Monitoring and Evaluation

Minimum Requirements for Initiatives

June 2021

Laudes Foundation specifies in this paper the 'minimum requirements', roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation at the initiative grant level from 2021 onwards. This paper does not address core principles and criteria for other types of evaluative learning such as cluster, programmatic and developmental evaluation. However, these types of evaluation are referenced, where appropriate.

Monitoring and evaluation are two separate but related functions that assist the foundation and partners adapt and learn for the achievement of results and impact. Monitoring is the responsibility of foundation programmatic staff and partners working together to collect, analyse and learn from evidence to see if the initiative is achieving intended early / later changes and outcomes. Evaluation synthesizes evidence (including monitoring data), enables reflection and development of lessons learned to be incorporated into improving future work of partners and the foundation.

All of our initiatives need to align with monitoring and evaluation minimum requirements, which will help partners and the foundation better understand:

1. Are we doing the right things right?

2. Are early and later changes happening and how did we contribute to them?

3. What are we learning; and

4. What can we improve?

1. Design of M&E Plans
At a minimum, we require the following by initiative grant size:

Grant size	Requirement	Approval Responsibilities (based on Operational Decision Driven Organisation - DDO)
Initiative grant size **less than** €100k	There is no requirement for a Rubrics Template (see Annex 1) as partners are not required to use rubric-based monitoring.	The Head of Programmes or Director of Programmes will approve the completed Proposal Light applicable for grant size less than €100K.
Initiative grant size **between** €100K and €250K	Fill in the Rubrics Template that details the selection of rubrics made by the partner in consultation with the Programme Manager.	The Director of Effective Philanthropy on the advice of the Senior Evaluation Manager will approve the completed Rubrics Template.
Initiative grant size **more than** €250k	Fill in the Rubrics Template that details the selection of rubrics made by the partner in consultation with the Programme Manager.	The Director of Effective Philanthropy on the advice of the Senior Evaluation Manager will approve the completed Rubrics Template.

A Theory of Change (TOC) is optional for all initiatives and can be developed during the proposal design phase and prior to commencement of the initiative grant. It does not replace the Rubrics Template.

- The TOC is optional for any initiative grant size. For initiative grants **more than €100K** the TOC will align with, and enable an appropriate selection of rubrics.

- The TOC will define causal pathways moving from early / later changes to outcomes. It will identify the problem statement, assumptions and risks. The TOC template is given in Annex 2 alongside questions to be posed while developing and preparing a theory of change. The TOC may also link to the [Laudes Foundation Theory of Change.](#)

- The TOC will be developed by the partner. Advice to develop a TOC can be provided by the Effective Philanthropy Team or an approved consultant on request.

- For initiative grants **more than €250K** the TOC will be approved by the Director of Effective Philanthropy on the advice of the Senior Evaluation Manager in consultation the partner and Programme Manager.

Baseline and Context: The entry conditions and context of the initiative grants **more than €100K** will be assessed by the partner through the baseline rating in the Rubrics Template. In addition, the proposal sections 1.1 (Case for Proposal) and 1.2 (Context) include a description of the problem to be addressed and current conditions, with clear qualitative and / or quantitative data. Appropriate attention will be given to gender and socio-economic disaggregated data, where relevant.

The baseline will form the starting point against which progress will be tracked through partner-led monitoring.

End-of-Initiative Learning Reports (self-assessment) and External Evaluation

M&E plans will specify the following by initiative grant size:

- Initiative grants **less than €100K** will plan and resource for end-of-initiative Learning Reports only (not including rubrics). These grants will not be eligible for individual external evaluation. They are expected to be part of larger evaluative learning processes conducted through the cluster or foundation-level evaluation (developmental evaluation).

- Initiative grants **between €100K and €250K** will plan and resource for end-of-initiative Learning Reports only, including a **Rubrics Template**. These grants will not be eligible for individual external evaluation. They are expected to be part of larger evaluative learning processes conducted through the cluster or foundation-level evaluation (developmental evaluation).

- Initiative grants **more than €250K** will plan and resource for end-of-initiative Learning Reports, including a **Rubrics Template**. These grants will only be eligible for individual external evaluation if they meet one or more of the following criteria - (a) significant grant investment (e.g., in the Euro millions); (b) Programme teams and partners have strong demand for external evaluative learning; and / or (c) the initiative grant is not part of an existing cluster of partner initiatives working towards similar challenges and outcomes.

Resourcing: The M&E plan for the initiative grant, developed by the partner, will detail who is responsible for M&E in the partner organisation and provide a budget for the monitoring / reporting as needed. Monitoring will be budgeted between 2% to 3% of the initiative grant budget and will be specified in the proposal. Where an external evaluation of the initiative is exceptionally approved, the M&E budget range should increase to between 5% to 7% of the initiative grant budget.

2. Implementation of M&E plans

Laudes Foundation will work with each of our partners receiving initiative grants **more than €100K** to ensure close adherence to the M&E plan.

We require that any deviation such as changes in rubrics template or TOC or timing of reporting, and participation in the pre-defined evaluation approach be discussed and agreed with Programme Team(s) and Effective Philanthropy Team prior to making such changes.

At a minimum, we would expect the following:

- **Qualitative and quantitative evidence**: The evidence used for assessing progress against the baseline in the rubrics will be specified. If outcomes are changed or abandoned, we would ask for an explanation and rationale. Furthermore, if change and / or updates are made to evidence these should be specified. Evidence must, where relevant and feasible, provide gender, sex and socially disaggregated data.

- **Progress is tracked in monitoring reports**: Evidence will be regularly compiled and analysed to review progress through monitoring reports (as outlined in the Partner Reporting Guidelines) including the Rubrics Template. This will inform any adaptation of initiatives as necessary. The **Rubrics Template** will require reporting against the Process (A) and Outcome (B and C) Rubrics. In case of initiative grants below €100K, the partner is not required to submit monitoring reports.

- **Monitoring and evaluation is resourced as planned**, including spending according to budget. Any proposed changes in resourcing or budget related to M&E must be agreed by the Programme Team and the Effective Philanthropy team.

3. End-of-Initiative Learning Reporting and Evaluation

Learning Reporting is undertaken by the partner in accordance with the Partner Reporting Guidelines.

- For grant initiatives **less than €100K,** the Learning Report submitted by the partner will not be required to include rubrics.

External Evaluation(s) are undertaken in accordance with M&E plans. External Evaluations are used to assess outcomes (attribution and contribution) using rubrics. Assessments, where appropriate and required, will also include evidence of scaling up (or potential thereof) and take a responsive approach to gender, equity and inclusion in design and implementation, up to appropriately disaggregated data.

- External evaluations will be conducted by an external evaluation expert, independent of the foundation and partner. The external evaluation expert will, as necessary, be familiar with the local and regional context in which the initiative grant is implemented. In commissioning evaluation, the foundation in

collaboration with partners must strive for **gender balance** in the composition of external evaluation teams.

- External evaluations will provide basic data on when the evaluation took place; who was involved; key questions and methodology including the application of the rubrics, context on the initiative, findings, recommendations and lessons.

- For external evaluation, a foundation Senior Evaluation Manager will advise on budget, lead the development of the Request for Proposals, selection of consultants and oversight of the process, in close consultation with the partner and Programme Manager.

- Partners and the foundation will be invited to provide a management response to external evaluations. Both the partner and the foundation can decline to provide a management response.

Transparency on 'what we are learning': All external evaluations funded by Laudes Foundation are open-access and published. Evaluations are published unedited and without redaction of evidence or findings.

Laudes Foundation

Annex 1: Rubrics for Measurement and Learning Approach Framework

Laudes Foundation uses Rubrics to both track **how change happens** and to assess **how Laudes and its partners are contributing** to that change. Numbers alone don't capture what is most important about performance and they usually end up shifting the focus to what can be easily counted. And with that ongoing discussions and learning about quality are often lost – even though they are essential for systems change measurement and learning.

That's why Laudes uses Rubrics. It is a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) tool that focus on the core of each partnership: **how the initiative/grant contributes to what both Laudes and our partner is seeking to influence.**

In order to build up the measurement and learning framework for this initiative/grant, we ask you to fill table below with:

- **Relevant Laudes Rubric** – the rubrics on Early and Later Changes and 2025 Outcomes that are the most relevant to your initiative (complete list below);

- **Rubric Translation** – for each selected rubric, list the initiative/grant outcomes that relate to them;

- **Specific Changes Expected** – for each initiative/grant outcome, list the specific changes the initiative/grant is seeking;

- **Criteria** – for each specific change, list the criteria that will be used to assess how substantial and valuable the change is;

- **Contribution** – for each specific change, please describe what will be the initiative/grant specific contribution. Considering multiple efforts will contribute to a specific change, it's important to understand the initiative's role in that collective effort.

First, select the Rubrics on Early and Later Changes and 2025 Outcomes that are the most relevant to your initiative. The list of Rubrics is found on Laudes website. And remember: we don't need to track every result the initiative influences, we are looking to track how the initiative contributes to the results Laudes is seeking to influence. One initiative will usually select between 2 to 4 rubrics.

Second, for each selected rubric (one line per rubric) please fill in the other four columns.

| Relevant Laudes Rubric	Rubric Translation	Baseline	Evidence of the changes related to the Rubric		
Number and Title of Laudes Rubric	Initiative outcome(s) related to this Laudes rubric	How the current situation is	Specific changes expected (and by when) within each outcome	Criteria (qualitative and quantitative) to assess how substantial and valuable	Initiative's contribution (outputs) to the expected change
		Rating			

Annex 2: Theory of Change Template and Suggested Guiding Questions

Introduction

There are many definitions of a 'theory of change' (TOC) – in essence; it is a blueprint of the building blocks needed to create long-term social change. Building blocks include outputs, outcomes, assumptions (supportive and those that will 'kill' the pathways towards impact) and contexts (policy, political, environmental, socio-economic, cultural) within which an initiative (single or multiple) or organisation is embedded, that are necessary to achieve impact(s).

The key value of a TOC is that it visually conveys beliefs about why the initiative, programme or organisation is likely to succeed in reaching its goals. Unlike a logical framework, which is associated with focused and discrete initiatives, a TOC can be developed for strategies, programme(s), initiatives, groups of organisations working together towards common goals (collective impact), convenings and research initiatives.

The Theory of Change template is given below and the arrows can be moved to draw the causal pathways.
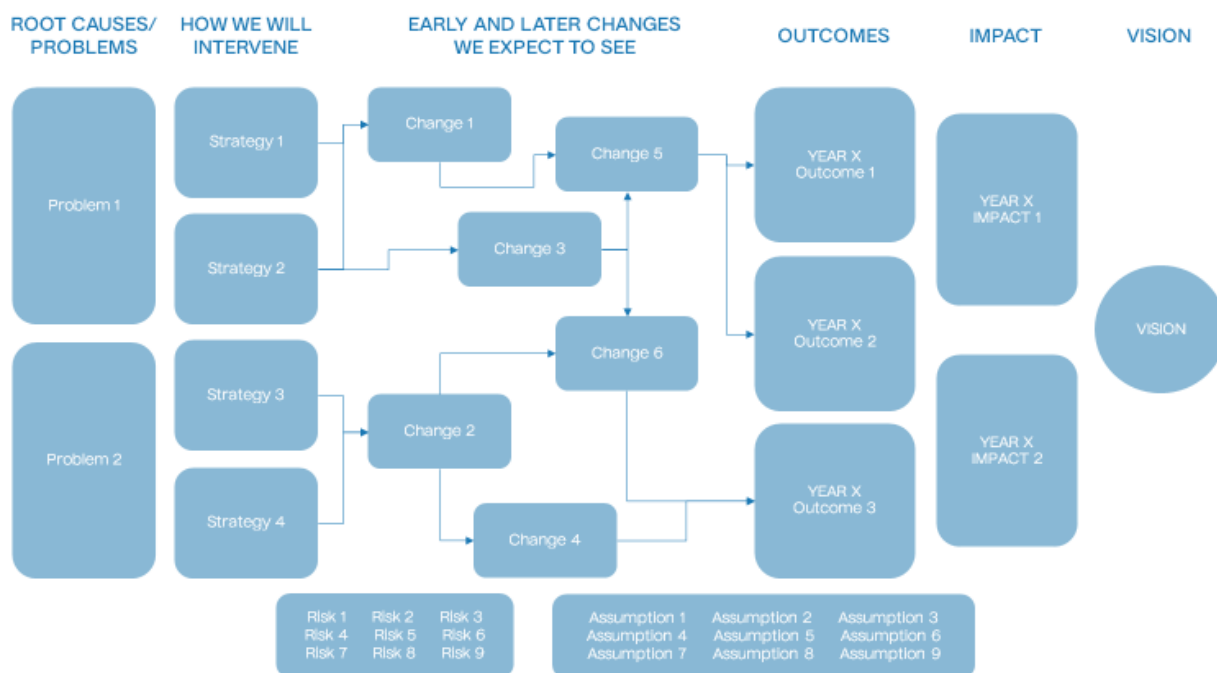
Suggested Guiding Questions to Develop a Theory of Change

What are the root causes that lead to...?

- What are the "problems" and "needs" that reinforce them in vicious cycles?
- What are the "rights" and "potential" that weaken them in virtuous cycles?
- What would be the fundamental principles of a system that supports an inclusive and regenerative economy?

How would you intervene in the system?

- Which leverage points are important for creating enough pressure to 'flip' the system?
- How would you intervene in those leverage points?
- What activities, resources and alliances, would you need?

Where and under what circumstances will changes need to take place?

- What are some context scenarios that could make system shift difficult
- What are some context scenarios that could derail key pathways to change?
  - For both, consider political, cultural, economic, mass migration, Covid-19 (pandemics), significant climate events, etc.

Why do you believe your theory will hold true?

- What are your assumptions?
- What are the threats to your strategy(-ies)?

How would you know if you're moving in the right direction or not?

- What are the early signs of traction likely to be?
- What about early signs of failure?
- What will be the key elements needed to embed changes in the system and make it impossible to revert back to the previous state?
- How will you know when the new state is sufficiently stable?
- If your strategy works, what kind of results do you expect to see in 5 years? And in 10 years?