	USAID dynamics	USAID dynamics
Data sharing	Integration of the Developmental Evaluator	Stakeholder relationships	Integration of the Developmental Evaluator
Skills of the Developmental Evaluator	Data utilization	DE readiness	Leadership
DE readiness	Leadership	Skills of the Developmental Evaluator	Stakeholder relationships
Leadership	Data sharing	Integration of the Developmental Evaluator	Skills of the Developmental Evaluator
Stakeholder relationships	USAID dynamics	Leadership	Data utilization
Integration of the Developmental Evaluator	Stakeholder relationships	Data utilization	Funding dynamics
Understanding of DE	Data collection	Data sharing	Data sharing
USAID dynamics	Funding dynamics	Funding dynamics	DE readiness
Data collection	DE readiness	Data collection	Political dynamics

## TOP FIVE PRIORITY FACTORS

The WDI team selected five factors for further analysis: *integration of the Developmental Evaluator*, *data utilization*, *DE readiness*, *skills of the Developmental Evaluator*, and *USAID dynamics*. To select these factors, the WDI team considered which were least researched and could offer the most significant insights for future DE implementation.

**INFLUENCE OF PRIORITY FACTORS OVER TIME.** In four stages, the WDI team analyzed how the influence of the top five priority factors changed over time. These stages aligned with the work conducted by the four Lab teams that participated in Phase I and Phase II of the Uptake DE:

- **Beginning (months 1-6):** This stage aligns with Phase I research objectives of the Uptake DE. In this stage, work was conducted with the two Lab-wide Priorities teams: D2FTF and SOGE.
- **Middle (months 7-11):** After a few months of engagement with the two Lab-wide Priorities teams, the DEPA-MERL consortium and USAID’s award management staff at the Lab expanded the scope of the Uptake DE to include two additional teams: the DI and DFS teams (Phase II).
- **End (months 12-16):** In this stage, the Developmental Evaluator helped the four Lab teams to make strategic changes to their programs (Phase II). The DE contributed to activities focused on the design of two anticipated new USAID Bureaus and shared data from the *Mission Engagement Playbook* to audiences outside of the four Lab teams.

- Post-DE (months 17-22):** During these months, the Developmental Evaluator focused on helping the iDesign and PSP teams with sustainability planning (Phase III of the Uptake DE). However, she continued some engagement with the four original Lab teams (D2FTF, SOGE, DFS, and DI). The scope of work carried out with iDesign and PSP was not included in this analysis because it was not a part of the DEPA-MERL learning agenda. Thus, data from the post-DE phase reflects only data the WDI team continued to collect on the Developmental Evaluator’s work with the four original Lab teams. The DEPA-MERL consortium decided this based on a few justifications. First, despite the official transition into Phase III, data collected from the Developmental Evaluator during this time frame continued to focus on changes related to the original four Lab teams. Second, these post-DE months opened a unique analytical opportunity for the WDI team to continue collecting data on barriers to and enablers of DE implementation *after* Phase I and Phase II had officially ended. The WDI team used the analysis from the post-DE stage to understand the barriers and enablers of the close of the Uptake DE with the Lab teams.

**Figure 8** and **Figure 9** are heat maps of the time analysis results using the Developmental Evaluator’s monthly reflection interview data.<sup>12</sup> The darker the color, the more frequently a given factor (**Figure 8**)—or a factor’s sub-theme (**Figure 9**)—was coded in that particular stage of the Uptake DE. In **Figure 8**, the percentages indicate how often a factor was referenced as a barrier or enabler.

The results demonstrated that the frequency with which factors influenced the Uptake DE varied by the stage of the evaluation. For example, the *integration of the Developmental Evaluator*, *DE readiness* of the stakeholders, and *USAID dynamics* were the most frequently mentioned factors in the first six months of the Uptake DE. During months 7-11 (middle), *USAID dynamics* continued to be mentioned and *skills of the Developmental Evaluator* remained an important enabler. Interestingly, *data utilization* was mentioned with medium frequency at the beginning of the evaluation and though it was most mentioned at the end.

Figure 8: Heat map: The frequency with which factors influenced the Uptake DE varied depending on the stage of the evaluation

	Stage of Uptake DE			
	Phase I	Phase II		Phase III
	Beginning [Months 1-6]	Middle [Months 7-11]	End [Months 12-16]	Post-DE [Months 17-22]
<b>Integration of The Developmental Evaluator</b>	B: 52%   E: 48%	B: 6%   E: 94%	B: 40%   E: 60%	B: 57%   E: 42%
<b>DE readiness</b>	B: 39%   E: 61%	B: 20%   E: 80%	B: 32%   E: 68%	B: 42%   E: 58%
<b>Skills of the Developmental Evaluator</b>	B: 22%   E: 78%	B: 4%   E: 96%	B: 13%   E: 88%	B: 68%   E: 32%
<b>USAID dynamics</b>	B: 88%   E: 13%	B: 76%   E: 24%	B: 67%   E: 33%	B: 69%   E: 31%
<b>Data utilization</b>	B: 35%   E: 65%	B: 13%   E: 87%	B: 11%   E: 89%	B: 33%   E: 67%

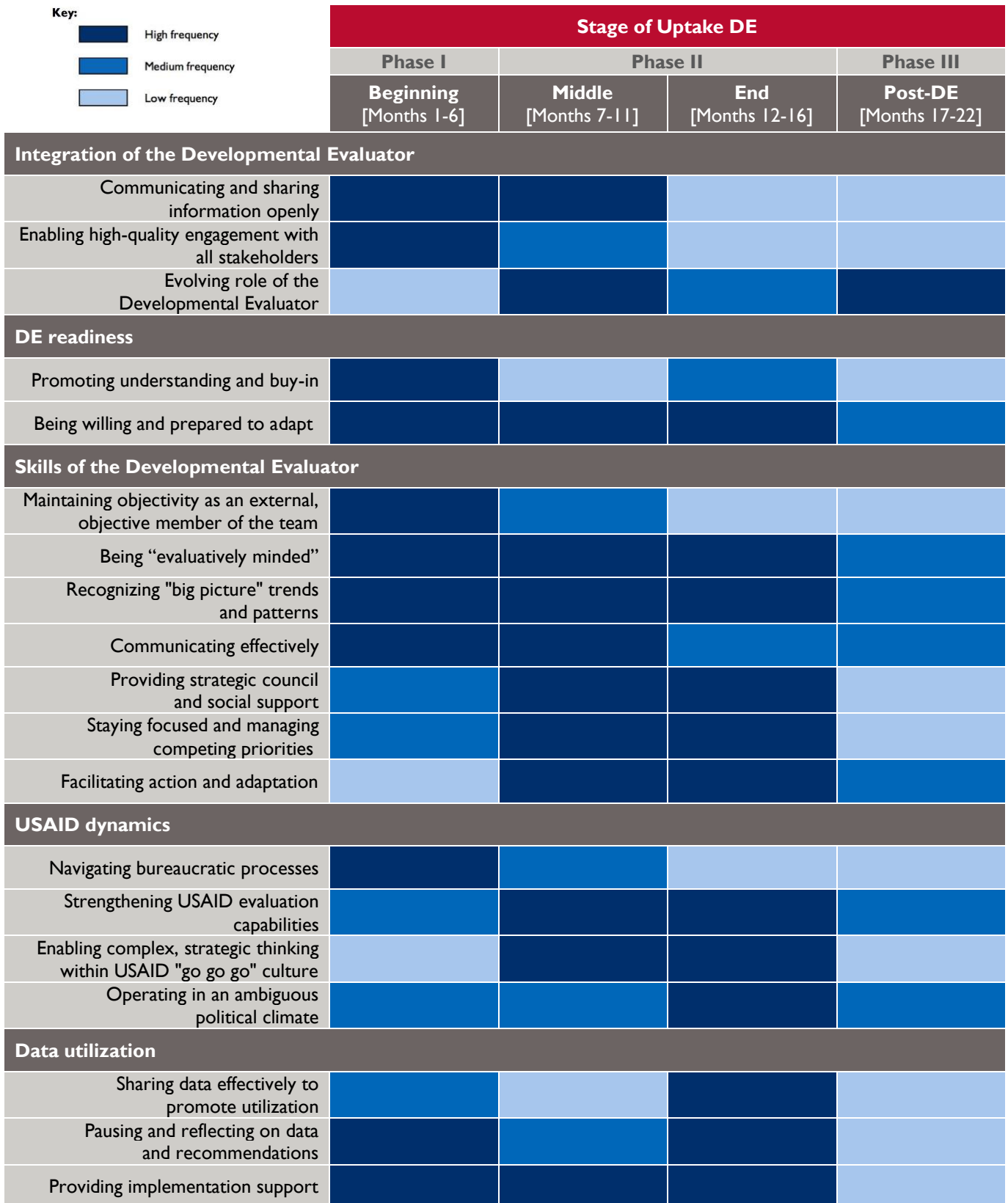
<sup>12</sup> The WDI team did not use substantiation interviews as a data source in the time analysis because substantiation interviews were conducted only at endline. Thus, frequency data could not be captured for the majority of factors during the different stages of the DE, from these interviews.



## HOW PRIORITY FACTORS INFLUENCED DE IMPLEMENTATION

Next, the WDI team conducted a deep-dive analysis of the top five priority factors to understand when sub-themes within each factor played a role. This analysis provided a more nuanced understanding of how a parent factor influenced the implementation of the Uptake DE over time (**Figure 9**). For example, by reviewing **Figure 8**, it appeared that *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* was most important at the beginning of the evaluation. However, by reviewing the frequency counts for the factor's associated sub-themes (*communicating and sharing information openly, enabling high-quality engagement with all stakeholders, and evolving role of the Developmental Evaluator*), the WDI team found that this parent code constituted a complex construct with sub-themes that were important throughout the Uptake DE.

Figure 9: Heat map: At different stages of the Uptake DE, the Developmental Evaluator increased (or decreased) the frequency with which she reported on certain sub-themes that influenced DE implementation



Below are summaries of the findings from this in-depth analysis.

## I. Integration of the Developmental Evaluator

At the beginning of the Uptake DE, the two most critically important sub-themes of *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* were *communicating and sharing information openly* and *enabling high-quality engagement with all stakeholders*. Even before the Acculturation Workshop,<sup>14</sup> the Developmental Evaluator requested that participating Lab teams—especially the Team Leads—share background reading material about their work and include her on team emails. In her own words: *“I think the importance of being looped into email communication on any given primary team cannot be emphasized enough. ... It takes repetitive reminders, but so much decision-making happens via emails these days, that I really do believe it is pertinent to be copied on the majority of email chains related to the focus/scope of the DE.”* During her initial monthly reflection interviews with the WDI team, the Developmental Evaluator emphasized how important it was to have the Lab’s Team Leads serve as DE *“champions.”* The Team Leads prioritized the Uptake DE to effectively establish two-way communication channels; they helped facilitate positive interactions and data sharing between the Developmental Evaluator and stakeholders.

In the middle stage of the Uptake DE, open communication remained critical to the success of the evaluation, especially as the Developmental Evaluator transitioned to working with two additional Lab teams. Also, the *evolving role of the Developmental Evaluator* became even more frequently mentioned. At this point, the Developmental Evaluator had established enough trust with stakeholders to shift from being *“just an evaluator”* to a strategic change agent who served in an advisor capacity. As needed, she also helped co-implement changes based on the Uptake DE findings. The Developmental Evaluator highlighted how her engagement with the teams changed over time: *“[M]y relationship has changed significantly from an evaluator, to a program-change consultant. They [the teams] are asking for my opinions and recommendations in real-time during weekly meetings ... whereas, previously I would take notes and track data as an evaluator who is [only] expected to produce my recommendations [at a later point in time].”*

During the end and post-DE stages, the Developmental Evaluator focused more on the implications of her strong integration with the Lab teams—that is, she would need to work with them to close out her involvement with the teams to effectively end the Uptake DE. This was not always an easy process. In her final monthly reflection interview, the Developmental Evaluator acknowledged that *“it will always be difficult to close out”* an evaluation, regardless of what approach is being used. Substantiators felt similarly and commented on how the teams would adjust once they no longer had the *“dedicated capacity”* of the Developmental Evaluator to help make data-driven decisions. One substantiator reflected: *“[N]ow the question is ... what happens when that dedicated capacity [the Developmental Evaluator] has been removed?”*

## II. DE readiness

*DE readiness* for this particular DE comprises two sub-themes: *promoting understanding and buy-in* and *being willing and prepared to adapt*. Both were frequently mentioned at the beginning of and throughout

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<sup>14</sup> The Acculturation Workshop was a kick-off meeting conducted by the Developmental Evaluator with stakeholders. It sought to a) educate participants about DE and its potential benefits for the program; b) refine research questions that the evaluation would explore and begin developing an evaluation work plan; and c) establish common expectations, roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols among stakeholders to ensure everyone was on the same page. These workshops generate interest and buy-in for the Uptake DE, which are critical to its ultimate success.

the Uptake DE. The DEPA-MERL consortium and participating Lab teams played important roles in *promoting understanding and buy-in* for the DE approach and *being willing and prepared to adapt* at the beginning. For example, the DEPA-MERL consortium conducted specific activities to ensure the Lab teams understood the approach and were fully aware of the evaluation's purpose. The Developmental Evaluator conducted key informant interviews with stakeholders before the Acculturation Workshop. She used these interviews to gather information about stakeholders' preparedness for the DE approach (and for learning and making program adaptations in general).

Additionally, for this approach to be successful from the start, Lab teams needed to be comfortable with having their shortcomings pointed out early on. Or, as one substantiator said, the teams needed a "*culture of risk*." Similarly, during monthly reflection interviews, the Developmental Evaluator mentioned that there needed to be a culture of learning among team members.

In the middle stage, the Developmental Evaluator focused more on the importance of the Lab teams themselves actively *promoting understanding and buy-in* for the DE approach. She said, having "*such strong advocates of the DE helped in [gaining] DE buy-in [from other stakeholders, even those that were not directly involved in the evaluation].*" Certain DE champions were "*vocal on the changes they have made and the value from the DE.*" This vocalization—or promotion of—the evaluation's data findings and the value of its activities was important for securing continued buy-in and enabling continued successful implementation.

Innovation constitutes one of the primary purposes of DE, and because innovation often requires adaptation, Lab teams needed to be both willing and prepared to adapt based on the data they received. The middle stage of the evaluation highlighted that even if the willingness to adapt existed, sometimes it was still difficult for the Lab teams to change their program "*mid-stream*."

Interestingly, during the end and post-DE stages of the Uptake DE, *DE readiness* remained a recurring theme. The Developmental Evaluator noted that stakeholders' buy-in and support for the Uptake DE contributed to a ripple effect. Stakeholders began promoting DE and sharing its findings with others who were not direct participants in the evaluation. One example of this is senior leadership's sharing of the *Mission Engagement Playbook*, a key deliverable of the Uptake DE. They discussed and used the findings in meetings with non-DE stakeholders to help inform strategic and operational decisions regarding the design of two anticipated new Agency bureaus.

### **III. Skills of the Developmental Evaluator**

Compared to all other factors, *skills of the Developmental Evaluator* had the most sub-themes. These included a mix of both technical skills (such as *being "evaluatively minded"*) and interpersonal soft skills (such as *communicating effectively*). At the beginning of the Uptake DE, substantiation interviews revealed the importance of stakeholders' perception of the Developmental Evaluator as *being "evaluatively minded"* and *recognizing "big picture" trends and patterns*, especially because she was working across teams.

For example, one substantiator shared, "*I would go consistently to [the Developmental Evaluator] to say 'help me pull this all together to see the big picture. ... here are all the things that are happening. ... help me identify what to do about it—this was her key value add.'*" The Developmental Evaluator placed importance on using these skills to produce "quick wins"—i.e., small, rapid activities that provided value to the Lab teams. These activities included stakeholder maps and timelines of the teams' work. These quick wins also helped develop and bolster her credibility.

Once the evaluative work expanded to include two additional Lab teams, the Developmental Evaluator's ability to *communicate effectively* and *facilitate action and adaptation* with stakeholders became even more crucial. In the middle stage, for example, the Developmental Evaluator needed to find ways to “*sensitively*” communicate negative findings and learn how to “*adapt [her] language*” so that data findings resonated with Lab teams more effectively. According to one substantiator, “*without the evaluator being able to communicate clearly, the thing falls apart.*”

In addition, the WDI team found that *providing strategic counsel and social support* increasingly went hand in hand with *facilitating action and adaptation* with the Lab teams. For instance, one substantiator mentioned that the Developmental Evaluator can help teams “*navigate through the murkiness ... to execute and wade through solutions.*” This sentiment was echoed by another stakeholder who said that the Developmental Evaluator provided leadership, “*a right-hand man or woman to [help] make evidence-based decisions.*” In the end stage, the Developmental Evaluator continued *facilitating action and adaptation* with the teams while also helping teams to *stay focused and manage competing priorities* such that they could effectively close out activities.

#### **IV. USAID dynamics**

In terms of *USAID dynamics*, *navigating bureaucratic processes* stood out as the biggest barrier faced by the Developmental Evaluator in the beginning stage. Specific instances involved granting facilities access to the Developmental Evaluator so that she could be co-located with the teams, and the perception that decision-making timelines and processes slowed stakeholders' ability to make adaptations based on data, among others.

In the middle stage, *USAID dynamics* centered on how the Uptake DE was *strengthening USAID evaluation capabilities* and *enabling complex, strategic thinking within USAID's quick, task-oriented “go go go”* (as opposed to strategy-oriented) *culture*. As heard in substantiation interviews, stakeholders desired to be champions of more data-driven decision-making, including the use of qualitative data. They focused on improving the methods they used to account for their impacts. Some also mentioned that the Uptake DE built on the existing work of the USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning's Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (PPL/LER) and the LEARN contract, which spearhead the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting work. Part of the Developmental Evaluator's job, as she saw it, was *enabling complex, strategic thinking within USAID's “go go go” culture*. She stated, “*a lot of the culture at the Lab is ‘go, go, go’ [and] that doesn't enable strategic thinking around off-ramp [close out] strategies or theory of change, measurement.*”

Finally, one unique element of *USAID dynamics* during the Uptake DE was its specific timing in USAID's history. Specifically, the DEPA-MERL consortium was *operating in an ambiguous political climate*. The implementation of the Uptake DE, including the Developmental Evaluator's ability to carry out activities, was affected by the “*uncertain*” or “*ambiguous*” political climate, related (but not limited) to the US executive branch's administration change and the anticipated re-organization (i.e., “the Transformation”) of the Agency and Lab. This uncertainty also included any issues related to limited and/or changing resources, such as staff turnover, budget cuts, or uncertainty related to future funding.

Although this uncertainty served as a barrier in some instances, the DE approach is apt for ambiguous conditions. For example, the Uptake DE served as a source of stability that helped teams navigate the

transition by tracking action items that might have been "dropped" if the Developmental Evaluator had not been there to help document earlier decisions or conversations.

## V. Data utilization

Interestingly, all of the sub-themes related to *data utilization* (*sharing data effectively to promote utilization, pausing and reflecting on data and recommendations, and providing implementation support*) were coded with a medium or high level of frequency at the beginning of the Uptake DE. This frequency highlights the fact that the Developmental Evaluator did not wait until the end of the evaluation to share data (which is when data is typically shared in traditional evaluations). Similarly, the majority of the participating Lab teams did not wait until the end to utilize data from the Uptake DE (again, as opposed to when use occurs in a traditional evaluation). Within the first two months, the Developmental Evaluator shared data and utilization-focused deliverables (e.g., SOGE Options Memo). Moreover, she facilitated meetings with participating Lab teams for *pausing and reflecting* on the Uptake DE's findings and recommendations.

During the middle stage, the Developmental Evaluator found that certain participating Lab teams began "*changing and reframing*" their language and behaviors based on data and insights from the Uptake DE. As they reflected on data, they discussed with the Developmental Evaluator how such findings could be used to make decisions. The Developmental Evaluator also helped stakeholders utilize data as she was *providing implementation support* as needed throughout the Uptake DE. For example, one substantiator highlighted how the Developmental Evaluator "*was critical in terms of helping us to define and refine our approach.*" A respondent of the Value of Developmental Evaluation Survey also shared how the Developmental Evaluator helped the teams so that they "*built stronger theories of change*" and "*adapted to opportunities and challenges to improve strategic implementation.*"

By the end of the Uptake DE, participating Lab teams had their own inter-team meetings to reflect on the DE's findings and next steps. *Pausing and reflecting on data and recommendations* continued to be a critical activity. Furthermore, *sharing data effectively to promote utilization* constituted an important part of revisiting recommendations. "*Documenting the lessons learned from the DE is a must,*" said the Developmental Evaluator, "*such that the benefits are realized even after the DE ends.*" A member of the SOGE team supported the Developmental Evaluator's statement with her hope to revisit the SOGE Options Memo (post-DE) to see if there were any recommendations that could be applied.

## FINDINGS FOR USAID: THE OVERLAP OF PRIORITY FACTORS WITH USAID DYNAMICS

Certain USAID staff at the Lab played a critical role in managing the various factors that served as barriers and promoting those that served as enablers to the implementation of the Uptake DE. To understand how *USAID dynamics* (a priority factor) interacted with the remaining top four priority factors, the WDI team identified how each of the remaining four factors was coded in relation to *USAID dynamics*. In addition, the WDI team highlighted what USAID staff did well in such instances, as well as what they could have done better. Data from both the monthly reflection interviews and substantiation interviews were used in this analysis. The percentage overlaps between each priority code and *USAID dynamics* are included in **Table 4**, with relevant quotes.

Table 4: USAID staff role in managing barriers and enablers of the Uptake DE

Factor	Percent overlap with USAID dynamics	How did the factor serve as an enabler?	How did the factor serve as a barrier?	What did USAID do well?	What could USAID have done better?
DE readiness	3%	Stakeholders' <b>understanding and buy-in</b> for the DE enabled a more effective DE implementation process.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff helped coordinate the Acculturation Workshop and co-develop the DE research questions.</li> <li>USAID Team Leads served as champions who advocated for the DE at the start of the pilot.</li> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff expressed openness to trying something new.</li> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff were willing to discuss data findings and prepared to implement adaptations.</li> <li>When the DE expanded, USAID Team Leads and award management staff agreed to the selection of the new teams, based on key criteria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few months into implementation, certain USAID Team Leads requested that the Developmental Evaluator collect and share only that data related to "strategic changes," but not "operational changes," such as how to improve team dynamics, communication, or notetaking. To prevent such unanticipated changes in scope, award management staff should make it clear from the beginning what types of data and feedback teams can expect to receive as part of the DE.</li> <li>One Lab team was under political pressure to perform well, which suppressed their appetite for risk. Such pressure could have been considered as a selection criterion for Lab teams' fit for the DE.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant quotes from stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"[The Team Lead is always saying,] 'we are in this to do better development, let's fully open ourselves to the opportunity that there are things that are not working as well as they could.' [There has to be a] willingness to grapple with failure or issues from the perspective of 'let's move forward and do something better.'" —Developmental Evaluator</li> <li>"[T]he Center Director at that time was a huge champion of the DE and we thought it was enough for him to tell them [the team] that this [DE] is good and [they] would get a lot out of it. They said 'sure, ok.' ... [but] there was a perfect storm of political pressure on that team at that time. ... they were getting attention from higher up from the Agency, and so the idea that this [their team] was less than perfect was very scary to them [and limited their full participation in the DE]." —Stakeholder</li> <li>"[Sometimes] team dynamics are a little bit of a barrier. ... pride could be a barrier too. ... They are not [always] open to learning." —Developmental Evaluator</li> </ul>					

Factor	Percent overlap with USAID dynamics	How did the factor serve as an enabler?	How did the factor serve as a barrier?	What did USAID do well?	What could USAID have done better?
Integration of the Developmental Evaluator	7%	<p><b>Communicating and sharing information openly</b> enabled the Developmental Evaluator to integrate with teams.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The roles and responsibilities of the Developmental Evaluator were clearly outlined at the start of the DE. This information was also shared with stakeholders during the Acculturation Workshop.</li> </ul>	
		<p>Stakeholders were willing to have frequent interactions and <b>high-quality engagements</b> with the Developmental Evaluator.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff were proactive DE champions who intentionally integrated the Developmental Evaluator from the start of the DE. They included her on email communications and invited her to in-person meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some administrative processes—such as granting the Developmental Evaluator a USAID email address and access to the team’s calendars—could have been initiated.</li> </ul>
		<p>Both: Stakeholders supported the <b>evolving role of the Developmental Evaluator</b>, which included offering strategic advice and co-implementing program changes. However, the close out of the Developmental Evaluator's integration with the teams was a barrier.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USAID award management staff granted access to facilities and full-time working status to the Developmental Evaluator.</li> <li>As needed, USAID expanded the scope of the DE to different Lab teams. Especially in Phase III, this allowed the Developmental Evaluator extra time to close out her integration with the Lab teams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In some cases, Team Leads could have more effectively identified persons or processes to help carry on the “DE mindset”—to learn, pause and reflect, and adapt—after the Developmental Evaluator ended her integration with the teams.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant quotes from stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Based on my observations, DE is appropriate for USAID. Having the [Developmental Evaluator], embedded in USAID, is very powerful and effective and actually cost-effective. The method of having someone sitting with the team but not part of team—is highly effective here in the Lab. For me, it was a significant learning." —Stakeholder</li> <li>"[As a Developmental Evaluator] you become part of the resource to brainstorm and problem solve." —Developmental Evaluator</li> <li>"Now the question is, what do they [the Lab teams] do with it? ... What happens when that dedicated capacity [the Developmental Evaluator] has been removed [from the teams]?" —Stakeholder</li> <li>"It will always be difficult to close out. They [the Lab stakeholder teams] are not doing anything wrong. ... it's just that the DE will end and you [the Developmental Evaluator] won't see all the outcomes to fruition. DE still faces the same kind of struggles at the end like any program on the sustainability of recommendations. ... the leaving of the Developmental Evaluator is not stopping change. ... it's just that you [the Developmental Evaluator] won't see the extent of the impact. It's just the DE process." —Developmental Evaluator</li> </ul>					



Factor	Percent overlap with USAID dynamics	How did the factor serve as an enabler?	How did the factor serve as a barrier?	What did USAID do well?	What could USAID have done better?
Data utilization	17%	The Developmental Evaluator <b>shared data effectively to promote utilization.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff participated in activities to pause and reflect on data findings to successfully utilize data from the DE.</li> <li>Throughout, the USAID Team Leads and award management staff scheduled recurring "prep sessions" and "manager briefings" to re-share and re-discuss findings.</li> <li>USAID Team Leads played an active role in prioritizing findings and recommendations so that they were implementing recommendations that made the most sense for their teams. In some cases, this meant identifying a person or team that could continue this kind of work after the DE ended.</li> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff created space for thinking reflectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USAID Team Leads and award management staff can emphasize how the Lab's "go, go, go" culture will be challenged by the DE approach.</li> <li>In some cases, USAID award management staff said they could have created more opportunities for information sharing across teams, to help make the most of the evaluation.</li> </ul>
		The DE created space for stakeholders to <b>pause and reflect on data and recommendations.</b>			
		Both: The DE <b>provided implementation support</b> , which helped enable the teams to engage in data-driven decision-making and adaptations. However, providing this support was sometimes perceived as a barrier because the Developmental Evaluator needed to ensure she was maintaining objectivity in how she evaluated the teams' work.			

**Relevant quotes from stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator:**

- "They just get it, they get adaptive management and data-led decision-making. There is a threshold that you pass. ... this Team Lead has that threshold and that's a huge enabler. ... Buy-in is a continual process. Different personalities champion in different ways. For example, one Team Lead is incorporating it into her day-to-day activities. But another Team Lead, his whole mindset has changed." —Developmental Evaluator
- "We got so much information from the DE. I drank the DE Kool-Aid. I don't think we could have done it [closed out D2FTF] as successfully without those findings [from the DE]. It was so instrumental to ... change management and learning." —Stakeholder
- "One of the things that DE really helps to reinforce and enable is the facilitation of uptake [i.e., the use of data findings] and ... checking in on what is happening. Not just understanding whether the recommendations were taken up or not. ... But if those recommendations are not being taken up, the Developmental Evaluator asks why that is." —Stakeholder

Factor	Percent overlap with USAID dynamics	How did the factor serve as an enabler?	How did the factor serve as a barrier?	What did USAID do well?	What could USAID have done better?
Skills of the Developmental Evaluator	9%	The Developmental Evaluator <b>maintained objectivity.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID Team Leads and award management staff played a major role in ensuring that the Developmental Evaluator hired possessed the right skill set.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning of the evaluation, the Developmental Evaluator had to convince teams of the value of qualitative research. USAID Team Leads can actively encourage the use of rigorous qualitative data collection and analysis within their teams.</li> <li>• USAID award management staff can provide additional skills trainings related to systems thinking, stakeholder mapping, etc., to Lab staff who request or require it. This could help ensure that the teams are not over-relying on the Developmental Evaluator’s skills and that they are also building their own related internal capacity.</li> </ul>
		The Developmental Evaluator played a critical role in encouraging stakeholders to be more <b>“evaluatively minded”</b> in how they approached their work.			
		The Developmental Evaluator helped stakeholders <b>recognize “big picture” trends and patterns.</b>			
		The Developmental Evaluator used data to <b>provide strategic council</b> to stakeholders as they navigated situations of high ambiguity.			
		Stakeholders turned to the Developmental Evaluator to help them <b>facilitate action and adaptation.</b>			
		Both: Staying <b>focused and managing competing priorities</b> was sometimes difficult when working with multiple stakeholder teams.			
<p><b>Relevant quotes from stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I think [the most valuable thing is] just having someone to look across everything we are doing and not focus on execution but [focus] on how the pieces might fit together.” —Stakeholder</li> <li>• “My hope is to check in monthly, to see how the priorities are shifting, and if they want immediate inputs ... I can prioritize ... to get something on their desk. I want to be flexible.” —Developmental Evaluator</li> <li>• “[The] most difficult thing is that there are too many moving pieces with the transformation. ... so it’s going to be really hard for me to prioritize my time to start working on some items.” —Developmental Evaluator</li> <li>• “[The Developmental Evaluator] created the space [for] us to have those conversations. ... [without her,] we would have been a little rudderless [without a clear direction]. ... she helped give us some direction ... and [helped us] figure out what our north star was and how we [should] navigate to it.” —Stakeholder</li> <li>• “I would describe [the Developmental Evaluator as] a leader who not only came in there with the know-how and the methodology, but she also demonstrated strong leadership qualities. ... She provided value on [the] technical side and on the evaluation side—but also was able to marry that with strategy and leadership, [which was] a critical side of the DE.” —Stakeholder</li> </ul>					

## RESEARCH QUESTION 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Based on the analysis above, the WDI team identified the following key takeaways:

- 1. Factors that influenced the implementation of the Uptake DE served as both barriers and enablers (Table 3 and Table 4).** For example, the *integration of the Developmental Evaluator* was both a barrier and an enabler. Stakeholders were *communicating and sharing information openly* with the Developmental Evaluator (enabler). On the other hand, in some cases, the Lab teams struggled to absorb the *evolving role of the Developmental Evaluator* when it was time for the Developmental Evaluator to close out the Uptake DE (barrier). Either way, stakeholders played a key role in these processes. It is critical for the Developmental Evaluator to develop strong familiarity with stakeholders and their needs early on in the Uptake DE. The Developmental Evaluator understood her stakeholders' needs, built trust with them, and proved to them early on that she was there to help them. These actions enabled them to co-develop activities that were relevant to the Lab teams and work together to increase enablers or overcome barriers to DE implementation.
- 2. Overall, skills of the Developmental Evaluator and data utilization were the top enablers of DE implementation (Table 3). USAID dynamics and stakeholder relationships were the largest barriers. Additionally, skills of the Developmental Evaluator and USAID dynamics were more frequently coded across the four stages compared to the other codes (Figure 8).** A key skill of the Developmental Evaluator in the USAID context is the ability to develop strong relationships with USAID staff and gain their trust, according to a senior staff substantiator. Through these two mechanisms, Developmental Evaluators working in the USAID context can then successfully facilitate use of the data and insights gathered and help teams make decisions on co-proposed recommendations. Much of the application of the DE approach and its subsequent success was based on the Developmental Evaluator's ability to understand USAID's relationship-based culture and be comfortable in it.
- 3. With the exception of skills of the Developmental Evaluator, the influence of key factors varied over time (Figure 8).** Further analysis showed that each factor comprised different sub-themes (Figure 9), providing insight into the evolution of barriers and enablers influencing implementation of the Uptake DE. When considering which activities to conduct, or what deliverables to provide, the Developmental Evaluator intentionally contemplated the strategic value-add the Uptake DE could provide to each partner. As team leadership who had bought into the Uptake DE came to trust the Developmental Evaluator's skill set and judgment, it became easier to gather data, share difficult findings and negative information, and co-develop recommendations that proposed changing the status quo.
- 4. Despite USAID-specific barriers, the USAID Team Leads and award management staff played a role in ensuring the successful use of DE data and recommendations.** For example, when coded, *USAID dynamics* overlapped with *data utilization* 17% of the time (Table 4). One success factor involved Lab teams' proactiveness. They did not wait until the end of the evaluation to utilize the data shared by the Developmental Evaluator (Figure 8).

## Research Question 3: What do key informants consider to be the value (added or lost) of conducting a DE compared to a traditional evaluation approach?

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3: DATA FINDINGS

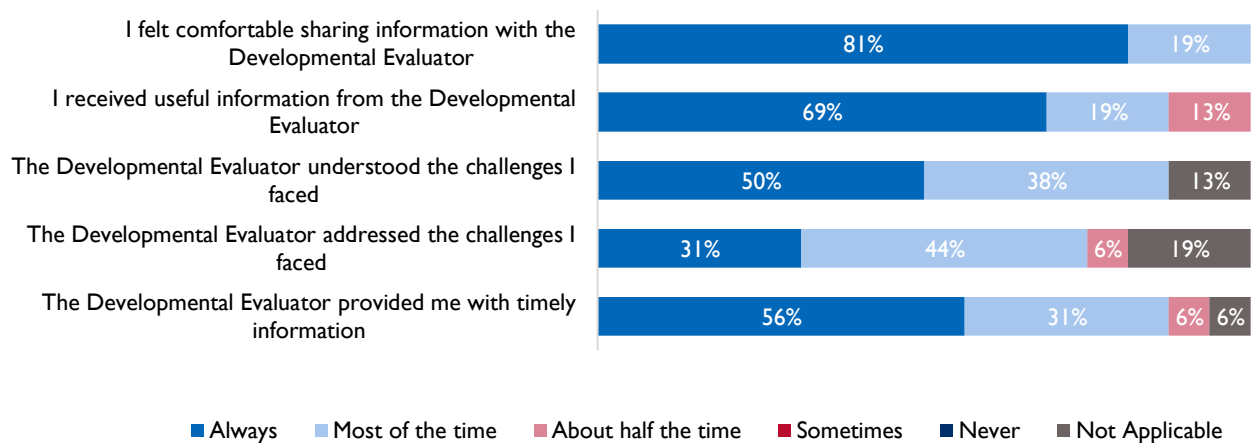
The WDI team distributed the Value of Developmental Evaluation Survey to 23 individuals to assess the DE approach in the context of the Uptake DE. Of the 23, 16 people responded (70% response rate), and 12 completed the entire survey.

#### INTERACTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR

The WDI team assessed the value of survey respondents' interactions with the Developmental Evaluator through a question with five sub-items. Respondents could answer using a five-point scale that ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Results are shown in **Figure 10**.

Overall, respondents reported positive interactions with the Developmental Evaluator. On all except one of the five sub-items, at least 50% of respondents used the highest rating of the scale (i.e., *always*). Notably, none of the respondents used *sometimes* or *never* in response to a sub-item of this question.

Figure 10: Survey respondents reported largely positive interactions with the Developmental Evaluator (n=16)

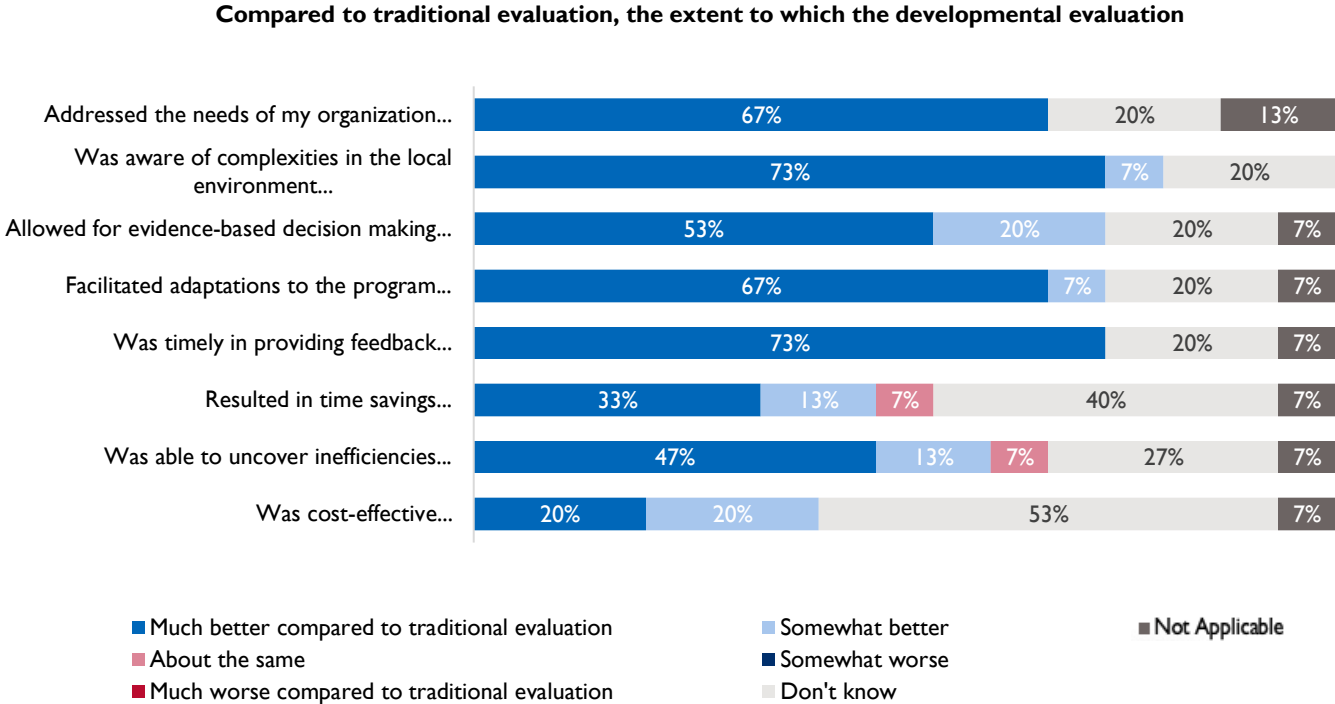


#### DE COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL EVALUATION

The WDI team assessed how the Uptake DE compared to traditional evaluation through a question with eight sub-items. To rate the Uptake DE, respondents used a five-point scale that ranged from 1 (*much worse*) to 5 (*much better*). Results are reported in **Figure 11**. Generally, survey respondents reported that the Uptake DE was more valuable than a traditional evaluation. On five of the eight sub-items, more than 50% of the respondents reported that the Uptake DE was *much better* than a traditional evaluation. Across all sub-items, none of the respondents said that the Uptake DE was either *somewhat worse* or *much worse* compared to a traditional evaluation. However, more than half of all respondents said they

did not know how cost effective the Uptake DE was.<sup>15</sup> A sizable percentage of respondents (40%) also did not know if the Uptake DE resulted in more time savings (compared to a traditional evaluation).

Figure 11: Survey respondents perceived the Uptake DE as more valuable than traditional evaluation (n=15)



**STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES BASED ON LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE DE**

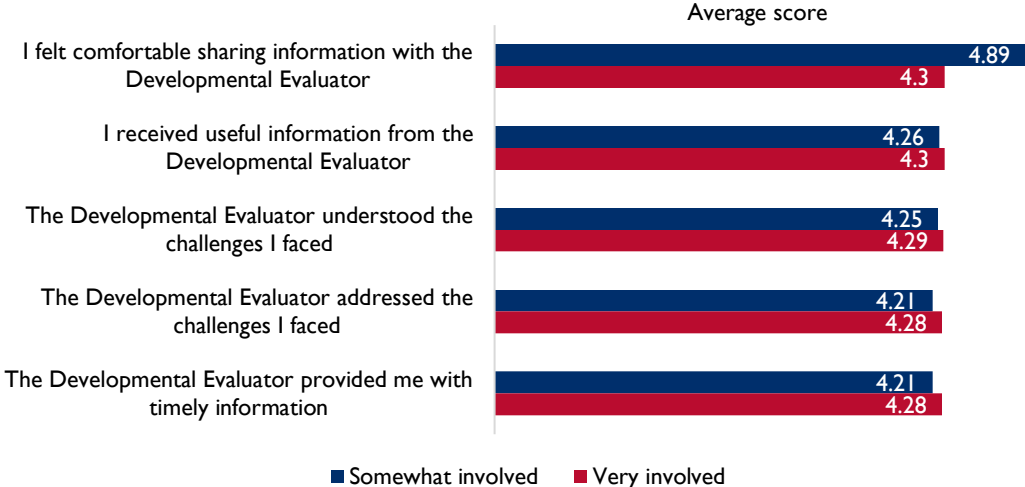
To understand how respondents’ perspectives differed based on their involvement in the Uptake DE, the WDI team asked respondents to self-report their level of involvement using a scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all involved*) to 4 (*very involved*). Of the 16 respondents who answered the question, the majority (56%, 9 of 16 respondents) reported being *somewhat involved* in the Uptake DE. Nearly a third (31%, 5 of 16 respondents) reported being *very involved*. Two respondents reported being *rarely involved*.

For this analysis, the WDI team compared the average responses of those who were *somewhat involved* to those of respondents who were *very involved* in the Uptake DE.<sup>16</sup> The results showed some differences in the perspectives of these two groups. Please note: The higher the average score, the more valuable a respondent group perceived the Developmental Evaluator and the Uptake DE.

<sup>15</sup> The funding structure of the Uptake DE varied by stage and team. For example, two of the four Lab teams did not contribute financial resources to participate in the Uptake DE. Hence, responses related to cost-effectiveness of the Uptake DE may be biased by these differences.  
<sup>16</sup> For this analysis, the WDI team did not include respondents who self-reported as being *rarely involved* in the Uptake DE. These respondents were omitted because of the small sample size (n=2) and because they responded “n/a” or “don’t know” for the majority of the questions and sub-items.

**Interaction with Developmental Evaluator:** On all sub-items except one (Figure 12), respondents who were very involved in the Uptake DE rated their interactions with the Developmental Evaluator slightly more positively than those respondents who were somewhat involved in the Uptake DE.

Figure 12: Respondents reported similarly positive interactions with the Developmental Evaluator. However, those who were somewhat involved in the Uptake DE felt more comfortable sharing information with the Developmental Evaluator (n=16)



**Uptake DE compared to traditional evaluation:** The data indicated that the two groups had similar perspectives on a) how the Uptake DE addressed the needs of the organization and b) the timeliness of the feedback, when comparing DE to traditional evaluation (Figure 13). On the remaining sub-items, somewhat involved respondents rated the Uptake DE slightly more favorably than those who were very involved in the following cases: a) that DE afforded awareness of complexities in the local environment and b) that DE resulted in time savings. Respondents who were very involved perceived higher value in the remaining sub-items: a) the DE allowed for evidence-based decision-making, b) the DE facilitated adaptation to the program, c) the DE was able to uncover inefficiencies, and d) the DE was cost effective, compared to traditional evaluation.

Figure 13: Regardless of respondents' level of involvement in the Uptake DE, they had similar perceptions of its value compared to traditional evaluation (n=14)



### MOST VALUABLE ASPECTS OF THE DE

In response to the question, “In what ways was the DE most valuable?” respondents (n=12) emphasized the Uptake DE’s ability to integrate data into strategy and decision-making, provide dedicated attention from a skilled evaluator, and improve communication across stakeholders (**Figure 14**). As one respondent explained, “[The DE] integrated evidence-based analysis into regular ways of working for the team, so that they built stronger theories of change [and] adapted to opportunities and challenges to improve strategic implementation.” Additionally, respondents commented on how valuable it was to have dedicated attention from the Developmental Evaluator. “The DE is most valued because [of] the Developmental Evaluator,” concluded one respondent. “[She] understands the context of any challenges and can provide recommendations that are specific and applicable to that challenge.”

### LEAST VALUABLE ASPECTS OF THE DE

According to the respondents who answered the question,<sup>17</sup> the least valuable aspect of the DE approach was that it had financial and informational “trade-offs,” compared to other types of evaluation. Additionally, two of 12 respondents (17%) reported that having multiple teams involved was the least valuable aspect of the Uptake DE. For example, one respondent said that the evaluation “was initially shared between two teams, but that eventually became four teams. As our [Developmental] Evaluator was increasingly stretched to meet the needs of the other teams, I would say that the attention our team got definitely waned. Not terribly so, but enough that we felt we were more on our own to implement the changes than perhaps we were ready for.”

<sup>17</sup> Of the 12 respondents who answered the question, seven respondents gave specific answers to the question, “In what ways was the developmental evaluation least valuable?” The remaining five replied “not applicable.”

Figure 14: Respondents emphasized that the Uptake DE was valuable because of its ability to integrate data into decision-making, provide dedicated attention from a skilled evaluator, and

**In what ways was the developmental evaluation *most* valuable?**

**Integrated data into strategy, decision-making, and adaptation**

6 out of 12 respondents



**Provided dedicated attention from a skilled evaluator**

6 out of 12 respondents



**Improved stakeholder communication and relationships**

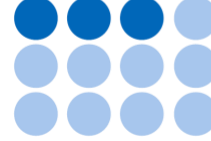
4 out of 12 respondents



**In what ways was the developmental evaluation *least* valuable?\***

**Had trade-offs (financial, informational) with other types of evaluation**

3 out of 12 respondents



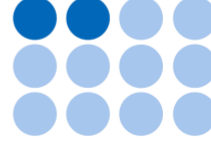
**Success depended on level of leadership buy-in**

2 out of 12 respondents



**Was sometimes hard to meet the needs of multiple teams**

2 out of 12 respondents



\* When asked this question, 5 out of 12 respondents replied "not applicable."

**Key:**

Respondent reported this answer

Respondent did not report this answer



## PERSPECTIVES ON USING DE AGAIN

Respondents were asked two separate questions about whether they would recommend the DE approach. First, they were asked a closed-ended question about whether they would like to see DE continued at their own organization. Ten of the 12 respondents who answered this question (83%) said yes, and the remaining two respondents (17%) said yes, *but with changes*.

The second question, which was open-ended, asked respondents whether they would recommend the DE approach to other organizations. All 12 respondents (100%) said yes. **Figure 15** highlights key reasons why respondents would do so.

During the substantiation interviews, the WDI team gained further insights related to stakeholders' preferences regarding the future use of DE at USAID. While nearly all substantiators recommended DE for reasons similar to those listed in **Figure 15**, there were notable dissenting opinions. Specifically, two substantiators questioned potential DE scalability and sustainability at USAID. While these individuals said DE was a valuable approach for the Agency, they did not envision DE as a widely scalable approach for two main reasons: resource constraints and the need to have the right, highly skilled Developmental Evaluator. *"Having a [Developmental Evaluator] is a luxury from a resource standpoint,"* said one senior USAID staff member. *"How [do you] scale this without hiring a bunch of [Developmental Evaluators], it is not feasible."* Another senior staff member concluded, *"[DE] is an expensive and time-consuming tool that should be used judiciously. But when used well, as it was in this case [the Uptake DE], the results keep continuing to provide benefits."*

Figure 15: 100% of respondents would recommend DE to other organizations



### RESEARCH QUESTION 3: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Based on the analysis of the Value of Developmental Evaluation Survey above, the WDI team identified the following key takeaways:

- 1. The majority of survey respondents found that the Developmental Evaluator addressed the needs of their organization while incorporating an awareness of complexities and helping to facilitate adaptations to their programming (Figure 11).** The WDI team triangulated this finding with data from its analysis of harvested outcomes and substantiation interviews. **Most respondents found that the DE approach was *much better than traditional evaluation in the Uptake context* (Figure 11).** Of 15 respondents, 11 (73%) said that the Uptake DE was *much better* than traditional evaluation because it was aware of complexities of the local environment and was timely in providing feedback.
- 2. The comparison of stakeholders showed that respondents shared similar thoughts on the value of the Uptake DE, regardless of whether they had self-identified as being *somewhat involved* or *very involved*.** There were some differences. For example: a) *Somewhat involved* respondents felt more comfortable sharing information with the Developmental Evaluator than those who were *very involved* (Figure 12). This was a surprising finding and can be a topic for future investigation. b) *Very involved* respondents reported that the Uptake DE was more cost effective and better able to uncover inefficiencies than traditional evaluation. While this finding can also be a topic for future investigation, one possible reason for it is that, because these stakeholders are more involved, they better understand and recognize such nuances (Figure 13).
- 3. When reporting how the Uptake DE was most valuable overall, respondents emphasized the Uptake DE's ability to integrate data into strategy, decision-making, and adaptation; provide dedicated attention from a skilled evaluator; and improve stakeholder communication and relationships (Figure 14).** This finding highlights the importance of having a Developmental Evaluator who is prepared to help stakeholders make data-driven changes, since that was an area from which stakeholders derived great value.
- 4. Of the 12 respondents who answered the question, 100% said they would recommend the DE approach to other organizations (Figure 15).**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from findings and key takeaways of the Uptake DE, the WDI team identified and organized eight overarching recommendations<sup>18</sup> into five themes that follow the implementation path of a DE (**Table 5**). These recommendations are for USAID staff who are deciding whether to utilize the DE approach in their own work, other DE funders, DE implementers, and Developmental Evaluators. Where applicable, recommendations note related resources.<sup>19</sup>

Additional recommendations related to DEPA-MERL’s research findings were also made in the consortium’s first DE pilot with [Family Care First in Cambodia](#). Cumulative recommendations will be shared in the DEPA-MERL consortium’s cross-case comparison report, forthcoming in September 2019.

*Table 5: Key recommendations to strengthen DEs*

Theme	Recommendations
<b>Selecting</b> DE as the evaluative approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm that a learning culture exists within the organization before selecting the DE approach.</li> <li>2. Determine the scope of work based on the time frame to best meet stakeholder needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Launching</b> a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Select the right Developmental Evaluator for your team.</li> <li>4. Develop familiarity with stakeholders to include them in DE design and implementation.</li> <li>5. Produce quick wins for stakeholders to increase buy-in for the DE.</li> </ol>
<b>Implementing</b> a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Acknowledge that the role of the Developmental Evaluator will evolve over time and expect it to do so.</li> </ol>
<b>Utilizing data</b> for decision-making in a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Be prepared to help mobilize stakeholders to make data-driven changes.</li> </ol>
<b>Closing out</b> a DE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Take active steps to close out the Developmental Evaluator’s integration with the stakeholder teams.</li> </ol>

<sup>18</sup> The WDI team does not provide a holistic set of recommendations here but rather the most salient, based on the data collected and insights developed.

<sup>19</sup> Please note that DEPA-MERL has not tested or used all resources identified in this report.

## SELECTING DE AS THE EVALUATIVE APPROACH

### I. CONFIRM THAT A LEARNING CULTURE EXISTS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION BEFORE SELECTING THE DE APPROACH

Findings from the analysis of barriers and enablers support the assertion that stakeholders' willingness and readiness to adapt constituted a critical component for ensuring that the DE was able to function effectively. The data corroborates existing literature stating that a culture of reflective practice and critical thinking at an organization is an essential condition for using the DE approach.<sup>ix</sup> The funder, and/or leadership from teams participating in the DE, may find it valuable to survey or interview stakeholders before the launch of a DE to understand the learning culture<sup>20</sup> of the potential teams or organizations who want to participate in a DE.

#### Resources that can help:

- Consider using or adapting questions from the [DEPA-MERL DE Readiness Survey](#), a tool adapted from the Tamarack Community's [DE Diagnostic Checklist](#).<sup>21</sup>
- The Spark Policy Institute's [Readiness for DE assessment tool](#) can also help ascertain whether the contracting mechanism, organizational culture, personalities of stakeholders, and program scope are amenable for program adaptation.

### 2. DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF WORK BASED ON THE TIME FRAME TO BEST MEET STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

Findings from Uptake DE Research Question I suggest that the time frame of the evaluation may influence the value a funder may obtain from a DE and, subsequently, the scope of work. For example, a funder who has enough financial and human resources for only a limited three-month DE engagement may want to focus their evaluation on knowledge management tasks rather than institutional or policy-level changes, which could possibly take longer.

The WDI team would like to add a caveat to this recommendation: The scope of work for a DE can be a living document to align with the program and how its needs unfold with the use of the DE approach. It is indeed good to re-examine both the scope of work and the Developmental Evaluator's role during implementation. To help prioritize the needs of the evaluation, documentation on the scope of work and the Developmental Evaluator's role can be updated with guidelines on how or when the Developmental Evaluator should (or should not) fulfill requests from stakeholders to take on additional evaluative efforts.

#### Resources that can help:

- In his blog, [Seven Steps to Setting up a DE](#), Ashwin Budden reflects on several time-bound considerations related to the DE start-up, based on his work on a USAID project.

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<sup>20</sup> A learning culture exists when both leadership and staff are willing to accept (and learn from) both favorable and unfavorable performance data or program outcomes, and when stakeholders can share uncomfortable information transparently without fear of repercussion from leadership.

<sup>21</sup> The WDI team recommends that this self-reported data also be triangulated with data collected by the Developmental Evaluator.

- If the Developmental Evaluator has trouble prioritizing data, they can gather data through a survey, so stakeholders can prioritize their interests and the needs of the evaluation.

## LAUNCHING A DE

### 3. SELECT THE RIGHT DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR FOR YOUR TEAM

When considering the qualifications and fit of candidates to serve as the Developmental Evaluator, DE funders and managers must examine the depth of a potential evaluator’s “Monitoring and Evaluation toolbox”—that is, the diversity of their technical and nontechnical skills and experiences. Do they have experience implementing both quantitative and qualitative efforts? Specialized skills and experience may be desired, but are they unnecessary?

For example, depending on the envisioned scope of work for the DE, the Developmental Evaluator may (or may not) need to have sectoral experience. In the case of the Uptake DE, substantiators noted that sectoral expertise was not the most relevant skill—rather, it was the Developmental Evaluator’s ability to *recognize “big picture” trends and patterns and facilitate action and adaptation*. If implementing a DE within USAID, it is important to note that a few Uptake substantiators mentioned that it was important to hire an evaluator who could work full time in this role and who had strong knowledge of USAID’s relationship-centric culture—or was able to learn it quickly and be comfortable in and with it.

#### Resources that can help:

- For guidance on selecting the right evaluator, see DEPA-MERL’s [\*Developmental Evaluation in Practice: Tips, Tools, and Templates\*](#). This resource also includes a sample terms of reference (i.e., job description) for a Developmental Evaluator.
- The blog [\*Determine the evaluator qualities\*](#) on [\*BetterEvaluation.org\*](#) is a good primer for identifying Developmental Evaluator skills.

#### GET CREATIVE: CONSIDER PHASING IN FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

One barrier to implementing the DE approach is limited resources—and not just financial capital, but human capital as well. One approach to combating this issue is to use a phased or tiered approach to funding and implementing DEs.

From a financial perspective, this worked successfully in the Uptake DE. The evaluation underwent three phases of expansion and had one financial partner (EIA) that helped set the stage for other Lab teams to financially opt in.

From the perspective of human capital, DE work can be tedious. The full, successful participation of stakeholders was possible because their participation in the evaluation was progressive. Early in the pilot, the Developmental Evaluator took on more of the initial workload and responsibility for encouraging stakeholders to reflect and incorporate data into teams’ discussions. Later, once there was broader support for the evaluation, the Developmental Evaluator transitioned her role such that stakeholders took on more tasks and responsibilities to ensure they were actively engaging in their own data-driven decision-making.

### 4. DEVELOP FAMILIARITY WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO INCLUDE THEM IN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Evidence from the DEPA-MERL pilots demonstrates that building buy-in for the DE approach is an ongoing process. Success factors for establishing and maintaining buy-in include quickly establishing a physical presence and two-way communication channels between the Developmental Evaluator and stakeholders. In the Uptake DE, the Developmental Evaluator, from the beginning, identified ways to help acculturate the Lab teams to the DE approach and integrate it into their teams. For example, to promote and assess understanding and buy-in for the Uptake DE, the Developmental Evaluator conducted key informant interviews with core members of the Lab teams, as well as key partners, decision-makers, and program implementers. Data

from the analysis of barriers and enablers of the Uptake DE showed that establishing two-way communication channels is a must. Also, acculturation cannot be limited to document review; stakeholders value face-to-face interactions with the Developmental Evaluator. Likewise, the Developmental Evaluator needs to have *high-quality engagements with all stakeholders* to support the *evolving role of the Developmental Evaluator*—from establishing trust with stakeholders to serve in an advisory role, to facilitating actions and co-developing recommendations, to supporting stakeholders during the close of the DE.

## 5. PRODUCE QUICK WINS FOR STAKEHOLDERS TO INCREASE BUY-IN FOR THE DE

The Developmental Evaluator should identify and leverage opportunities to create quick wins—small, rapid activities or deliverables that provide value to stakeholders. Creating quick wins can help the Developmental Evaluator build trust with stakeholders and develop credibility for the DE approach from the start. Data from the Uptake DE revealed that it was important to the stakeholders that the Developmental Evaluator was “*evaluatively minded*” and was able to *recognize "big picture" trends and patterns*. The Developmental Evaluator leveraged these skills to produce quick wins, such as stakeholder maps and timelines of a team’s work. These early wins also helped her develop strong alliances with key persons on the Lab teams and create virtuous cycles. To identify quick-win opportunities, Developmental Evaluators can use systematic data collection techniques—such as key informant interviews, focus groups, or surveys—to identify areas of immediate (and long-term) value-add for stakeholders.

## IMPLEMENTING A DE

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE ROLE OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR WILL EVOLVE OVER TIME AND EXPECT IT TO DO SO

The *evolving role of the Developmental Evaluator* indicates that the Developmental Evaluator is not a typical evaluator who conducts traditional evaluations. As seen in the Uptake DE, the Developmental Evaluator is also a strategic advisor who, in some cases, helped co-implement changes with the Lab teams. During DE, it is valuable to acknowledge how the Developmental Evaluator’s role and relationships with the team evolve. The Developmental Evaluator should consider the impact on their objectivity and/or their scope of responsibilities when providing implementation support. There is a balance to maintain. Having a dedicated evaluator who shares the same values as stakeholders is one of the most valuable aspects of the DE approach. However, becoming too embedded in a team or providing the recommendations rather than facilitating the necessary conversations or co-creating recommendations with stakeholders can threaten the Developmental Evaluator’s ability to objectively serve as a third-party evaluator. The trick is not to let shared values or relationships compromise the Developmental Evaluator’s ability to share data and findings with stakeholders.

## UTILIZING DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING IN A DE

## 7. BE PREPARED TO HELP MOBILIZE STAKEHOLDERS TO MAKE DATA-DRIVEN CHANGES

In DE, the Developmental Evaluator’s work does not stop with the collection of data and facilitation of the development (or co-development) of recommendations based on those findings. Stakeholders’ work does not stop there either. As the WDI team’s data reveal, stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator need to be prepared to mobilize to facilitate change and adaptation. From the stakeholder’s

perspective, that means recognizing that being “too busy” is a false barrier. The Uptake DE champions realized that busyness was not an excuse for failing to engage in the DE or participate in pause and reflect sessions. From the Developmental Evaluator’s perspective, this means going beyond co-creating the recommendations. In the Uptake DE, the Developmental Evaluator not only advised teams, but also co-created recommendations and co-implemented changes with them. Being prepared to utilize DE data for decision-making can be achieved by a) following up with stakeholders; b) creating space for reflection through, for example, quarterly pause and reflect sessions; and c) engaging in collaborative conversations about the action-oriented opportunities to adapt based on the evaluation’s findings.

## **CLOSING OUT A DE**

### **8. TAKE ACTIVE STEPS TO CLOSE OUT THE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR’S INTEGRATION WITH THE STAKEHOLDER TEAMS**

Stakeholders and Developmental Evaluators will want to create an action plan to allow the Developmental Evaluator to close out her integration with the participating DE stakeholder team(s). The Developmental Evaluator may join teams with the sole role of being an evaluator. But, with time, they are likely to build relationships and become an advisor whom stakeholders consult for a variety of reasons. After months of engagement, the Developmental Evaluator may even conduct tasks that become critical to the teams. For an effective DE close, these aspects should be transferred to team staff.

For example, in the Uptake DE, the Developmental Evaluator gave teams multiple reminders of her departure during her last days with them and facilitated workshops to help teams set themselves up for success. These activities included providing additional coaching for individuals and teams. She also worked with teams to build in time to review and prioritize current (or previous) recommendations with stakeholders. Developmental Evaluators should treat the close out of the DE carefully and actively plan for it at least three months prior.

If possible, the Developmental Evaluator should also establish processes in their stakeholder teams so teams continue their learning culture post-DE. For example, the Developmental Evaluator can set up quarterly pause and reflect sessions in the team’s calendar and provide the protocols and tools necessary to conduct the meeting.

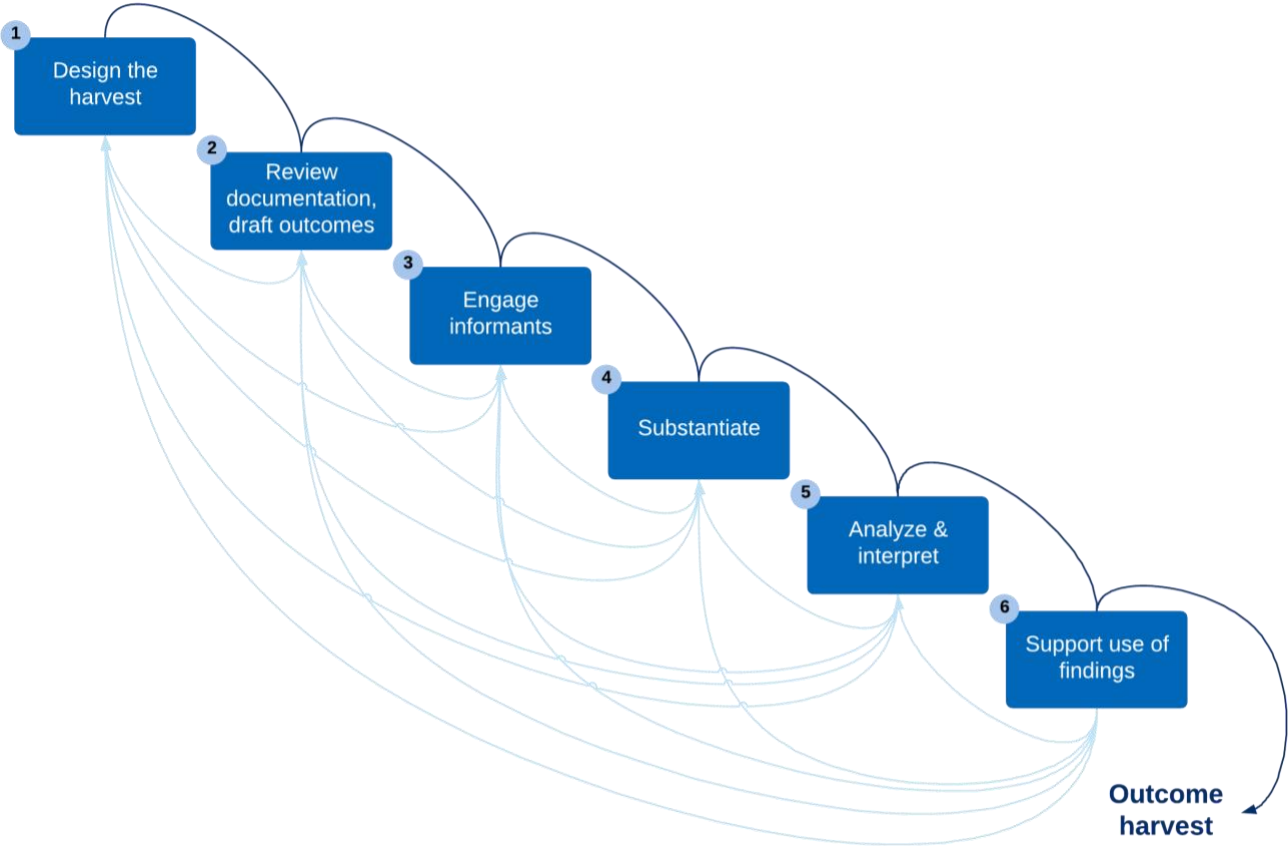
## **CONCLUSION**

Within the landscape of evaluation methods typically used by USAID, DE offers a promising approach to evaluate innovative programs that operate in complex environments or do not have a ready theory of change, and need to adapt over time. While the DEPA-MERL consortium does not consider this study of a single DE sufficient for making causal conclusions, it does contain valuable findings that can be used to better understand and implement DEs in the USAID context. There is a need to further explore the enablers of and barriers to a successful DE, and to see if they hold true in other DEs conducted within USAID. For this reason, the DEPA-MERL consortium is currently exploring additional areas of research through other DEs being deployed within USAID. The WDI team will compare and share findings across these DEs in a forthcoming report (expected in September 2019). The DEPA-MERL consortium looks forward to connecting and working with other evaluators, funders, and implementers interested in creating a stronger, more effective DE approach.

## APPENDIXES



# APPENDIX A: SIX STEPS OF OUTCOME HARVESTING



Adapted from Wilson-Grau, R. (2015). Outcome harvesting. Retrieved from Better Evaluation: [http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome\\_harvesting](http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting)

## APPENDIX B: TABLE OF THE TWENTY-TWO OUTCOMES HARVESTED DURING THE UPTAKE DE

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOGE; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DI; Lab/USAID; Other	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
1. Based on the data collected to answer the Development Evaluation’s Research Question 1, the Developmental Evaluator developed and submitted an Options Memo to the SOGE team. This Options Memo contained findings, possible actions, implications of those actions, and recommendations for adaptation around the SOGE relationship with their partner Presidential Initiative, Power Africa, related to approval processes, branding, and communications on SOGE initiatives. <b>This Options Memo was extremely valued– and has continued to be referenced by the team– because it documented pain points between SOGE and Power Africa and how to work better together.</b> It kicked off adaptations and efforts from the SOGE team, particularly from leadership, to engage more with the Power Africa team. This included weekly check-ins between the Team Leads to better communicate - a necessary first step that improved relationships and some decision-making related to how each team communicated their respective roles	SOGE	Partially	Enable	ENGAGE	Positive	Inter-OU	GUIDE	OPS
2. SOGE and Power Africa held an in-person meeting with the Developmental Evaluator present to discuss their longstanding communications and branding challenges. <b>The Developmental Evaluator also provided key recommendations to SOGE on how they should present themselves to reduce friction with Power Africa’s image.</b> These recommendations were found agreeable by both SOGE and Power Africa. In addition, this in-person meeting enabled both groups to better understand each other’s concerns and any improvements that had been made based on the findings of DE Research Question 1. <b>They engaged in a collaborative effort to tackle remaining barriers and issues, including working towards a mutually agreed upon set of branding guidelines (though not yet cleared by either team).</b>	SOGE	Partially	Enable	ENGAGE	Positive	Inter-OU	GUIDE	OPS
3. The Developmental Evaluator learned that the SOGE team did not have a clear off-ramp strategy in place. The lack of an off-ramp strategy in the event that SOGE did not receive funding past their due date, could have put them in jeopardy of being unable to sufficiently accelerate the market and the discontinuation of SOGE’s work after the team’s disbandment. Hence, <b>the Developmental Evaluator worked with the SOGE team to develop an (iterative) plan that detailed their off-ramp strategy,</b> contributing to the acceleration of these necessary discussions. <b>Creating this plan led to better understanding of partners’ goals and their desired impact and hence a better outcome measurement plan.</b> It also improved partner relations, as well as increased buy-in and appreciation of SOGE efforts from leadership at the Lab and Power Africa.	SOGE	Fully	Enable	STRAT	Positive	Program	CO	SUSTP
4. As part of the SOGE off-ramp efforts, the Developmental Evaluator identified that the SOGE team did not have a rigorous method to assess if the off-grid energy market they operated in had accelerated, what their contribution were to any possible acceleration, and indicators for exit or completion of their work. The SOGE team used a results framework that did not capture all the work they were doing as they had evolved from a Lab-Wide Priority to a Grand Challenges for Development partnership approach. Hence, <b>the Developmental Evaluator helped the SOGE team update their results framework and develop metrics for measuring success and achieving sustained uptake which</b>	SOGE	Partially	Enable	KNOW	Positive	Program	CO	EVA

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOGE; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DI; Lab/USAID; Other)	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
are now used by the team. These metrics of the improved SOGE's results framework better measured strategic efforts undertaken by the SOGE team, captured the collective impact of the partnership, and assessed some ecosystem level impacts around market acceleration.								
5. Based on the data collected, the Developmental Evaluator identified that there were no significant market acceleration outcomes from SOGE's work in their Nigeria and Uganda operations as of March 2018, most likely due to the short length of engagement thus far. On sharing these findings with the SOGE team, the latter accepted the need for adaptations to their strategy, the set-up of a theory of change framework, and a rigorous measurement of their activities in order to have stronger evidence. <b>The Developmental Evaluator worked together with SOGE to develop their theory of change that evolved into their data-driven, off-ramp/sustainability strategy.</b> They also co-created the SOGE 20XX Timeline Mapping tool to identify and track outcome-level indicators and targets that worked toward achieving the desired change of market acceleration. Through developing this framework, <b>the SOGE team recognized ways to refine their activities and identified barriers and enablers.</b> This modelling also resulted in <b>stronger partner alignment around a vision for SOGE, as well as a strategy for eventual handover of the partnership management away from USAID.</b>	SOGE	Partially	Enable	STRAT	Positive	Program	CO	OPS
6. During the DE, there was a need to understand trends regarding D2FTF's milestones as well the communications and Mission engagement activities they had conducted. <b>The Developmental Evaluator developed a timeline tool that captured D2FTF's trends and activities from FY15-18.</b> This timeline tool was <b>used by D2FTF in a presentation with their partner, the Bureau of Food Security (BFS).</b> <b>This contributed to BFS' recognition and understanding of D2FTF's work.</b>	D2FTF	N/A	Capture	KNOW	Positive	Program	SELF	KM
7. The Developmental Evaluator identified that within D2FTF, there was an over-reliance on their partner, the Bureau of Food Security (BFS) for the absorption of capacity and continued technical assistance to the field. While BFS did not have enough capacity or a team to take on the work, D2FTF's original off-ramp strategy was to consistently try and hand off their activities to them, which the Developmental Evaluator recognized would fail. The Developmental Evaluator documented that the stability necessary for long-term buy-in was not yet committed by BFS to D2FTF. Hence, <b>the Developmental Evaluator facilitated multiple discussions with D2FTF on their off-ramp plan to strategize for these challenges.</b> The Developmental Evaluator pushed the D2FTF team to think creatively by creating space to have the necessary discussions to accelerate the process. She also helped D2FTF leadership to think through some of the solutions given the barriers. As a result, <b>D2FTF began their off-ramp planning a year in advance and built an off-ramp with multiple pillars that included BFS, Digital Frontiers contract (a new, 5-year contract), and with other teams of the Center for Digital Development</b> (versus just a transition to BFS that would have resulted in forfeiting D2FTF activities). This also helped set D2FTF's agenda for their final year, which focused on capacity building.	D2FTF	Fully	Enable	STRAT	Positive	Inter-OU	GUIDE	SUSTP
8. D2FTF's off-ramp strategy needed to address certain challenges of working with their partner, the Bureau for Food Security (BFS). <b>Using guidance from the DE, D2FTF bought into and actively pursued, early engagement with the Digital Frontiers</b>	D2FTF	Fully	Enable	KNOW	Positive	Inter-OU	GUIDE	SUSTP

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOGE; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DJ; Lab/USAID; Other)	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
<p><b>contract as part of this strategy.</b> D2FTF used a <i>Do One, See One, Teach One</i> approach as recommended by the Developmental Evaluator with DF staff to ensure that their knowledge and technical capacity, proven successful through the DE, continued to exist in DF even after D2FTF ceased operations in the Lab. This approach successfully led to the uptake of the D2FTF model by DF. Separately, there was also additional buy-in into the DF mechanism from the BFS for continuation of D2FTF work. This was because of a request made to BFS (supported by the DE findings). Together, <b>these ensured a sustainable, smooth exit strategy for D2FTF. The process also aimed for a seamless transition and set up the DF team for success such that they could successfully carry forward and grow the work that D2FTF conducted.</b></p>								
<p><b>9.</b> Findings from the DE showed that it would be most effective for D2FTF to leverage and phase in other teams at the Global Development Lab in their off-ramp strategy leading D2FTF to strongly consider collaborating with Digital Financial Services (DFS). However, D2FTF wanted to ensure that their off-ramp strategy did not create unnecessary burdens on other teams. DFS had in fact also experienced budget cuts and staff attrition, which made them hesitant to accept additional responsibilities. <b>The Developmental Evaluator served as an arbitrator and helped the two teams find their middle ground.</b> This also included a workshop, which provided a platform for them to share their uptake models, their current work and guiding principles, and their decision-making processes, all of which successfully dispelled their concerns and helped identify both teams' needs. This workshop <b>also created space to have an open, collaborative, discussion between the teams including on their limitations and played a major role in the further strengthening of D2FTF's exit strategy. DFS became a key pillar in D2FTF's exit strategy based on this meeting and additional follow-up work.</b></p>	D2FTF	Fully	Promote	STRAT	Positive	Inter-OU	GUIDE	SUSTP
<p><b>10.</b> The Nigeria Mission reached out to Digital Financial Services (DFS) to set up an e-payment system for them. The Developmental Evaluator connected the DFS Team Lead with the SOGE Team Led because of SOGE's large ecosystem work in Nigeria, including their existing relationship with the Mission in order to leverage recommendations from the DE around utilizing pre-existing entry points for successful Mission engagement <b>The Developmental Evaluator encouraged them to take a collaborative approach that resulted in a collaborative, successful Mission engagement for multiple teams. This would be securing scopes of work for multiple teams with USAID/Nigeria.</b> To summarize, it led to a joint outreach effort, mutual reinforcement of stakeholder networks in-country, broader uptake of ongoing research efforts, and a <b>cohesive customer service-oriented approach to Mission engagement with the Nigeria Mission.</b></p>	DFS	N/A	Enable	ENGAGE	Positive	Inter-OU	NOR	OPS

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOGE; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DI; Lab/USAID; Other)	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
<p>11. The Developmental Evaluator identified two issues faced by the Digital Financial Services team, namely: 1) the products developed using Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) buy-ins were not designed to be utilization-focused and did not generate value to the Digital Financial Services team or evidence to further their work; and 2) some of the causal pathways denoted in their theory of change did not have evidence in support of them. Based on this, <b>the Developmental Evaluator recommended using HESN buy-ins to conduct evaluations/research to create this evidence base and strengthen/improve the Digital Financial Services team's theory of change.</b> Agreeing to the Developmental Evaluator's recommendation, <b>Digital Financial Services reprogrammed \$900,000 USD of their HESN buy-ins to conduct utilization-focused evaluations to test their theory of change.</b> The DE also highlighted the need and benefits of sustained learning which the Digital Financial Services team embraced, and hence selected to do a randomized control trial of a program in Rwanda where large investments were already made.</p>	DFS	N/A	Enable	STRAT	Positive	Program	GUIDE	OPS
<p>12. Based on the data gathered by the Developmental Evaluator, including the Uganda process tracing study and the positive deviance case studies, the Developmental Evaluator identified multiple challenges and developed 27 recommendations regarding Mission engagement strategies for sustained uptake. <b>The Developmental Evaluator shared her findings and recommendations with the Digital Financial Services (DFS) team through a series of meetings allowing the team to have a deeper understanding of the material.</b> Through this process, DFS prioritized and implemented nine of those recommendations and changed and/or refined their outreach approaches, improved their decision-making when working with their Missions, improved their relationship management practices with Missions, improved alignment with Mission strategy, and gained a better understanding of Mission desires. For example, as a result of these discussions and implementation of the prioritized recommendations, <b>DFS was more strategic and selective in the type of work they did and Missions they engaged with (e.g. not engaging with a particular Mission) to make sure it aligned with their uptake model and best utilized their available resources.</b></p>	DFS	Partially	Enable	STRAT	Positive	Program	CO	ME
<p>13. Based on the data collected, the Developmental Evaluator was able to substantiate only three outcomes across the six evaluated ecosystem-oriented work streams that also included the evaluation of operations by Digital Financial Services (DFS) in Liberia and Sierra Leone. On sharing this with DFS, they immediately initiated tasks to refine their strategy in order to achieve their goals. <b>The Developmental Evaluator facilitated multiple theory of change workshops for the DFS staff</b> because the findings pointed towards the need for a well-articulated framework with indicators to track progress towards ecosystem-level success. <b>The workshops helped DFS to develop their theory of change, tipping point metrics to measure progress towards sustained uptake, and is now operationalized to guide their programming/budgetary decisions.</b> This enabled them to make improved technical and strategic decisions and also budgetary decisions, aligned with their theory of change, resulting in them being "better stewards of US taxpayer money."</p>	DFS	Fully	Enable	STRAT	Positive	Program	CO	OPS
<p>14. After the Developmental Evaluator's several presentations including to the Senior Leadership/Managers Meeting, two Lab All Hands meetings, and to evaluation interest groups across the Agency and the team's own presentations on the findings of the DE, the said</p>	Lab/USAID	Partially	ENABLE	INST	Both	USAID	NOR	OPS

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOGE; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DI; Lab/USAID; Other)	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
<p>approach gained attention more broadly within the Lab. <b>Senior leadership better understood the approach, which increased their buy in to the findings of the Uptake DE. Numerous instances of dissemination of the Mission Engagement Playbook, a key deliverable of the DE were recorded.</b> For example, senior leadership shared, discussed, and used the findings in meetings to inform strategic and operational decisions regarding the design of two anticipated new Agency Bureaus. Additionally, the COR of DEPA-MERL was asked to lead the Agency Transformation Workstream on "Development of Agency-wide client service quality assurance and accountability". This group would determine the Agency's vision for successful mission engagement and set out parameters for success based on the DE's findings and other sources. It would be up to individual Bureaus to then implement that success in a way that best fits their offerings and their client Missions. Note: The outcomes from the use of the findings were not be able to be recorded due to the closing of the Uptake DE in December 2018.</p>								
<p><b>15.</b> The Developmental Evaluator observed that the process of engaging with Missions was neither standardized across teams in the Lab nor were strategies always effective. Capturing evidence-based findings, <b>the Developmental Evaluator led the development of the Mission Engagement Playbook that included checklists, email templates and how-to-guides on implementing successful sustained uptake strategies for mission engagement to a broader set of USAID stakeholders and Bureaus (i.e., beyond the Lab).</b> An immediate outcome was uptake beyond SOGE, D2FTF, and champions of the DE to higher level leadership and other operating units at the Agency expressing the need and desire for broader application for successful field service and sustainable programming. For example, the Bureau for Food Security requested further engagement (trainings, tailored dissemination, etc.) with the Developmental Evaluator in order to fully incorporate the guidance into their Mission engagement strategies. Leadership from the Digital Frontiers contract and the Lab confirmed the use of best practices identified in the document to inform their mission engagement approach. <b>Lab leadership and staff also expressed the need for broader application of the Playbook including to inform the development of USAID's anticipated new Bureau– Democracy Development and Innovation.</b> The Executive Director of the Lab shared the Playbook on TDY with multiple mission directors, receiving praise (including from the USAID/Tajikistan Mission, stating the guidance should be applied Agency-wide). The authors note some stakeholders did not believe the Mission Engagement Playbook would be widely used which they believed was indicative of an operating unit's culture rather than the product itself.</p>	Lab/USAID	Fully	ENABLE	INST	Both	USAID	NO ROLE	ME
<p><b>16.</b> Leadership of the Digital Inclusion (DI) team (added to the Uptake DE in Phase 2) were not invested in the study and also contested the conclusion that there was a lack of outcomes from their ecosystem work as shown by the DE. However, seeing the benefits gained by the Digital Financial Services team from working with the Developmental Evaluator upon receiving similar findings from the same ecosystem study, new leadership in the DI team reached out to the Developmental Evaluator in October 2018. <b>They requested the Developmental Evaluator conduct workshops with the team in early and late November to make the necessary adaptations to address the negative findings. This change in attitude towards the DE and its findings is considered significant.</b> Unfortunately, the DI team delayed the timeline of these workshops, pushing them to December 2018 when the</p>	DI	N/A	PROMOTE	KNOW	Both	Program	NOR	N/A

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOGE; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DI; Lab/USAID; Other)	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
Developmental Evaluator was no longer available due to commitments with other teams in the Lab. However, she met with the DI team and provided them with resources on how to move forward with the adaptations. The team has since reached out to the Program and Strategic Planning Office team at the Lab, who were trained by the Developmental Evaluator, and secured support to conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise (an explicit recommendation from the Mission Engagement Playbook)								
17. To set the new partnership between the Lab and the Digital Frontiers contract (a new, 5-year contract) on the pathway to success, Digital Frontiers' leadership requested the Developmental Evaluator to provide feedback on their Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan. Given the Developmental Evaluator's ongoing work with the priority teams that Digital Frontiers contract intended to support, leadership wanted to capture the Developmental Evaluator's lessons learned. <b>The Developmental Evaluator offered support and reviewed the MEL plan; her suggestions were in-line with the Digital Frontiers contract leadership's attitude towards adaptive management and learning.</b> Note: At the time of the substantiation interviews, leadership from the Digital Frontiers contract was incorporating recommendations and adaptive strategies into the mechanism's MEL plan. Furthermore, the recommendations prepared by the Developmental Evaluator aligned with those determined by Digital Frontiers contract. <b>This further increased the acceptance and use of the recommendations put forward by the DE and maintained a culture of mutually beneficial learning at the Lab.</b>	Other	Fully	Promote	KNOE	Positive	PROGRAM	NOR	EVA
18. In response to DE Research Question 1, <b>the Developmental Evaluator developed Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations (FCR) Matrices for the Lab-Wide Priorities – D2FTF and SOGE.</b> The FCR Matrices provided insights into the conditions and working relationships necessary in the Lab-Wide Priorities (LVVPs) and partners to achieve sustained uptake. The dissemination of these FCR matrices encouraged continued sharing of the DE findings and the evaluation approach (within and beyond the Lab). <b>This dissemination effort led to a broader understanding of the value-add of DE by key leadership at the Lab. This in turn helped with acceptance of the Developmental Evaluator's findings among this stakeholder group as the DE progressed.</b> This positive receptivity and acceptance of the findings led to increased uptake of DE findings concerning creating adaptive, action-oriented teams under Research Question 3 efforts.	Lab/USAID	N/A	Promote	KNOW	Positive	Program	NOR	KM
19. The Developmental Evaluator found that the Lab's portfolio reviews did not result in evidence-based learning and decision-making to the extent that they should. <b>The Office of Evaluation and Impact Assessment (EIA) (under the Lab) structured their Learning Agenda as a modified DE based on the value provided by the Uptake DE.</b> This was to allow for learning to take place and to practice adaptive management on key strategic questions for the Lab. Although there was no dedicated Developmental Evaluator for this effort, core templates, learning processes, and tools were leveraged from the Uptake DE. <b>These resources provided additional support and guidance, resulting in a utilization-focused Lab Learning Agenda that was well-received and resulted in an increase in data-driven decision-making at the Lab</b>	Lab/USAID	Fully	ENABLE	KNOW	Both	Program	GUIDE	EVA
20. When conducting a refresh exercise on the results framework for the Center for Digital Development that spanned across the five teams under the center, the Expanding Monitoring	Lab/USAID	Fully	Promote	KNOW	Positive	Lab	GUIDE	EVA

Outcome harvested during the Uptake DE	Team* (SOG; D2FTF; DF; DFS; DI; Lab/USAID; Other)	Level of substantiation (Fully, Partially, Disagree, N/A-not substantiated)	Capture, promote, or enable the utilization of emergent learning?	Type of change** (KNOW; STRAT; ENGAGE; INST)	Orientation of change in the short-term (positive, negative, both)	Level of change (Inter-OU; Lab; Program; Sector; USAID)	Level of implementation support (CO; GUIDE; NOR; SELF; )	Value to the program: (EVA; KM; ME; OPS; SUSTP; N/A)
<p>and Evaluation Capacities (MECap) project Fellow found the existing framework to be problematic in certain ways. In the higher levels of the framework, outcomes or 'sub-intermediate results' become difficult to measure as they were too broad in scope or intangible concepts. <b>The MECap Fellow found that conversations with the Developmental Evaluator helped her formulate the multiple layers of strategic objectives that could be manageably measured and documented by the Center to understand their impact.</b> The MECap Fellow also attended a workshop conducted by the Developmental Evaluator with Digital Financial Services that focused on applying 'spheres of control' in their theory of change to understand this concept. She found her conversations especially helpful because the Developmental Evaluator had worked deeply with two of the Center's teams and could apply a pan-center, meta-level problem-solving and analysis lens. <b>The updated Results Framework was cleared by management and a report on this updated version was soon to be released for the first time.</b></p>								
<p><b>21.</b> After findings from the DE Research Question 1 were disseminated, EIA had an improved understanding of the value-add of the DE approach. <b>Based on this, they expanded the evaluation to include two more teams within the Global Development Lab (Lab) for the study of DE Research Questions 2 and 3.</b> Outreach was conducted to determine interest, buy-in, and fit with the existing research agenda, leading to Digital Financial Services and Digital Inclusion teams being added to the Uptake DE. Additionally, a greater sample size enabled the DE to conduct comparative analysis of different models/approaches for leveraging and scaling sustained uptake efforts that were used to create lessons for all the teams in the Lab and also USAID.</p>	Other	N/A	Capture	KNOW	Both	Lab	NOR	N/A
<p><b>22.</b> During the second Acculturation Workshop to onboard the two new Global Development Lab teams -- Digital Financial Services (DFS) and Digital Inclusion (DI) -- <b>the Developmental Evaluator conducted a "model canvassing" exercise with all four teams present to define their uptake models</b> (as necessitated by DE Research Question 2). This led the teams to identify significant gaps in their current uptake models and engage in work with the DE to refine their models. <b>This initiated the DFS, D2FTF, and SOGE teams to start or continue more intensely in working on their off-ramp/sustainability plans.</b></p>	Other	Fully	Capture	STRAT	Positive	Program	GUIDE	KM

\* The harvested outcomes are grouped into six themes. The first four relate to the four Lab teams that participated in Phase I and Phase II of the DE: SOGE, D2FTF, DFS, and DI. The third theme "Lab/USAID" includes outcomes related to the proposed changes to the Lab or USAID. All other outcomes were categorized in the fifth and final category, "other."

\*\* KNOW: knowledge and capability changes; ENGAGE: engagement and relationship changes; STRAT: strategy changes; INST: institutional and policy changes.



## APPENDIX C: KEY FACTORS IDENTIFIED AS INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION OF DE, LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

Factor	Definition
Cultural norms	Cultural and social norms related to the region that could influence the DE process.
Data collection	Methods, tools, and processes for collecting data and information that will be analyzed by the Developmental Evaluator or the DEPA-MERL consortium as part of the DE.
Data sharing	Activities or processes for sharing data and information between the Developmental Evaluator and the stakeholder teams.
Data utilization	Utilization of data related to the DE by stakeholders (e.g., USAID, four Lab teams) to help achieve the goals of the DE or the program.
DE readiness	Willingness and/or preparedness of stakeholders to engage fully in the DE. Readiness includes any reference to stakeholders' understanding of the purpose of DE or their buy-in of and support for the DE.
Funding dynamics	The influence that funding had on different stakeholders involved with the DE.
Geography	Geography of the regions that impacted the DE.
Integration of the Developmental Evaluator	Engagement between stakeholders and the Developmental Evaluator that affected the Developmental Evaluator's assimilation into stakeholder team(s). Integration includes efforts by stakeholders to physically, functionally, or socially assimilate the Developmental Evaluator. This could include the Developmental Evaluator's participation (or lack thereof) in events and email communications, as well as stakeholders' perceptions of the Developmental Evaluator as an "insider" or "outsider."
Leadership	The fulfillment or lack of fulfillment of a person's or organization's assigned roles and responsibilities. This includes roles and responsibilities related to the implementation of the DE.
Local and international dynamics	Stakeholder relationships that focused on the dynamics between local (Washington, DC) and international stakeholders.
Political dynamics	Political dynamics related to the region or regions (where programs are being implemented) that impacted implementation of the DE. For example, this could include references to government processes or laws, political conflicts, elections, etc.
Skills of the Developmental Evaluator	Skills, needed or desired, for a person to function efficiently and effectively as a Developmental Evaluator. These include "hard," technical skills as well as "soft," interpersonal skills referenced by the Developmental Evaluator or stakeholders.
Stakeholder relationships	Any change or evolution in the roles and relationships of stakeholders within the scope of the DE. This includes collaboration and engagement efforts among different stakeholders, such as interactions among the Lab teams, the Developmental Evaluator, and/or the DEPA-MERL consortium.
USAID dynamics	Dynamics related to USAID culture and/or administrative processes that were perceived as affecting the implementation of the DE.

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