



The BESTLIFE2030 Grantee Handbook for Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning



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Table of content

1. Introduction	2
2. Project Design	2
3. Results-Based Management: The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Cycle	3
4. Theory of Change	4
5. Results Chain - Planning	8
6. Results Chain - Monitoring	16
7. Results Chain - Evaluating	18
8. Annex 1 – MANDATORY BESTLIFE2030 Performance Indicators	19
9. Annex 2 – Example Theory of Change	21
10. Annex 3 – Example LogFrame (Results Chain)	24
11. Annex 4 – Tools and Resources	26

1. Introduction

The purpose of this companion handbook is to provide practical and hands-on technical guidance on the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning process as a BESTLIFE2030 applicant and/or grantee, including the theory behind, and application of, the project design, theory of change, results chain and LogFrame, and how to properly monitor and evaluate your project as it progresses. It should be read as a complement to the templates and guidance provided to you by the BESTLIFE team. The guidance in this handbook is expected to be succinct, user-friendly, and explain concepts and tools in a way that will facilitate the operationalisation of your project's goals and objectives. Key concepts, principles, and terminology are presented both in the glossary and throughout the handbook, where relevant.

2. Project Design

What are Your Objectives? Developing a Pathway to Impact

BESTLIFE2030 seeks that the projects funded can contribute towards making a real difference in biodiversity conservation across the EU Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). Being able to measure the tangible impact that your project has at local, regional, and global scales requires a strong results-based management (RBM) foundation. A strong RBM foundation will allow for the accurate measurement of the effect of your project, learn lessons on what worked and what did not, and share that learning to scale up the impact achieved.

To start, **all projects should explain the need or the problem they are trying to address, and how they will deliver change towards that problem.** When designing a project, it is best practice to review the evidence of what has worked in the past and consider lessons learned while factoring in the current context.

Consider the following questions when in the designing stages for your proposed project:

- Describe the conservation concern your project is trying to address? Which stakeholders do you plan to be involved in your project and how? How will they benefit from the project? What change is expected as a result of your project?
- How will you achieve this? What methodologies and key activities need to be carried out to achieve your expected results?
- What resources, people, and equipment will you need? How long will it take to

achieve your expected results?

- What potential problems or risks may affect the delivery of your project?
- How can you mitigate and manage these problems or risks?
- How will your project add value to support/enforce local, national and regional priorities?
- How will the progress and ultimate success of the project be demonstrated and measured?

3. Results-Based Management: The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Cycle

What is Results-Based Management?

Results-based management is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes, and impact). The actors in turn use this information and evidence on actual results to inform decision-making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting.

Results-based management can be seen as a life-cycle approach. It begins with components of planning, such as setting the vision, the impact and developing a results framework. Once all actors agree to pursue towards the vision, implementation starts, and monitoring becomes an essential task to ensure results are being achieved. Monitoring and evaluation provide invaluable information for decision-making, and lessons learned in the future.

Effective monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) are core components that make up the RBM approach and are critical to ensuring strong project management by establishing a project that has a solid foundation, that is resilient to change and potential unforeseen disruption, that creates an opportunity for learning and development, that enhances decision-making, and that can generate tangible results.

Many agencies and organisations use different definitions and terminologies when it comes to defining RBM, even though, the concepts in many cases, are analogous. The BESTLIFE2030 programme adopts common terminology used internationally to help support greater coherence and consistency when it comes to communicating RBM.

Results-Based Management - A management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensures that their processes, products and services contribute to the desired results (impact, outcomes, outputs) and use information and evidence on actual results to inform decision making on the design, resourcing, and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting.

Monitoring - The systematic and routine collection of data on project resources, activities and results. This includes the routine monitoring of progress towards the project outcomes and outputs using the LogFrame and its performance indicators.

Evaluation - The periodic assessment and analysis of project resources, activities and results that can assure or inform a project's design and decisions to help it achieve its overall impact. This can take the form of annual reviews, mid-term reviews, and/or closed project evaluations.

Learning - The process through which evidence and information is reflected on and used to address evidence gaps and identify what works or doesn't to continuously improve the ability to achieve results by the project and others.

Results - Changes in a state or condition that derive from a cause-and-effect relationship. There are three types of such changes - outputs, outcomes, and impact - that can be set in motion by a development intervention. The changes can be intended or unintended, positive and/or negative.

4. Theory of Change

What is a Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a method that is used to explain how a given intervention, or set of interventions, is expected to lead to specific change. A theory of change must be driven by sound analyses, consultation with key actors, and learning on what does and does not work in the current context. It can be used to help identify solutions to address the causes of problems that hinder progress, and help guide decisions on what approach should be taken. Furthermore, a theory of change also helps to identify the underlying assumptions and risks that are vital to understand and revisit throughout the process to ensure the approach will contribute to the desired changes. A theory of change is often laid out in a diagram showing the connections between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. However, more than this, a ToC makes clear that these connections rest on a set of assumptions and risks that should be revisited regularly to ensure the project approach will contribute towards the desired change.

NOTE. A Theory of Change is **NOT** required for BESTLIFE2030 project proposals; however, all applicants are expected to articulate in their project description how their actions will lead to the expected impact. Designing a ToC can be useful in this scenario when developing your project proposal. The BESTLIFE2030 team encourages project teams to reflect and review their ToC at project start-up and then regularly throughout the lifetime of the project. It can be helpful to do this upon submitting the project interim and final reports.

Purpose: Why use a Theory of Change

First, conservation and biodiversity challenges are complex, and are typically caused by many factors and layers that are both embedded deeply in the way society functions, and brought on by environmental challenges that can, at times, be out of our control. For example, establishing a protected area may not lead to increased biodiversity unless illegal activities are controlled for, proper monitoring of ecological components is established, support is obtained from local communities, sustainable financing mechanisms are in place to ensure continued protection and management of the area, and no unforeseen environmental circumstances detrimentally harm the area (e.g., tsunami, floods, forest fires etc). A theory of change can help you systematically think through the many underlying and root causes of these kinds of challenges, and how they influence each other, when determining what should be prioritised to maximize your contribution to your overall impact.

Second, a theory of change provides a framework for learning both within and between project cycles. By articulating the causes of conservation and biodiversity challenges, making assumptions explicit on how your proposed project is expected to yield change, and testing these assumptions against evidence, the theory of change helps to ensure a sound logic for achieving change. It can also be a useful tool when making course corrections if the selected approach is not working or if anticipated risks materialize. Monitoring and evaluation will help with learning and lessons to refine assumptions and inform decisions on how an approach should be adapted to deliver planned results. When circumstances changes, especially in light of crisis and shocks, adjustments to the theory of change should be made.

Lastly, a theory of change can be used as a means for developing and managing partnerships. The process of agreeing on a theory of change establishes different views and assumptions among programme planners, beneficiaries, donors, programme staff etc. It can help foster consensus and motivate actors by involving them early in the planning stages and by showing how their work can contribute to long-term impact.

A ToC can be used as:

Strategy Tool

- To assist teams to work together to achieve a shared understanding of a project
- To make projects more effective by understanding outcomes and their causes
- To identify any hidden assumptions and their importance (or lack of)

M&E Tool

- To determine what needs measuring (and what does not) to support evaluation activities
- To encourage teams to think about evidence in a more focused way
- To prompt critical reflection and re-thinking of approaches

Communication Tool

- To provide a quick visual or narrative summary of the project's aims
- To give confidence to external parties that the project team understands the pathway to change, and has identified the assumptions and risks that they are making
- To highlight and describe the process of change

Methodology: How to develop a theory of change

The BESTLIFE2030 approach aims to bring clarity and quality to the process of project design and implementation. An overarching theory of change can support the development of a strong BESTLIFE2030 proposal by helping to outline the impact the project hopes to contribute to, and the outcomes areas prioritized by the project, further elaborating on the outcome areas by explaining the outputs needed to achieve such outcomes. Following strong principles and key steps outlined below, a strong theory of change can go a long way in contributing to both a competitive proposal and successful project.

Key principles for developing a theory of change

- a. It should be **developed collaboratively** to ensure all ideas, contexts, and knowledge are appropriately captured and reflected in the project design.
- b. It should be grounded in, tested with, and revised based on **evidence** at all stages.
- c. It should support **continuous learning** and improvement of project design at all

stages.

Key steps for developing a theory of change

1. **Focus on the high-level change** the BESTLIFE2030 programme is intending to contribute to and reflect whether your proposed project is in alignment with that.
 - a. The BESTLIFE2030 programme aims to advance biodiversity conservation by supporting local actors in the European Union's outermost regions and overseas countries and territories. In what ways will your proposed project contribute to the overall impact that BESTLIFE2030 wants to have?
2. **Identify what is needed** for the anticipated change to happen.
 - a. Outline and describe what is needed to achieve the change your project is anticipating having, starting from high-level outcomes to contribute to the overall impact but are fed by various lower-level outputs and activities (see Results Chain section for further details on these topics). This section needs to clearly focus on the identified problems and targeted solutions to those problems.
3. **Make explicit the key assumptions and risks** underpinning how your theory of change happens.
 - a. Establish and make explicit the related key assumptions underpinning the theory of how change happens and major risks that may affect it. This includes identifying why solutions are key drivers of change in a given context, and the factors that may influence these drivers.
 - b. **Assumptions** are things taken for granted, accepted as certain to happen.
 - c. **Risks** are things that might happen, and if they did, would impact the successful delivery of the project. They can include but are not limited to environmental, political, design, and/or partnership related risks.
 - d. Oftentimes, assumptions and risks are inversely related. For example, if we assume that adequate monitoring of a protected area is needed to ensure property protection of vulnerable species, we might define a risk around the possibility that the resources are not properly targeted or available to support such needs.
4. **Identify partners and actors** who will be the most relevant for achieving each result.
 - a. Focus on actors likely to have a direct role in determining the success or failure of the change your project is seeking.

Checklist for your Theory of Change

Quality assurance checklist to ensure a strong theory of change that is in alignment with the BESTLIFE2030 programme:

- Is based on a collaborative and participatory process, involving multiple actors' perspectives and allowing the views of women, youth, duty-bearers, rights-holders and vulnerable communities to be reflected during the theory of change development and validation process.
- Is clearly targeted towards and identified changes that will benefit the conservation and biodiversity landscapes by tackling root and underlying causes in addition to immediate causes.
- Contributes to resilience and reductions in potential shocks and stresses, including those caused by the effects of climate change, epidemics, natural hazards and conflict.
- Refers to evidence, knowledge and lessons learned from credible sources such as evaluations, analysis, and monitoring.
- Clearly states assumptions and risks most relevant to where change will be realized.
- Identifies who does what within the proposed project, as well as the key partners and actors who will be required for change to take place.
- Shows a plausible, clear, logical flow to describe how the planned intervention intends to contribute to the desired changes, without any leaps of faith or gaps in logic.
- Can be presented as a diagram, but at the very least, the logic is embedded within the narrative of the project proposal.

5. Results Chain – Planning

What is a Results Chain

First and foremost, results are a describable or measurable change that is derived from a cause-and-effect relationship. There are three types of such changes – outputs, outcomes, and impacts – which can be set in motion by an intervention/project. A results chain on the other hand is the logical and linear relationship between the project's processes (inputs and activities) and the three types of results (outputs, outcomes, impact). In other words, the Results Chain is a simplified description of how a project intends to deliver change.

Results Chain - The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired results - beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in individual outcomes and those that influence outcomes for the community, impacts and feedback. It is based on a theory of change, including underlying assumptions.

Table. 1 Results Chain and Example

IMPLEMENTATION		RESULTS		
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Resources that are required for the project to take place.	The actions and work that are carried out by the lead partner and partners in implementing the project.	What is delivered as a result of the activities being successfully completed.	The overall objective of the project - i.e., what will be achieved by the project as a result of successful completion of outputs.	A long-term objective that the project will contribute to, but will not be solely achieved by the project (and might fall outside of the project timeframe).
EXAMPLE: Please refer to Annex 2.				

Getting Started: Developing the LogFrame (Results Matrix)

A LogFrame (sometimes referred to as a Results Matrix) is a tool used to monitor and evaluate performance. They are used to track actual results against what was planned, by using indicators, baselines and targets. A LogFrame is used throughout the life cycle of the project - from planning and implementation to monitoring, evaluation, learning, and reporting. LogFrames are essential for monitoring and reporting results from the project level up to the BESTLIFE2030 programme level.

Note. A LogFrame is required for BESTLIFE2030 proposals at the full proposal phase by way of the template provided to you from the BESTLIFE team. LogFrame monitoring should be done regularly. Any changes to the LogFrame including impact, outcomes, outputs, performance indicators, baselines, targets, means of verification, and assumptions need to be agreed upon beforehand with the BESTLIFE2030 team.

LogFrame - The logical and linear relationship between the project’s processes (inputs and activities) and the results (outputs, outcomes and impact), and how those results will be measured (performance indicators). It is a simplified description of how a project intends to deliver change. A LogFrame can help:

- Monitor programme performance, identify where the project is, and quantify the results regularly to determine if the project is on track to deliver the intended outcomes and impact.
- Inform interim reports, which will occur during the project implementation to assess performance and make recommendations as needed.
- Inform the final report, which will occur at project completion and is based on an assessment against the logframe to compare planned and final achieved results.

Theory of Change Versus LogFrame

While the theory of change describes the process of change and assumptions, they are best used alongside a LogFrame, which is a tool used to identify and track results against what was planned by using indicators, baselines and target values. Ideally, the ToC should be developed before the LogFrame, because it encompasses the wider context in which the project is based.

Impact

An **impact** is the highest-level change to which an organisation, policy, programme, or project contributes through the achievement of one or more outcomes. The impact represents the *raison d'être* of an organisation, policy, programme, or project, and it takes the form of a sustainable change of state among beneficiaries. It represents the “why” of a project and should describe the changes in state, condition, or well-being that a project’s ultimate beneficiaries experience. The impact usually occurs after the end of a project, but should, when feasible, still be measured during the life of the project as changes may occur earlier.

For example, the BESTLIFE2030 programme impact statement is **to advance biodiversity conservation by supporting local actors in the European Union’s outermost regions and overseas countries and territories.**

Tips when developing your impact statement:

- The Impact will likely **not be achieved solely** by the project
- Will (often) be achieved **outside the timeframe** of the project
- There should only be **one Impact Statement**

Outcomes and Outputs

Outcomes represent changes in capacities, behaviours, practice of performance (the WHAT of a project). It is a change that is anticipated to occur once one or more outputs have been achieved. In terms of time frame and level, these are usually

changes in capacity (increase in knowledge, awareness, skills etc), behaviour or performance among intermediaries or beneficiaries. Outcomes usually stem from the capacity built among intermediaries or beneficiaries at the output level.

For example, “improved access to equipment infrastructure by organisations in X country” or “increased capacity on governance and rights of protected and conserved areas”.

Outputs represent the products or services delivered (the HOW of a project). They are direct products or services stemming from the activities of an organisation, policy, programme, or project. Outputs provide the conditions necessary to achieve the intended Outcomes; **if the Outputs are achieved (and the assumptions hold and the risks do not occur), then the logic is that the Outcome will also be achieved.**

For example, “Water and sanitation facilities built/refurbished in rural areas of country X”, “Technical training on human rights-based approaches to PCA managers (female/male) in province of country Y”.

Activities are the actions taken or work performed through which contribute to produce the outputs and outcomes of the project. For example, “demonstration sessions conducted for...”, “technical advice provided to...”. Do not confuse inputs or activities with Outputs or Output indicators. For example: the number of participants in a workshop is an input, the number of workshops held is an activity, and the Output is what those participants are now capable of as a result, e.g. higher quality practices, increased knowledge and understanding, etc.

Performance Indicators, Baselines, and Targets

Performance Indicators help measure outcomes and outputs by adding greater precision. They help ensure that decision-making is informed by relevant data. They can be represented as quantitative and/or qualitative variables. Quantitative indicators are represented by a number, percentage or ratio. In contrast, qualitative indicators measure quality and are usually based on perception, opinion or levels of satisfaction (e.g., survey results). Indicators should be expressed in neutral language, such as “the level or degree of satisfaction” or “the percentage of training enrolment by gender”. **Proxy indicators** can be used when results can’t be measured directly. For example, a proxy measure of improved governance could be, in some cases, the number of improved strategies or funding directed to conservation efforts.

Applicants in their proposals and grantees during the project implementation are required to report on standardised BEST indicators (see [Annex 1](#)).

BEST standardised indicators: projects must contribute to **at least one** KPI linked to biodiversity (habitats, invasive alien species, and species). Additionally, they will be strongly encouraged to evaluate the impact made by KPIs that strengthen the capacity of civil society and/or that contribute to reducing climate vulnerability.

As a standard of good practice, all indicators should follow **SMART guidelines**, these are:

- **Specific** – as simple and concise as possible to reduce confusion and misinterpretation.
- **Measurable** – indicators that are able to be quantified (qualitative, quantitative etc).
- **Achievable** – indicators that are within reason for what the project can realistically deliver on.
- **Relevant** – indicators that are relevant to your project’s activities, outputs, outcome and overall impact.
- **Time-bound** – indicators that can be captured and measured within the project timeline.

Baselines represent the status of the performance indicator at the beginning of the project that acts as a reference point in which is measure against throughout project monitoring to help measure progress. In some cases, if the performance indicator is new, the baseline might be zero (0) or not applicable (N/A). For example, a performance indicator of “the number of training sessions delivered”, might be zero at the beginning of a project, if the training being delivered is new.

Targets are what your project hopes to achieve by the end of implementation. **These should be realistic based on your project’s scope and evidence base for change, avoiding optimism bias.**

Means of Verification

The **means of verification** are the **sources of evidence** (databases, surveys, reports etc.) your project will use to track and demonstrate achievement of your indicators. You should assess the quality of the means of verification to make sure your indicator is fit for purpose, and you understand the limitations. Be as specific as possible about the data source and reporting mechanism. Simply noting "project completion report" is almost always too general. The appropriate data source is critical for the collection of valid, quality data; and the LogFrame is meant to be instructive and helpful to those responsible for data collection and reporting.

Assumptions and Risks

The assumptions and risks identified in your LogFrame are largely guided by the ones developed in the Theory of Change. There may be additional assumptions and risks added to the LogFrame now that you have a clearer idea of the project and its activities, however, there should not be too much deviation from the assumptions and risks identified from your Theory of Change. The expectation is that if the outputs are delivered, the assumptions hold true and the risks do not occur, then the outcome will be achieved. Then if the outcome(s) are achieved, the assumptions hold true and the risks do not occur, contribution toward the impact will be made.

Role of Partners

The responsibilities of the different partners – whether they are your own organisation, government, an NGO, or any other implementing organisation – for the achievement of a given output and outcome, should be identified in the LogFrame. This helps identify responsibility for completing activities and reporting on performance indicators.

Inputs

Inputs reflect an estimate of the resources required – financial, human, technical assistance and knowledge – for your given project. This will typically be outline in the project proposal and the financial template required as part of your proposal, however, it can be useful to use the LogFrame to help inform the resources that will be required.

Table. 2 LogFrame Elements

	Project Summary	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks
Impact	The ultimate result to which the project contributes to			
Outcome 1	The change that occurs if the project Outputs are achieved; the primary purpose of the project	Quantitative ways of measuring and qualitative ways of judging progress towards the project’s Outcome	Sources of information and methods used to verify progress against the indicators	External factors and conditions necessary to prevent the project impact from being achieved

Outputs 1.1	The specific, direct deliverables produced by undertaking project activities	Quantitative ways of measuring and qualitative ways of judging progress towards the Outputs	Sources of information and methods used to verify progress against the indicators	External factors and conditions necessary to meet the Outcome or which prevent the outcome from being achieved
Activities	The specific tasks to be carried out to produce the expected Outputs			

Checklist for developing your LogFrame

For developing Outcomes:

- It is **short but specific** – they are formulated as one-sentence statements of a realistic change you expect to see. It ensures you communicate exact expectations and leaves as little room as possible for misinterpretation.
- It **describes change** – a change that policy, programme, or project is expected to achieve or contribute to.
- It is **relevant** – to the actual needs of the country, beneficiaries, and intermediaries etc.
- It **follows a specific syntax** – that is the direction of change – what will change – who will experience the change – where it will be experienced. The order is not as important as ensuring each of these components is included. For example, “Reduced (direction) vulnerability to threats from climate change (what will change) by community members (who experiences the change) in region X (where it will be experienced)”.
- It is **simple and expresses only one change** – they should never include expressions such as “via”, “through”, “in order to”, “leading to” or “stemming from.” The use of these expressions indicates that the outcome statement contains more than one level of change, because they point to relationships across different levels of the logic model—not in a single outcome. In such cases, the statement can likely be split into two outcome statements at two different levels of the logic model.
 - For example, the outcome statement “Improved economic prosperity of community members through increased opportunities in the tourism sector” is incorrect because it contains two changes at different levels: “improved

economic prosperity” and “increased opportunities”.

- It is **measurable** – each outcome statement should be measured by two to three indicators, ideally by a mixture of qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- It is **different from performance indicators** – It should not be so specific so as to only be measured by one indicator. For example, “reduced poaching of species X” versus “reduced illegal activities of species X”.
- It is **realistic and achievable** – An outcome statement needs to capture a realistic change given the project’s scope, timeframe and budget. For example, it is not realistic to have an ultimate outcome stated as “Increased climate resilience of men, women, girls and boys in country X” if the project takes place in municipality Y of country X and targets women. In this case, such a project’s ultimate outcome might be “Improved knowledge and skills for climate resilience of women in municipality Y of country X.”

For developing Outputs:

- It **clearly indicates what the implementor will deliver** – specific and detailed enough so that it is clear what product or service the implementor will provide, yet they should not attempt to cover every activity required to deliver the output.
- It **follows a syntax different from that of outcome statements** – An output statement refers to what an implementer produces or provides, as opposed to an outcome statement which describes the changes intermediaries or beneficiaries experience. It should therefore not begin by describing a change and its direction and should avoid words such as “increased” or “improved.”
 - The syntax is phrased in the past tense, includes information on what was delivered or rendered, in what subject, and to or for whom. For example, “Technical assistance (what) provided (verb) on gender-sensitive and environmentally sensitive project management (what subject) to regional government staff (female/male) (to/for whom)”.
- It should be **objective** – they should contain no subjective terms. For example, “awareness campaigns on protected and conserved areas at country fora provided to men and women in country X”.
 - A subjective example would be, “awareness campaigns on PCAs at country fora provided to appropriate users in country X”. Appropriate users does not have a commonly understood definition and can be interpreted as different-by-different actors.
- It **represents a completed package of activities** – an output statement is a package of completed work, and each output is broken down into its component activities. For example,

- **Output:** Technical assistance in project management provided to regional-government staff.
- **Activities (for above stated output):** Conduct gap analysis with regional-government staff. Develop training package. Hire Trainer. Facilitate delivery of training. Conduct ongoing mentoring with selected government staff.
- **Sub-activities (only for hire trainer component in this example):** develop a Terms of Reference, create job poster, post advertisement, screen applications, conduct interviews, select candidate, inform candidate, negotiate salary, draft and conclude contract.

For developing and validating performance indicators:

- The performance indicator describes how the achievement of the result will be measured.
- Those who will be reporting on the performance indicator are in agreement with it, understand how to measure it, and have confidence in it.
- Every variable included in the performance indicator statement is measurable with reasonable cost and effort.
- The performance indicator is clear and easy to understand even to a layperson.
- The performance indicator lends itself to aggregation.
- A baseline current value can be provided for every variable in the performance indicator statement.
- There is a target value set for each performance indicator that is achievable within your project timeline.
- The performance indicator is not repeated in any of the other results in your LogFrame.

6. Results Chain – Monitoring

Project monitoring is the routine collection, analysis and use of information about project progress and results being achieved. Effective project management requires monitoring of the different aspects of each project, including:

- **Results monitoring** (Outputs, Outcome and Impact) monitors whether the project is on track against intended milestones and targets, and any unintended consequences (both positive and negative).

- **Activities monitoring** (processes) tracks the use of funding and resources into how activities are delivered and whether they occur according to a pre-defined work plan.
- **Compliance monitoring** ensures delivery is by local, and national government laws, within donor requirements including safeguarding and ethical standards.
- **Situation/context monitoring** examines the project's operating environment, monitoring risks and assumptions, as well as other contextual factors that may influence project progress.
- **Financial monitoring** tracks the use of input funds for activities and Outputs, with attention paid to value for money, accurate forecasting of costs and budget monitoring, clear and audited accounting procedures, and adequate safeguards to prevent fraud and corruption.
- **Organisational monitoring** covers the internal capability and capacity of institutions involved with the project and partners to utilise and manage the project funds, undertake activities and deliver expected results.

Tools for Monitoring

The BESTLIFE2030 LogFrame and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (provided in further detail below) tools provided through the project portal are the key monitoring tools as a grantee (full proposal phase). They help to outline impacts, outcomes, outputs, performance indicators, baselines, and targets, and help to monitor change against the performance indicators as your project progresses. These tools will help your project stay focused and on track, as well as meet the requirements of your grant as a BESTLIFE2030 grantee.

Developing the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

In accordance with the BESTLIFE2030 programme, the M&E plan is used to systematically plan the collection of data to assess and demonstrate progress made in achieving expected results. The M&E plan is an extension of the LogFrame but also includes the frequency of which data will be measured. **Frequency** refers to the period that the M&E will cover. For example, M&E could take place once or twice a year, at the mid-term and/or at the end of the programme cycle. As a grantee, your individual grant contracts will highlight the expected frequency for monitoring and reporting on your project. It is advised to use this frequency to also monitor and report on your M&E plan.

7. Results Chain – Evaluating

Results-Based Management in Evaluation

Evaluation is a crucial step in the RBM life-cycle and the BESTLIFE2030 programme. As a grantee, a self-evaluation of your project and its progress will be conducted by means of your reporting periods through the financial and narrative reports. In some cases, external evaluation will be sought for projects by the BESTLIFE2030 team. These evaluation processes provide a reference for strengthening, professionalizing and improving the quality of the projects. Evaluation has two key aspects: (1) as a critical management tool for achieving better results; and (2) as a quality assurance tool. Evaluations function to provide programme improvement, accountability, and organisational learning. All of these aspects are included throughout the required narrative and financial reports for each reporting period as a BESTLIFE2030 grantee.

Inter-Linkages and Dependencies Between Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation

- Without proper planning and clear articulation of intended results, it is not clear what should be monitored and how; hence monitoring cannot be well done.
- Without effective planning (clear results framework), the basis for evaluation is weak; hence evaluation cannot be well done.
- Without careful monitoring, the necessary data is not collected; hence evaluation cannot be well done.
- Monitoring is necessary, but not sufficient, for evaluation.
- Monitoring facilitates evaluation, but evaluation uses additional new data collection and different frameworks for analysis.
- M&E of a programme or project will often lead to changes in programme/project plans. This may mean that further changing or modifying data collection for monitoring purposes.

8. Annex 1 – MANDATORY BESTLIFE2030 Performance Indicators

All projects in the BESTLIFE2030 programme must contribute to at least one performance indicator under the “Biodiversity” category. Additionally, where applicable, grantees are strongly encouraged to also include performance indicators under all other categories, specifically from the enabling conditions, outreach and climate vulnerability categories. A detailed list of the Standardized BESTLIFE2030 performance indicators is below:

BEST No.	BESTLIFE Indicator	Atlas Booklet
BIODIVERSITY		
BEST 1	Annual Change in Population Trends or Habitat Occupancy of Targeted Species	Please refer to page 3 to 12 of the Atlas Indicator booklet.
BEST 2	Reduction in Key Threats Affecting Target Animal Species	
BEST 3	Area of Mangrove Habitat Under Active Conservation Actions (km ²)	
BEST 4	Area of Terrestrial and Freshwater Habitats Under Active Conservation Actions (km ²)	
BEST 5	Area of Marine and Coastal Habitats Under Active Conservation Actions (km ²)	
BEST 6	Area of Coral Reef and Rhodolith Bed Habitats Under Active Conservation Actions (km ²)	
BEST 7	Area of Habitat Under Direct Invasive Alien Species Management Action (km ²)	
BEST 8	Reduction in Population Density of Target Invasive Alien Animal Species (%)	
BEST 9	Reduction in Population Density of Target Invasive Alien Plant Species (%)	
BEST 10	Area of Forest Under Active Restoration and Recovery (km ²)	
ENABLING CONDITIONS		
BEST 11	Number of Collaborations Forged or Enforced	Please refer to page 13 to 14 of the Atlas Indicator booklet.
BEST 12	Number of Regulations, Strategies, or Protocols with Conservation Provisions Revamped, Enacted, or Amended	

OUTREACH		
BEST 13	Number of People Trained	Please refer to page 15 to 19 of the Atlas Indicator booklet.
BEST 14	Number of Volunteers Involved in Project Activities	
BEST 15	Number of People Reached by Awareness Activities	
BEST 16	Number of People Reached by Media and Social Networks	
BEST 17	Number of People from Vulnerable Groups Benefitting from Project Activities	
EMPLOYMENT		
BEST 18	Number of Jobs Created	Please refer to page 20 of the Atlas Indicator booklet.
PROTECTED AREAS		
BEST 19	Increase in Spatial Coverage of Protected and Conserved Areas Within the Geographic Scope of the Project (km ²)	Please refer to page 21 and 22 of the Atlas Indicator booklet.
BEST 20	Number of Protected and Conserved Areas Meeting or Progressing Toward Green List Certification	
CLIMATE VULNERABILITY		
BEST 21	Percent Increase in the Adoption of Climate-Adaptive Practices as a Result of the Project Intervention	Please refer to page 23 of the Atlas Indicator booklet.

9. Annex 2 – Example Theory of Change

Impact	Advance biodiversity conservation by supporting local actors in regions X			
	Activities	Responsibility	Risks	Assumptions
Outcome 1.0 Strengthen the capacity to build, implement, and monitor conservation-led projects of local actors in regions X.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Projects do not improve or strengthen capacity and knowledge. -Project objectives are not achieved by the end of their implementation period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Capacity building will result in contributions towards advancing biodiversity conservation. -Training needs are already known and identified. -Political circumstances within countries will not hinder projects to be implemented and achieve tangible results.
Output 1.1 Projects have been successfully developed for local and regional biodiversity conservation initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop guidelines and templates for project development. -Organise and conduct timely workshops on project development process. -Conduct trainings on how to develop technical, financial and communication deliverables. -Conduct due diligence on project proposals and ESMS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organisation X -Governing body Y -NGO Z 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of capacity and understanding to develop strong project proposals. -Unexpected cancellations of applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Projects can easily learn and understand reporting processes. -Implementing team have the knowledge and capacity to conduct catered trainings.

<p>Output 1.2 Projects have been successfully delivered at local and regional levels.</p>	<p>-Final reports submitted by projects. -Social media posts, articles, and visibility have been published on media channels.</p>	<p>-Organisation X -NGO Z</p>	<p>-There is no capacity or funding available to support communications work. -Extenuating circumstances (environmental, political, disasters etc) could stop project completion. -Unexpected departure of staff. -Projects still have unpaid costs due by the end of the implementation period.</p>	<p>-There is reliable access to the internet, social media channels, and the proper audience for content. -No disasters or extenuating circumstances influence the delivery of the project. -All financial checks are in place before the closure of the project.</p>
<p>Outcome 2.0 Advance contribution to regional and international conservation strategies in regions X.</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>	<p>-The programme does not tangibly contribute to regional and international conservation strategies.</p>	<p>-All work conducted through the programme contribute to regional and international conservation strategies.</p>
<p>Output 2.1 The programme has achieved tangible contributions to regional and global biodiversity targets.</p>	<p>-Collect and monitor the quantitative and qualitative data that contribute to global goals and targets. -Implement projects (sustainable use of ecosystem services, conservation of</p>	<p>-Organisation X</p>	<p>-Data collected cannot be used to support global goals and targets.</p>	<p>-Implemented projects will lead to tangible results and contributions. -The team has knowledge of how to properly collect, aggregate, and monitor data.</p>

	<p>biodiversity, and climate change actions).</p> <p>-Collaborate with organisations and country leads on other initiatives (e.g., GreenList)</p>			<p>-Other organisations and country leads have the time and willingness to collaborate.</p>
<p>Output 2.2 The programme has contributed towards key policy processes on biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>-Participate in meetings on policy discussions.</p> <p>-Attend foras and conferences, as needed.</p> <p>-Organise policy-related events at regional level.</p> <p>-Produce policy assessments and briefs.</p>	<p>-Organisation X</p>	<p>-Participation is not possible at policy discussions.</p> <p>-There is not enough capacity or funding to attend conference and fora.</p> <p>-Programme does not contribute to policy assessments, therefore it is not possible to produce policy briefs or assessments.</p>	<p>-There is enough staff and capacity to adequately contribute at key policy meetings, conferences, forums etc.</p> <p>-The team knows how to connect with the right people to have policy-related discussions.</p>

10. Annex 3 – Example LogFrame (Results Chain)

Impact	Advance biodiversity conservation by supporting local actors in regions X				
Results	Indicators, Baselines, Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks	Role of Partners	Indicative Resources
Outcome 1.0 Strengthen the capacity to build, implement, and monitor conservation-led projects of local actors in regions X.	Indicator: Amount of funds directly financed through the programme. Baseline: €0 Target: €2 Million	-Financial plan	See Annex 3	Lead Agency X	€3 Million
	Indicator: Percentage of participants who report and increase in their knowledge and skills after completing training. Baseline: 0 Target: 80%	-Surveys from training/workshop participants			
Output 1.1 Projects have been successfully developed for local and regional biodiversity conservation initiatives.	Indicator: Number of projects funded in region X Baseline: 0 Target: 300	-Contract documents of approved projects	See Annex 3	Lead Agency X	
	Indicator: Number of workshops/training sessions held. Baseline: 0 Target: 50	-Training/workshop reports			
Output 1.2 Projects have been successfully delivered at local and regional levels.	Indicator: Percentage of visibility actions completed by projects Baseline: 0 Target: 100%	-Number of projects that have proof of at least one media publication (video, social media, news article etc)	See Annex 3	Lead Agency X with support from project implementors	

<p>Outcome 2.0 Advance contribution to regional and international conservation strategies in regions X.</p>	<p>Indicator: Percentage of sites/areas contributing to national and global conservation targets. Baseline: 0% Target: 70%</p> <p>Indicator: Number of sites/areas with strengthened protection, management, and/or governance that meet international effectiveness standards of the Green List. Baseline: 0 Target: 100</p>	<p>-Project contracts and final project reports</p>	<p>See Annex 3</p>	<p>Lead Agency X</p>	<p>€1 Million</p>	
<p>Output 2.1 The programme has achieved tangible contributions to regional and global biodiversity targets.</p>	<p>Indicator: Area of habitat restored. Baseline: 0km² Target: 50km²</p>	<p>-Project interim and final reports</p>	<p>See Annex 3</p>	<p>Lead Agency X</p>		
<p>Output 2.2 The programme has contributed towards key policy processes on biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>Indicator: Number of conferences and forums attended. Baseline: 0 Target: 5</p> <p>Indicator: Number of policy and legislative documents where input was provided. Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p>	<p>-Registration information</p> <p>-Copy of the policy and legislative documents clearly delineating contributions</p>	<p>See Annex 3</p>	<p>Lead Agency X with support from policy makers Y, Z</p>		

11. Annex 4 – Tools and Resources

Theory of Change

- [The Centre for Theory of Change](#)
- Grantcraft, 2006, [“Mapping Change Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation”](#)