

The SMART Indicator Checklist

The SMART criteria are well-accepted in the field of monitoring and evaluation as criteria for assessing the quality of project indicators (the variables that are tracked to measure changes or achievements in connection with an intervention). That said, the letters of the acronym have been defined in different ways. Common terms used when explaining the SMART criteria include: Specific; Measurable; Attainable, Appropriate or Attributable; Relevant, Realistic, Reliable; and Timebound. This checklist can be used to review project indicators to determine if they meet quality standards or need to be revised or discussed further. For a sample use of this checklist, see Switchboard's [Case Study](#).

			Yes or No
S	Specific	Does the indicator measure only one variable or aspect of a program, project, objective, outcome or output?	
		Does the indicator clearly specify <i>what</i> variable is being measured, for/among <i>whom</i> ?	
M	Measurable	Are there practical ways of measuring the indicator?	
		Have the data elements ¹ that are used to calculate the indicator been clearly defined?	
A	Attainable	Is the target attached to the indicator achievable?	
	Appropriate	Does the indicator measure the objective, outcome, or output it is meant to measure? Does measuring this tell us whether we have achieved what we wanted to achieve?	
	Attributable		
R	Relevant	Is it possible to measure this indicator (within the available timeframe, with the available resources)?	
	Realistic		
	Reliable		
T	Timebound	Does the indicator state within what timeframe the indicator will be measured?	

¹Data elements are the smallest specified units of data that convey meaningful information. More than one data element is often required to calculate an indicator. For example, calculating the indicator % of *employable refugee clients who are employed* would likely require capturing at minimum the following data elements: # of employable male refugee clients who are employed, # of employable female refugee clients who are employed, # of employable male refugee clients, and # of employable female refugee clients. It is important to document the data elements required to calculate an indicator to make sure that your data collection tools and indicator tracking systems are adequate. Doing this planning during project design (or in preparing requests for continuation funding) prevents challenges in reporting on project indicators down the line.