

## ASSESSMENT & ADAPTATION

**Objective:** The objective of this component is to provide a snapshot of progress towards our vision for change and identify, as needed, how to adapt.

**Overview:** Teams need to distinguish between positive signals of success and warning signs of failure. The box below serves as a practical tool for checking if initiatives are moving in the right direction to prompt adaptations as needed throughout their development.

Analyzing the assessment and adaptation component should be done quarterly ideally as part of the project’s quarterly pause and reflect exercise. Adaptations and learning should be documented and communicated through project reporting, communication stories and in conversations with donor representatives.

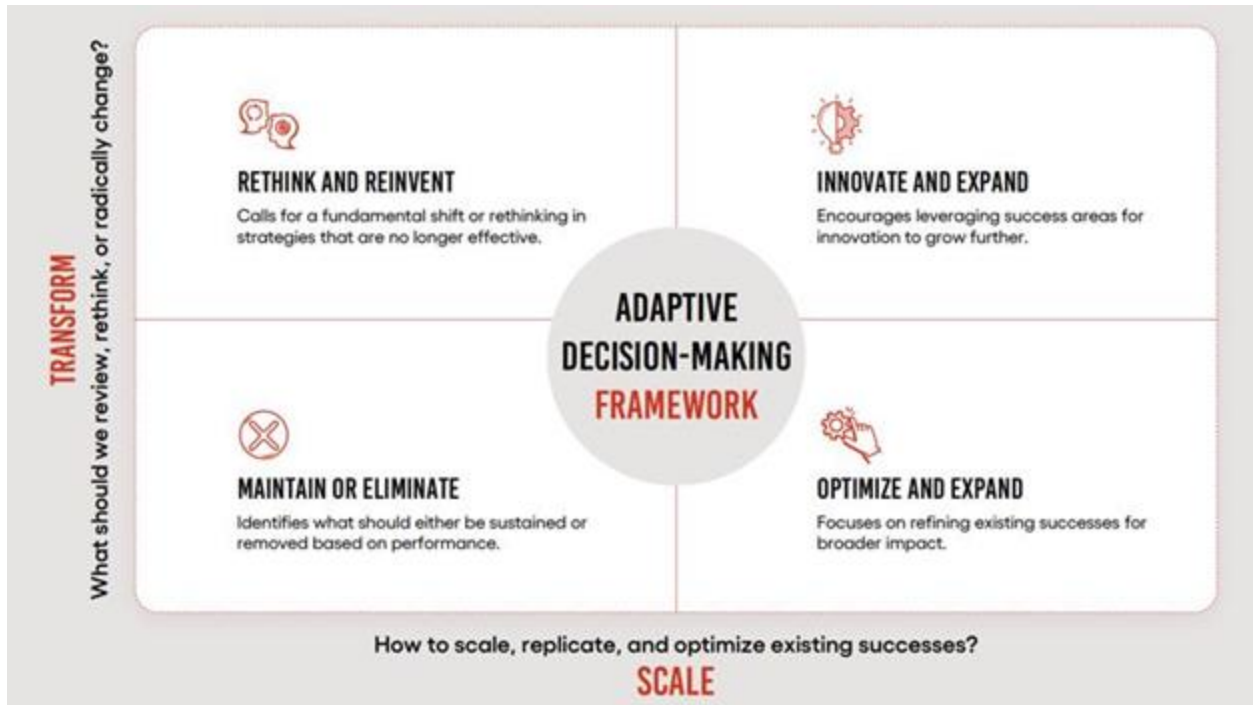
	<b>What do we want to see?</b>	<b>What don't we want to see?</b>
<b>Where to Start</b>	<p>New ideas being implemented effectively, with strong buy-in from local actors, showing promise for broader impact.</p> <p><i>GYSI Example: Market actors see the value and are willing to make changes to their traditional ways of doing business to more actively include women, youth, and historically excluded populations, including in leadership and decision-making roles, showing capacity to act on opportunities for advancement.</i></p>	<p>Ideas that are driven by ACDI/VOCA, with local actors perceiving them as risky, or not adding value to their overall business goals or objectives.</p> <p><i>GYSI Example: Resistance from institutions or groups to engage with or support active participation or leadership of women, youth, or historically excluded groups; or project partners only making changes to their ways of doing business because ACDI/VOCA has asked them to in order to receive support.</i></p>
<b>Building Momentum</b>	<p>Increased engagement from second movers, including those not directly supported by ACDI/VOCA, showing growing interest and support.</p> <p><i>GYSI Example: Other market actors, who are not directly engaged with the project, begin to copycat and adopt similar changes to more actively include</i></p>	<p>Ideas that remain siloed among our direct partners, failing to connect with broader networks or attract necessary resources for growth.</p> <p><i>GYSI Example: Market actors who an ACDI/VOCA project supports may be truly integrating and actively including women, youth, and historically excluded populations in leadership and decision-</i></p>

	women, youth, and historically excluded populations.	making roles, but other market actors (not affiliated with the project) do not see the value or are unwilling to adopt similar behaviors. Therefore, there is no change in the system beyond the few market actors ACDI/VOCA is supporting.
<b>Transition Point</b>	<p>Broad engagement from diverse stakeholders, with strong coalitions working together to overcome barriers and scale solutions.</p> <p><i>GYSI Example: The whole market systems shifts to respond in ways that allow for widespread active participation of women, youth, and historically excluded populations, for example, through changes in policy and other formal rules.</i></p>	<p>Resistance from powerful institutions or groups, and unresolved barriers that prevent progress toward scaling.</p> <p><i>GYSI Example: Due to existing systems structures, such as formal laws, informal norms, power dynamics, or other factors, the scaling of increased, active participation of women, youth, and historically excluded populations is greatly inhibited.</i></p>

**ADAPTATION**

Since systems change evolves through different stages or phases, we often need to rethink, innovate, phase out, or scale up part or all of an initiative. The Adaptive Decision-Making Framework (see visual below) outlines four key decision quadrants for initiatives based on their current performance and potential for scale. Note, ideas should rarely 'stay as is'; we expect a process of continuous improvement as each phase presents new challenges to scale.

- **Rethink and Reinvent:** Initiatives that haven't met expectations but address important needs should be reconsidered before further investment.
- **Innovate and Expand:** Initiatives with proven impact can be improved and expanded to have a greater transformational effect on the system.
- **Maintain or Phase Out:** Initiatives that aren't working or have decreasing impacts over time should be assessed to determine if they should be maintained until their natural end or discontinued entirely.
- **Optimize and Scale:** Initiatives that are ready to grow may require minimal changes or adjustments to improve efficiency before scaling up.



## DECISION-MAKING

The Adaptive Decision-Making Framework helps refine strategies and adjust priorities based on learning and performance across different levels of intervention.

Here's when and how to use it:

Level	Frequency	Instrument	Application
<b>Impact-Level</b>	At inception and as needed.	Contract documents, MEL plans.	The long-term development goals are usually defined, but it may be necessary to adjust them if external conditions shift or new ways to achieve higher-level goals are identified which requires a shift in how impacts are defined.
<b>Systems-Level</b>	Inception, Bi-Annually	MEL and Strategy Documents.	Systems are usually defined at inception. But over time, new opportunities or barriers may emerge, prompting a shift in focus to more critical or promising systems to achieving impact.
<b>Outcomes-Level</b>	Annually	Work plans	Outcomes are updated annually as new insights emerge from implementation. These updates

			reflect the best strategies for achieving systems change within the limits of project resources and the broader context.
<b>Intervention-Level</b>	Ongoing	Partnership agreement or other instruments	Interventions are adjusted frequently as teams experiment with new approaches to discover what works. Flexibility and agility are essential to adapt the scope of interventions based on learning and system feedback.

**Illustrative Example:** Below is an illustrative example of the USAID Transforming Market Systems (TMS) Activity's Context for Change for the tourism system.

<b>ASSESSMENT: Based on the current evidence, what is the current progress towards our vision of change?</b>	<b>ADAPTATION: In what way(s) do we need to adapt our systems change vision or intervention strategy in any way?</b>
<p>Current development of new tourism experiences relies upon seed capital or external donor cooperation. We need to think about a more sustainable approach to tourism innovation.</p> <p>Reconsider an alternative to the Destination Management Organization (DMO) model that better fits the local context and the realities of tourism development. We must rethink their financing structures and eliminate dependence on irregular donor and IHT support.</p> <p>There is some level of duplication of non-strategic and unsustainable marketing efforts that are not aligned with long-term objectives or tourism market development priorities.</p> <p>There is some donor funding for capacity building that is not strategic or sustainable.</p>	<p>Focus on the development of tourism SMEs, as this is the profile of the companies best positioned to reach and effectively serve international markets.</p> <p>Strengthen public-private partnerships in local tourism destinations, involving cooperatives, local governments, chambers of commerce and community organizations in a more ecosystem-based model for sustainable tourism development.</p> <p>Optimize marketing and promotion efforts between public and private sector actors, especially the creation of a public-private promotion agency to sustain marketing efforts over the long term.</p> <p>Develop and scale digital platforms such as MarketReady and specialized services that allow tourism businesses to market their services, book accommodations, and promote local attractions.</p>

**Process & Facilitation Guide:** Below is a recommended process and facilitation guide to develop the Assessment and Adaptation component as part of an in-person workshop. Note, it is not the only way and can be adapted as needed.

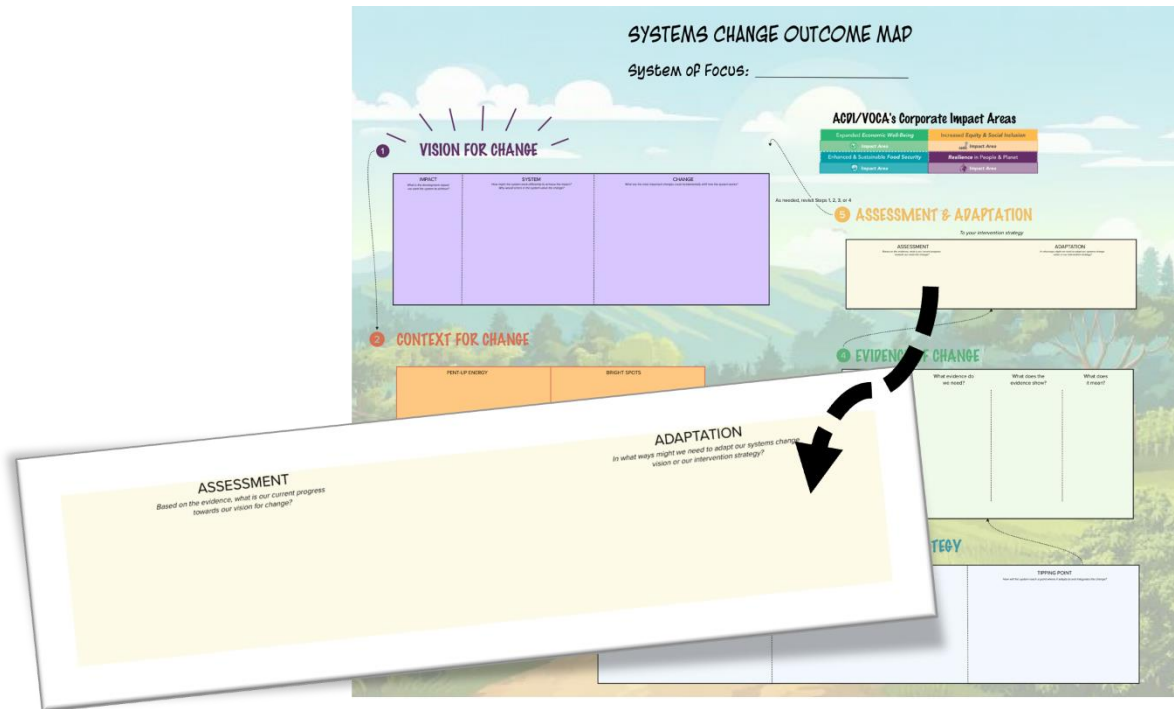
**Timing:** Analyzing the assessment and adaptation component should be done on a regular basis, ideally as part of the project's quarterly pause and reflect exercise. Timing will vary depending on the group size and level of detail you want to go into.

**Participants:** At minimum, the technical team should be involved. But it is also recommended to include the MEL team, and perhaps grants or others from the operational side as adaptations are discussed (to be clear about what is feasible, etc). Additionally, projects may consider inviting partners or key stakeholders to participate in assessment and adaptation discussions to broaden voices and bring greater ownership of the change process.

**Materials:** Use the Systems Change Outcome Map (printed on a poster) and have sticky notes and pens/markers available. It is also helpful to have the worksheet available to discuss the quadrants shown there.

**Preparation:** Participants should have the opportunity to review the most recent data (ideally that identified through the Evidence of Change Component) and conduct the Evidence of Change activity iteratively, prior to a workshop on the Assessment and Adaptation Component to make informed decisions about adaptation.

**Step 1. Introduce the Assessment & Adaptation component of the poster** (see image below).



**Step 2: Facilitate a discussion around the following two key questions:**

- Based on the evidence, what is our current progress towards our vision for change? Keep in mind ACDI/VOCA's four impact areas. Are we seeing progress in certain impact areas but not others? If so, how might we need to adapt?
- In what ways might we need to adapt our systems change vision or our intervention strategy?

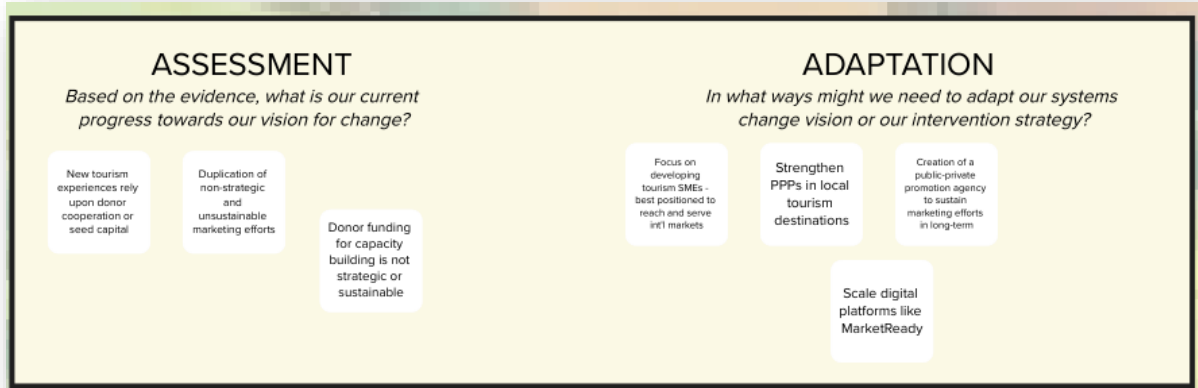


Facilitator(s) may also find the following questions useful:

- **Rethink and Reinvent:** What do we need to fundamentally shift or rethink because the strategies are no longer effective?
- **Innovate and Expand:** Where can we leverage success areas for innovation to grow further?
- **Maintain or Eliminate:** What should either be sustained or removed based on performance?
- **Optimize and Expand:** Which of our successes should we focus on refining for broader impact and how?

Encourage staff to write their ideas on sticky notes and onto the poster. You can group similar sticky notes together. Also be on the lookout for contradictory sticky notes and use this as an opportunity to probe the team to understand more.

Using the Honduras tourism sector example above, a completed Assessment & Adaptation on the poster may look something like this:



**Step 3.** Be sure that at some point after the Assessment and Adaptation component is developed, this is put into the Word document worksheet. It is important to capture this narrative, particularly for the MEL team for reporting and to tell the story of adaptation across the life of the project.

**Iterative Adjustments:**

- The results of this process may require updating your **Vision for Change**.
- Use the worksheet template to rewrite or refine the vision as needed, ensuring it reflects any new insights or shifts in strategy that emerge from the assessment.

**Tips & Additional Resources:**

- See [ACDI/VOCA's CLA Playbook](#) for further ideas and examples to facilitate pause and reflect session and to manage adaptive decision making processes.