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Leading from the Field: Funded international nongovernmental organizations and the participatory development of long-term impact assessments

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Leading from the Field – Funded international nongovernmental organizations and the participatory development of long-term impact assessments

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Dr. Susan Murphy, who taught me about idiosyncrasy credits (Hollander, 1958); Dr. Karen Ford, who helped me earn them; and Dr. Margaret Sloan, who never let me use them in lieu of actual work.

This work is the result of countless hours in more than 30 countries from Afghanistan to Vietnam (Colombia to the Kyrgyz Republic, Germany to Guinea-Bissau, South Sudan to Sri Lanka) and everywhere in between. While I may have been thousands of miles from family and friends, they always reminded me of their love and support. I will spend the rest of my life trying to repay this immense kindness. This work is dedicated to them.
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Abstract

Leaders of international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) must contend with multiple accountability regimes while balancing responsibilities to stakeholders. While many accountability mechanisms are donor-led, this study sought to understand the capacity that NGOs have as agents of change to influence measurement and evaluations activities. The study focused on NGO applications submitted to a donor-government during competitive award announcements for conventional weapons destruction activities.

Using a parallel convergent mixed methods approach, this study examined the ways in which NGO leaders develop their organizations’ capacity to implement long-term impact assessments. A direct entry logistic regression of applications showed evidence of organizational characteristics influencing the inclusion of such assessment activities in response to a stated donor-government objective. Textual analysis of these applications helped build a more robust understanding of how the community of practice proposed to develop and deploy impact assessments.

This study found a field engaged in active conversation about measuring impact and highlights the changing power dynamics in the traditional donor/NGO relationship. Opportunities for future research and limitations of the study are discussed. The results of the investigation have important implications for researchers and practitioners in the field, including ways NGO leaders can use a collaborative process to demonstrate accountability, improve strategic planning, develop internal capacity, and substantiate impact.
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Introduction

Leadership is intrinsically linked with accountability; accountability requires measurement and evaluation. This study examined the ways in which leaders at nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations develop capacity and implement long-term impact assessments. With increased calls for accountability, leaders are under significant pressure to respond to external and internal stakeholders. This presents a tension—and opportunity—for leaders to manage.

Questions about how organization leaders respond to these challenges start with governance and structure (Tran, 2019) but continue to stakeholder engagement and mission focus (Valean, Eynaud, Chatelain-Ponroy & Sponem, 2018). To balance these stakeholders while simultaneously meeting donor requirements and delivering services, leaders are called upon not only to improve management but also to diversify such strategies (Laurett & Ferreira, 2018). Similarly, research in the nonprofit sector and contemporary dialogues underscore the need for proactive leadership that diversifies resources and increases capacity (Lee & Shon, 2018; Hung & Hager, 2019).

This study recognizes the inherent struggles in the structure of the donor-government/nonprofit organization relationship. As will be discussed, leaders must address resource dependence within a challenging alliance (Knutsen, 2017). But research has shown that the tension between donor-governments and nonprofit organizations also generates creativity and affirms a nonprofit’s identity (Arvidson, 2018). As this study
will discuss, increased accountability and evaluation are a reality for the nonprofit sector; however, leaders can show concern for organization identity and mission drift while simultaneously evaluating and improving services (Atia & Herrold, 2018). The vision, capacity, and energy to tackle these competing priorities and challenges are critical to nonprofit longevity—and are critical for leaders to understand as they manage stakeholders, increase transparency and accountability, and solicit resources to deliver services. All of these factors and complications are magnified in scale and scope for international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), many of which work across borders and can be delivering services in post-conflict or near-conflict spaces.

**Post-conflict Weapons Destruction.** Landmines, unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war, and stockpiles of conventional weapons pose a challenge to peace and prosperity around the world. Removing these explosive hazards and improving weapons security and destruction capacities pave the way for stabilization and development in transitional and post-conflict spaces. The first concerted, semi-professional work in this direction started in the late-1980s as a local endeavor of necessity in South Asian communities impacted by landmines and other explosive hazards. The Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) community of practice has since grown into a highly standardized and technically proficient global capacity for response and remediation. The growth and development of the landmine action community of practice largely emulates the professionalization of the international development assistance sector.

The U.S. Department of State now manages approximately $250 million in annual funding to support landmine clearance and CWD programs around the world. Working with foreign governments, international organizations, private companies, and NGOs,
these projects support the reduction of excess small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition, implements physical security and stockpile management practices at weapons storage sites, and supports humanitarian mine action programs to remove other explosive hazards. These projects work through a variety of grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts to international NGOs, public international organizations, and private firms to carry out the broad portfolio of CWD activities.

CWD programs continue to evolve in response to new challenges. Implementing partners are adapting interventions to Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan—countries with active armed conflicts—while also meeting overarching humanitarian missions. Stabilization and other humanitarian assistance efforts cannot begin until key sites are cleared of explosive hazards; so, it is critical that work be carried out efficiently and to key standards of quality. This growth in the responsibility and influence of the NGO community has been broadly investigated (see Keck & Sikkink, 1998) and has had a profound impact on the CWD community of practice.

The landmine action community of practice has taken a different path than other international development interests, at least in part because of its technical nature and adherence to best practices. The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) address all aspects of active operations and help ensure that landmine clearance and other activities in multiple contexts result in land cleared of explosive hazards to an acceptable level of risk and accepted level of confidence. The IMAS define landmine action as those activities that seek to reduce the social, economic, and environmental impact of landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), and other explosive hazards. They are of
interest to our story because they allow donors, operators, communities, and other stakeholders to have confidence in the clearance activities being conducted.

The IMAS are also of interest because they define “mine action” as being broader than just clearance: “It is also about people and societies, and how they are affected by landmine and ERW contamination. The objective of mine action is to reduce the risk from landmines and ERW to a level where people can live safely” (IMAS Glossary, 2013). In short, the international standards link operational deliverables with communities’ quality of life and safety. An overarching goal of CWD activities is to build indigenous capacity, so critiques of governments as donors are diffused by the reality on the ground for landmine clearance work. That having been said, the IMAS are the minimum standards of acceptable work for the field. Leaders of donors and NGOs can and should work together to use data to improve services beyond compliance.

It should be noted here that NGOs, while “nongovernmental,” are part of and an outcome of a political and economic system that affects the political, regulatory, and operational environments for these service delivery organizations (Bloodgood, Trembley-Boire, & Prakash, 2014). This is particularly true for the landmine action community, which saw the negotiations on an international mine ban treaty championed and executed by NGOs first. It was only after intense pressure from NGOs that governments became involved in the process that would result in the Ottawa Convention.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction (commonly referred to as the Ottawa Convention) was adopted by sovereign governments in 1997. The convention grew from the efforts of six NGOs that founded the International Campaign to Ban
Landmines in 1992. As Keck and Sikkink (1998) demonstrated, networks of international NGOs and individual leaders can take specific, discrete steps to influence governments and move international norms. The trend of devolving state action to implementing partners for international assistance and development—the evolution of international collective action—was present in the genesis of the major treaties and frameworks governing conventional weapons destruction activities.

**Measuring Progress.** As with other donor-governments and stakeholders in the field, the Department of State has an interest in supporting CWD activities that provide long-term value to communities recovering from conflict. The non-profit sector in the United States, and the NGO sector globally, are well regarded for their energy, creativity, and focus on cost-effectiveness (Wolf, 1999). There has been considerable attention to the adoption and implementation of impact assessments and other evaluation techniques by NGOs, often as part of overall compliance with reporting requirements (Ebrahim, 2003b). What has been less considered is the extent to which donor-governments can tap into the creative energy and cost-consciousness of the nonprofit sector to encourage the development of impact assessments and evaluation regimes. In this way, donors may positively incentivize NGO leaders to spur the development and integration of impact assessments while normalizing these monitoring and evaluation techniques.

Donor-governments often prefer to work through NGOs because they change faster than local governments (AbouAssi, 2012). While this preference may be substantiated in practice, an emphasis on rapid response time might harm implementing partners. If NGOs are expected to change behavior without sufficient notice, fluctuations in funding can be devastating. As Doornbos (2003) pointed out, donors may change
priorities quickly while NGO leaders are left to react and decipher or interpret and implement these changes regardless of their organizations’ abilities, interests, and capacities. This tug of war between development imperatives and institutional imperatives has an outsized impact on implementing partners because they may not be regularly involved in the process of revising donors’ priorities (Edwards, 2008).

While the broader humanitarian assistance community has adopted long-term impact assessments (LTIA) as a way of demonstrating effectiveness and efficiency, there is a question about how best to encourage similar evaluations within the CWD community of practice. As DePree (2004) wrote on this relationship, “The art of leadership requires us to think about the leader-as-steward in terms of relationships: of assets and legacy, of momentum and effectiveness, of civility and values” (p. 6). If donor-governments are to prioritize the use of long-term assessment measures, they may have to engage and incentivize NGO leaders to do so.
Problem Statement

In the relationship between donors and NGOs, there are significant documented incentives for NGO compliance. Even where leaders are sensitive to power dynamics, the single most important way donors can influence the relationship is the provision of funding. While the NGO sector is credited with creativity and innovation—especially with an attention to conserving scarce resources—participatory change is an important force in the sector (see Hinton, 2004, and Wolf, 1999). Donors have an inherent interest in ensuring the impact of the interventions they fund (see Roche, 1999). Beyond overall compliance (Ebrahim, 2003b), NGO leaders may be engaged to develop internal capacity and strategic direction as part of implementing assessment and evaluation regimes. The opportunity to do so recognizes the pragmatism of NGO leaders balancing donor intent, organizational capacity, service quality, and effectiveness (DePree, 2004).

Evaluations establish legitimacy (Ebrahim, 2005). But, as the literature documents, a problem with accountability mechanisms is the chance they negatively affect service delivery. The challenge facing NGO leaders is how to respond to donor-government requirements for measurement and evaluation practices while building on internal organizational characteristics such as creativity, energy, and cost-consciousness. The momentum and effectiveness DePree (2004) recognizes for leaders is related no just to spotting trends and adapting but also to thinking strategically about coopting donor-government references or requirements while building capacity and transforming their organizations.

Given their intractable position in the realm of foreign affairs, governments are critical donors in international development and conflict recovery. Donor attitudes
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toward development aid and donors’ beliefs toward poverty and vulnerable populations suggest a limit toward warm glow giving (see Andreoni, 1990), at least for institutional donors working within the international development realm (Bachke, Alfnes, & Wik, 2014). Where Andreoni (2007) divided the market into three—private donors, recipient organizations, and governments—there has been skepticism: “For governments donating money to [charitable] organizations, it is important to realize that for many good causes, it can be very difficult to raise money from private donors” (Bachke, Alfnes, & Wik, 2014, p. 482).

The problem of resource mobilization for innovation is especially trenchant for the conventional weapons destruction community of practice. The work undertaken for landmine clearance and other weapons security and destruction activities involves significant capital expenses. Fixed/variable expenses for operations can cost millions of dollars per year. The competitive announcement process undertaken by the U.S. Department of State attempts, in part, to hold these costs in check—still, the work is resource-intensive, so the primacy of institutional or government donors is solidified by these significant funding requirements. The major cost components for the CWD sector can quickly dwarf the funding abilities of most private donors and charitable foundations. As we see in the literature and in practice, governments function in two specific but intertwined roles in the foreign assistance space: beyond being primary interlocutors for international diplomacy, they are also the primary funding source for such work.

At issue for leaders in donor-governments and NGOs is managing relationships while addressing the lack of long-term impact assessments—and a need to continually articulate value and legitimacy. As the largest bilateral donor to CWD activities, there is
a clear desire to implement LTIs that demonstrate value without mandating requirements that disrupt service. A lack of consensus by way of best practices or standards from the field is a challenge but also an opportunity—for leaders in NGOs and donor-governments—to strike a balance and establish a relationship.

Based on this context, the present study asks these essential questions: Do NGOs develop long-term impact assessments in response to donor prompts? If they do, are there organizational factors to support the inclusion of LTIs? And how are organizations proposing to implement components of LTIs?
Purpose of the Study

The present study seeks to engage with these ideas of NGO creativity and frugality because they have not been discussed thoroughly as part of measurement and evaluation within the CWD community of practice. While leaders’ roles are recognized in a large body of literature on nonprofit organizations, these studies have not been applied to CWD activities (see Allen, Smith, & Da Dilva, 2013; Anheier, 2009; Ebrahim, 2003b; Jaskyte, 2008; McCambridge, 2004). Landmine action and CWD activities include services that are highly technical and structured; therefore, the subject experts and implementing partners for such service delivery would be best poised to develop LTIA.s that can be integrated into programs with minimal disruption. Donor leaders can leverage this technical expertise against a desire by implementing partners to secure additional funding for service delivery.

Every year, the Department of State awards a portion of its assistance via competitive announcements. NGOs apply on the basis of the terms and conditions of these competitions. Many of the components of applications are mandatory, and there are barriers to entry for new organizations; however, some elements of the announcements are optional or suggested. The full competitive process is addressed and an example call for proposals has been included as Appendix A.

For the past five years, the Department has included optional language in some of its notices of funding opportunity that has encouraged applicants to address how they will develop and incorporate LTIA.s during the project’s period of performance. It is through these elements that grant-seeking organizations can move beyond compliance to develop and integrate LTIA.s. This study will use the applications received to understand the
ways in which NGO leaders may respond to long-term impact assessment prompts and distinguish their organizations’ capacities and capabilities. Additionally, it aims to better understand what commonalities exist when NGO leaders develop LTIA for integration in their projects.
Review of the Literature

To establish an appropriate body of literature, this study first reviewed the frameworks of international foreign assistance. With the exception of some limited funding from foundations or private donors, the vast majority of funding to support conventional weapons destruction projects around the world comes from donor-governments (Landmine Monitor Report, 2016). The dynamics of international foreign assistance are discussed in a broad and rich body of literature, so this review of literature focused on theories related to power dynamics and the relationships between and leadership of donor-governments and the NGO community. The study also included relevant literature in donor engagement, NGO capacity, and donor-NGO relationships to provide context for participatory models of evaluation and assessment.

Marshall and Suarez (2013) identified a trend of increased funding opportunities for NGOs as governments avoided providing bilateral foreign assistance while also seeking to maintain influence—governments increased their interface with implementing partners while also devolving services because of concerns related to providing assistance directly to other governments. The literature has documented these changes in the international assistance field and their implications for NGO leadership. The literature review also considered best practices from the field, especially the research on delivering interventions in transitional or conflict spaces to better understand how measurement and evaluation regimes can be practically implemented.

Opportunities for Leadership. As outlined by Bryson (2004), the engaged leader encourages the organization to undertake strategic change, while also discussing the consequence of failure. However, the engaged organization may not need such
statements to improve markedly—this is especially true for mission-oriented organizations like nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations. That having been said, leaders must “achieve workable unity” (Gardner, 1990). Transformational leadership (see Bass, 1985) calls for a multifaceted approach in the public sector (Van Wart, 2003). Behn (2004) terms this “creating the performance framework” to encourage active leadership from subordinates in pursuit of an organization’s mission or goals.

Leaders within the nonprofit sector can manage a culture that promotes such positive activity and empowers others (George, 2007; Schein, 1996). Leaders are responsible for managing the expectations of such exercises (Alaimo, 2008). Linked with strategic planning or resource development, leaders can deploy internal capacity to address outside evaluation criteria that is mission-focused and operationalizes organizational characteristics like creativity and cost-consciousness.

Default factors of leadership, management, strategy, hegemony, and accountability have the potential to encourage an environment in which large, opaque donors manage by fiat. Instead, a collaborative process for developing and instituting accountability mechanisms can build on the history of the CWD community of practice. Understanding these factors and historical precedents, NGO leaders have the opportunity to adopt a balanced approach that incorporates accountability measures that satisfy donor demands while limiting the overall disruptive force of externally imposed evaluation mechanisms. Leaders can develop clear and documented needs, communicate and motivate others, and ensure change and innovation are successful (see Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008). While these theories have historically focused on the private sector, transformational and servant leadership have been successful in the public sector as well.
(see Borins, 2002) and for leaders working across groups and constituencies (see Yip, Wong, & Ernst, 2008).

Research encourages a participatory model for assessment development because it allows leaders to enable “those out on the margins to represent and defend their interests more effective, not only within their own immediate contexts but also globally” (Eade, 2007, p. 630). Leaders at all levels and with every stakeholder group can help their organizations by advocating for equity in a more participatory environment. Studies have found a positive relationship between rank-and-file (that is to say lacking specialization) stakeholder engagement and the retention of mission focus in strategic planning processes (Valeau, Eynaud, Chatelain & Sponem, 2018). The successful development and deployment of long-term impact assessments would make the most of the access and expertise of NGO leaders and answer the donor-government’s monitoring and accountability imperatives.

**Government Performance as Donor.** Donor-government actions and preferences can have long-term impacts on the development of states and service sustainability. Batley and Mcloughlin (2010) examined whether non-state service delivery organizations threatened the legitimacy of governments. Specifically, they explored the idea that there is a conflict between the goal of state building (or building effective indigenous capacity) and the imperative of rapid service provision. The concern about NGOs displacing nascent government bodies is fair and warrants reviewing operations and guidelines for those working in fragile environments. In such situations, there are few empirical studies on operations, firms operate with different norms, and donors are not always transparent on the operational evaluations of organizations they fund. As Batley and Mcloughlin
(2010) wrote, service provision by non-state entities is “unregistered, unregulated, and unnoticed” (p. 133).

A concern with stakeholder engagement and representation as part of service effectiveness pervades the literature on international development and foreign assistance. Campbell and Lambright (2016) considered funder and provider motivations for collecting project-level information by surveying how donors collected and interpreted program performance data. To frame their discussion, the authors used organizational effectiveness and multiple constituency theories as grounding perspectives. Organizational effectiveness theory proposes measuring performance in light of management and governance (Herman & Renz, 2008); multiple consistency theory provides a more robust perspective than agency, resource dependence, and institutional theories because it focuses on learning over outcomes (Ebrahim, 2005 and 2010). These theories offer an interesting framework: performance metrics can help improve management activities if they are linked to development, community representation, and long-term impact. To this end, the authors supported fighting the desire for a single set of evaluation criteria (Connolly, Conlin, & Deutch, 1980, p. 212).

As Campbell and Lambright (2016) noted, some donors collect performance information for their own stakeholders. Having multiple stakeholders for performance measurement underscores the importance of having NGO leaders visualize donor governments within this broader framework—donors influence the relationship and have upward and downward accountability (Ebrahim, 2010, p. 102). A collaborative process may move the relational experience into something more akin to a partnership.
Besides seeking to gain access and build partnerships with donors, research shows that NGO leaders must also contend with retaining funding sources or move into reengagement and reacquisition (Aldrich, 2000; Bell, 1992; Bennett, 2006; Bennett, 2009). The pressures of power dynamics and engagement are particularly heightened when NGO leaders attempt to reconnect with lapsed or parted donors. In the private sector, firms are concerned with the most effective and efficient ways to reacquire a client, and there is access to client behavioral histories and other characteristics that may closely determine affinity (Feng, 2014). There is obvious interest from NGO leaders in reacquiring previous donors, given the resources consumed when cultivating new donors. The literature has isolated two major factors that contribute to donor reengagement: regret at abandoning the organization and the appeal of a reacquisition (Bennett, 2009). These factors may be limited in practice, however, as Burt and Popple (1998) and Lee and Woodliffe (2010) noted—any survey data on (private) donors’ giving patterns and preferences likely reflect over-reporting on certain information deemed desirable. While this survey data concerned private individual donors, institutional donors and governments are historically more inscrutable. It is difficult for NGO leaders to divine donor intent without establishing a relationship during engagement and acquisition (or retention and reacquisition); this is not a passive process for successful NGO leaders.

Feek (2007) also leveled critiques against donor-imposed standards and the idea of best practices, saying these have no place in a scientific study because they are not replicable, uniform, or true. While this does not invalidate best practices—plenty of worthwhile activities do not meet such rigorous standards—the argument does highlight a problem with institutional donors. Best practices are largely context-based or context-
specific, and they can discourage diversity, experimentation, or adaptation (especially in a field that focuses on compliance and conformity).

All of these factors coalesce into something of an unflattering portrait of large, inscrutable government donors. If the process of developing and instituting accountability mechanisms could be opened to technical experts and implementing partners active downrange, some of these pressures and imbalances might be alleviated. Field personnel are active at the nearest point of operations and service delivery. Jung, Kaufmann, and Harrow (2013) found evidence that foundations, frustrated with donor governments’ inertia, sometimes banded together to take a more substantial and direct role in advocating for policy changes. Still, this response to opacity and inertia has limited benefit for the nonprofit sector, as it does not directly engage with the issue of improving the ways in which donor governments make policy decisions that affect the sector.

**Inscrutability of Donors.** Brown and Troutt (2004) attempted to reconcile these varied motivations by accounting for the actions and structures that foster a positive relationship between governments and NGOs. The authors noted that there would be specific positions to ensure a successful relationship and specific attitudes to adopt. As we have seen, outsourcing activities to NGOs makes monitoring difficult and can interfere with planning, coordination, and service delivery. Donor-governments cannot create a positive working relationship if they “[create] standards but [do] not enforce them or if funding is not available to ensure that standards are met” (Brown & Troutt, 2004, p. 11). Such an environment presents the opportunity to adopt creative monitoring regimes that allow increasingly active grant recipients to work uninterrupted but with sufficient
oversight. It may also promote NGO creativity and capacity while meeting donor objectives and fitting into existing intervention designs.

Standards help ensure consistent products—see the International Mine Action Standards—and are critical when working with transient populations or amidst uncertainty (Brown & Troutt, 2004). The literature supports an approach, additionally, where governments provide support beyond money, especially in two areas of emphasis: structure and attitude. Structural components are duplicable—standards should be executed on grants or cooperative agreements with clear communication between stakeholders. Additionally, attitude and environment can affect the adoption of new standards and regulations by encouraging collaboration (Brown & Troutt, 2004).

There is inherent volatility in the donor/implanter relationship, and government donors may prioritize political factors over broader development concerns (see Kharas, 2004, p. 4). Yet, as AbouAssi (2012) noted, there is still a clear preference for nongovernmental organizations in the international development and conflict recovery spheres because these actors are more responsive and customizable than large government initiatives. Service delivery has also devolved to these organizations because, as noted, there is a lack of capacity with some host governments. As discussed with the development and adoption of the Ottawa Convention, the needs of affected communities and the service mechanisms of NGOs coalesced long before concerned parties added the appeal for or sourcing of funds to the agenda. These sector-wide best practices were baked into the CWD community of practice, so power dynamics are already inclined toward a more participatory model for monitoring and evaluation.
Donors have the ability and prerogative to help establish a policy framework not only to prevent bad behavior but also to promote a stable work environment (Batley & Mcloughlin, 2010). As the authors note, it is especially difficult to review operations and guidelines while working in fragile environments. There is a lack of empirical case studies, of information sharing by donors, and of consensus on goals and norms. The literature also expresses concern about adopting policy frameworks, which establish clear roles and relationships in stable environments, because they “may be unproductive in fragile settings where state capacity is weak” (Batley & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 173). At the end of the day, the literature conceives of NGOs as strategic actors with significant agency when engaging and interacting with multilateral institutions, donor governments, and other stakeholders (Fogarty, 2011). By balancing all of these factors with the type of work being done and the environments in which it is being done, there is a strong rationale for a participatory model of impact assessment development and deployment with NGO and donor-government leaders.

**Accountability and NGO Agency.** The call for increased accountability and achievement is the logical outcome of a nonprofit sector that is increasingly embedded in mainstream political or development processes (Moxham & Boaden, 2007). NGOs delivering services in lieu of direct government intervention have reported a concomitant increase in calls for accountability (Lipsky & Smith, 1989). This shift has happened along with and related to increasing calls for the nonprofit sector to adopt more private sector tendencies in its operations (Dart, 2004). As previously discussed, outsourcing or contracting can make monitoring difficult because it is almost always externally imposed
and can interfere with planning, coordination, and service delivery (Brown & Troutt, 2004).

There is a large body of literature about accountability for international NGOs, and much of it helps substantiate oversight requirements. These entities have significant impact in their communities of practice. Cavill and Sohail (2007), working through the broad corpus, parsed NGO accountability based on its focus within particular contexts. Practical accountability focuses on effectiveness and efficiency, with how activities are performed or services are delivered. By comparison, strategic accountability measures growth as it relates to an organization’s mission. There is a frequent dichotomy drawn for accountability sector-wide, though Cavill and Sohail (2007) noted an emphasis on practical accountability during semi-structured interviews following a literature review. They found this focus caused organizations to overlook strategic accountability and to miss some gaps in practical accountability as well. Both are important (and both are worth doing well), the authors contended, because accountability is linked to legitimacy, response to criticism, quality of practice, professionalization, and visibility. This division of practical and strategic accountability helps theoretically balance the goals of NGOs to simultaneously deliver services and justify their existence (Ferguson, 1994).

Many authors make strident cases for transparency and participation when deploying evaluation mechanisms to prevent what Ebrahim (2005) terms “accountability myopia.” An emphasis on accountability can hamper efforts to affect lasting change—Ebrahim (2005) suggests that a strident focus can negatively affect organizational learning and capacity development. Accountability systems are difficult to navigate, but a lack of attention to accountability can create blind spots for operations and strategy
(Carman & Fredericks, 2008). The outcome is to limit capacity before leaders can develop it.

Likewise, an overemphasis on accountability can prioritize funders before mission, vision, and theory of change—or emphasize normative impacts over long-term goals. In a cluster analysis study of organizations, Carman and Fredericks (2010) found three types of NGO approaches to accountability: those satisfied with their evaluation capacity, those struggling with evaluation, and those struggling across the board with little support for evaluation. Organizations most satisfied with their evaluative capacities and confident in their abilities to meet internal and external stakeholders’ needs were more likely to view evaluations as an organizational development tool as well as a compliance measure.

Accountability ultimately means measuring performance (Speckbacher, 2003). Business models for measuring performance have been adapted to the nonprofit sector, and some (balanced scorecard, performance prism) explicitly mention nonprofits (see Moxham & Boaden, 2007 for a thorough review of studies on the applicability of business processes in the public and nonprofit sectors). Most public sector entities do not have the latitude of the private sector. Nonprofit and public sector leaders are sometimes constrained in innovating and implementing change (Liket & Maas, 2015). Additionally, there are difficulties in transplanting private sector goals and public sector accountability to the nonprofit sector (Moxham & Boaden, 2007).

For their part, NGO leaders have positioned their organizations as strategic actors and influence the bureaucracies that fund and oversee them (Fogarty, 2011). There are also developmental lifecycles to contend with as we explore interactions between donors
and other stakeholders (Avina, 1993). By bringing donors together with service delivery organizations, the literature suggests that leaders can capitalize on field expertise while balancing reporting requirements with practical limitations. Research has demonstrated that the tension between donor requirements and nonprofit responses can confer a common identity and spur creativity (Arvidson, 2018). These perspectives of transforming rote compliance activities help situate NGOs in a dynamic context—one in which leaders can engage in direct conversation with donors and stakeholders. If we accept NGOs as agents in their own right, then part of our discussion must contend with how NGO leaders best promote the outcomes of their work.

**Metrics.** Stakeholders obviously require results to substantiate effectiveness. The literature suggests that it is not sufficient to mandate measurement and assessment regimes—donor-governments and other stakeholders should also specify what to measure. To assist, best practices emerge that help distill general guidance, past successes, and the requirements for a community of practice. As they examined the adoption of performance evaluations by NGOs, Eckerd and Moulton (2011) also tapped into resource dependence theory (Froelich, 1999; Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978) and contingency theory (Herman & Renz, 2008). Through these lenses, overlaid with new and institutional theory (DiMaggio, 2001), the authors observed that organizations tended to parse evaluation requirements into two levels of accountability mechanisms. At the organization level, the authors noted evaluations were used to signal legitimacy, as previously discussed; at the project level, evaluations helped link impact with the outcomes of service delivery. The danger with lumping these heterogeneous factors, actors, and objectives together is that evaluations could assume equivalency across the
nonprofit sector. The potential of improving accountability frameworks is advantageous at multiple levels.

Likewise, the prospect of ill-suited evaluations prompts a discussion about improving accountability, from the ground up, with individual or tailored metrics and rules. Burger (2012) examined oversight options and scenarios to look for ways in which regulators and government involvement may enhance accountability. Using a case study of Ugandan nonprofits, the author found that evidence of corruption and perceptions of ineffectiveness tarnished organization reputations with stakeholders. In this case, there was not much that could be done to significantly improve these factors—government regulations suffer from pool design and ineffective resource allocation (and there was not sufficient political pressure or peer review to overcome these deficiencies). Burger (2012) did suggest, however, that some regulation and government oversight could promote an environment for increased accountability.

Even with developmental NGOs that are frequently large and complex (sometimes reaching the size of host nations’ governments), the nonprofit sector still contends with operations taking place in self-made or fluid contexts. Burger (2012) found that monitoring by donors faced less resistance than outright regulation and oversight in various situations, writing, “Because donors control significant resources, they have strong influence over the NGO sector and compliance is not expected to be a problem” (p. 95). While the latter point is debatable, Burger’s case does suggest that donor involvement has a shorter time horizon and greater project focus than host government regulations and metrics. This flexible time horizon could be helpful in post-conflict or transitional spaces. Further improvement of accountability measures and the
Development of metrics requires us to consider the ways in which accountability can effectively and constructively be tailored to NGO activities and contexts.

O’Dwyer and Unerman (2010) made the case that effective assistance programs only function if they include recipients’ perspectives. The same could be extrapolated for measuring program effectiveness. Access to decision-making processes remains problematic across the sector; but, incorporating stakeholder feedback can help substantiate organizations’ missions and persuade donors to adapt. Donor-governments may not have access to beneficiary perspectives in developing areas and evaluation mechanisms may not have sufficient downward accountability (O’Dwyer & Unerman, 2010). Bearing this in mind—and understanding that clients and beneficiaries’ experiences are context-specific—making accountability mechanisms and metrics more participatory might offer multiple benefits.

Discussions of accountability mechanisms must surely grapple with components or metrics of such regimes. Allio (2012) suggested that strategic and thoughtful development and deployment of metrics by leaders could ultimately improve the implementation and delivery of services. For price and value conscious donors, such a process offers the potential of improving project efficacy (quality of services delivered) and efficiency (oversight by management). While metrics tend to focus on those operational efficiency goals, they can be oriented to indicators of strategic achievement, looking at efficiency and profitability as well as growth (Allio, 2012). The literature of metrics may not identify specific items or checklists; however, there is clear support for evaluation regimes offering multiple layers of benefits if deployed thoughtfully and deliberately in consultation with stakeholders.
Evaluation Design. Beyond considering the specific components of accountability measures, this review contends with how leaders can best structure metrics. As previously discussed, organizations satisfied with evaluation capacities tended to have regimes that already met the needs of internal and external stakeholders (Carman & Fredericks, 2010). Evaluation design elements borrowed from traditional, private sector sources emphasize internal initiatives that build management skills and improve donor relations when borrowed and adapted to the nonprofit sector (Chalhoub, 2009).

Specific to nongovernmental agencies, Stern, Stame, Mayne, Forss, Davies, and Befani (2012) undertook a review of impact evaluation practices for programs supported by the United Kingdom’s Department of International Development (DFID, the corollary to the United States Agency for International Development). DFID-funded organizations included three major components for their impact evaluations: questions, designs and methods, and program attributes. Stern, et. al. (2012) recommended clustering programs by attributes (duration, delivery method, risk and unpredictability) rather than mission or context complexity—essentially, the authors recommend that DFID and other institutional donors cluster project evaluations amidst operations.

As previously discussed, Eckerd and Moulton (2011) warned against lumping evaluation regimes together because it might encourage false equivalencies—but thoughtful evaluation design may help guard against this outcome. Sector leaders could also encourage these thoughtful practices, if only by reminding donors that evaluations in the third sector require different skillsets (Hall, 2014). These stakeholders and the different ways they think about knowledge and expertise have an impact on resources and strategies. Performance measurements and evaluations in the third sector tend to focus
on how to increase performance (Reed & Morariu, 2010; Benjamin, 2007; Carman, 2007) and how to improve practice with better data (Hall, 2014). Leaders must think of how to improve their organizations as well.

Preference for specific evaluation designs may not reflect or account for the strengths and weaknesses of these evaluation methods. Additionally, biases in theory and practice might privilege certain skills and abilities without sufficient justification, further complicating the sector’s attempts to design satisfactory evaluations. Determining how to design evaluation remains a complicated matter not only because evaluations establish legitimacy (Ebrahim, 2002 & 2005) but also because of critiques of popular evaluation methods or systems.

It is worth spending some time considering the ongoing issues with establishing ideal evaluation procedures and content. Even establishing broad evaluation logics can be problematic (Hall, 2014). Scientific evaluation methods may foster systematic observation and attributable outcomes; however, these may ultimately be reductive (Scott, 1998). Methods that are more bureaucratic may promote rational planning and sequential evaluation but may result in projects designed for the evaluators only. Learning models are open to change and creativity, with stakeholder engagement at all levels (Ebrahim, 2005), but may lack necessary rigor (Hall, 2014). Theory is dividing nonprofit measurement and evaluation procedures (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2010). Furthermore, implementation costs can rise if stakeholder interest in providing feedback is high but funds for evaluation are low. If evaluations are poorly designed, there can be a disconnect between the scale and scope of implementation and capacity. Finally,
evaluation knowledge and skillsets may not be properly matched with a privileged or preferred approach or framework.

The sector emphasizes sound evaluation design not only because poor evaluations can waste resources but also because there are multiple competing resource requests to support missions (Heyse, 2013). We also understand that most organizations behave in a consequential, rational, and appropriate manner (March, 1997). If given the opportunity to enact organization preference, some literature suggests that nonprofits mostly do so while promoting the organization’s goal. Despite this broad altruism and responsible behavior, Heyse (2013) noted that organizations’ unfettered decisions still have external impacts with their service communities. It is imperative, therefore, that we also interrogate the nature and procedures for making such choices amidst literature with dissenting voices here.

International NGOs have shown their own initiative in developing evaluation practices and procedures (Rugh, 2004). In their overview of such developments in US-based NGOs, Kang, Anderson, and Finnegan (2012) noted a sector-wide movement to self-starting the implementation of longer-term impact measures. These developments stand out not only because they extend the time horizon for evaluations but also because the US-based NGO sector is as varied as the international-based sector. Generally, small international NGOs in the United States have private donors while larger international NGOs can compete for institutional and government funding (Kang, et. al., 2012). Although all international NGOs have encountered pressure to improve evaluations (Startling, 2003), this broader pressure is finally resulting in long-term impact assessments (Adelman, et. al., 2007). The U.S. Agency for International Development
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has a history of reporting requirements but has added longer-term goals to overall project outcomes (Riddell, 1999) and other donor institutions are emphasizing fundamental goals (Britian, 2008).

Just as the broader international development community has professionalized and responded to calls for more stringent monitoring and evaluation, the landmine action community has also developed and refined a series of guidelines and best practices that govern the sector. Despite being initially proposed in 1996 as a body of sector-specific protocols and having a first edition adopted in 1997, the International Mine Action Standards only have one chapter on evaluation and one chapter on monitoring (see IMAS 14.10, Guide for the evaluation of mine action interventions; and IMAS 7.40, Monitoring of mine action organizations). IMAS 14.10 identifies responsibilities for evaluation with the United Nations (as a supporter of national mine action centers), the national mine action authority in an affected country, mine action implementing agencies, and donors. The standard also encourages broad stakeholder participation (see IMAS 14.10).

Beyond this, however, the standards for the mine action community of practice offer little in terms of descriptive and prescriptive guidelines. This lack of prescription for measurement and evaluation is not surprising, given that the historical focus for the IMAS and the mine action community has been on technical proficiency and clearance capacity (see Reed & Morariu, 2010; Benjamin, 2007). This lack of focus is important because it highlights a potential deficiency in the sector-specific literature: an emphasis on clearance operations without support for measurement and evaluation leaves leaders without critical data for project planning, service delivery, and capacity development competencies (Heyse, 2013). Indeed, the IMAS on monitoring mine action organizations
views costs associated with confidence intervals and other statistical analysis as “better spent on clearing more land and avoiding accidents caused by long delays to clearing land” (IMAS 7.40, p. C-3). Monitoring systems are linked to strategic goals and objectives but only as a means of ensuring compliance and safety. The standards do underscore the importance of information management to project implementation but discourages information gathering that might jeopardize operational efficiency.

As we have seen, the emphasis on making evaluations more pervasive and meaningful has multiple, overlapping stakeholders with varying levels of commitment to the endeavor (Startling, 2003; Adelman, et. al., 2007). The incorrect assumption with an increased emphasis on assessments is that organization leaders and managers will see evaluations as self-evidently meritorious and useful (Carman, 2011). As demonstrated by the IMAS on monitoring of mine-action organizations, cleared land may not be the sole output metric but other suggested metrics focus on compliance. Though there has been some success in making long-term evaluations’ normative and descriptive frameworks more digestible and user-friendly, there is still goal conflict between principal and agent, donor and implementer, and NGO and service recipient. There are major differences in the relevant theories of evaluations, specifically with the motivations for evaluation and how the information will be used (Allio, 2012; Burger, 2012; Carman & Fredericks, 2010; O’Dwyer & Unerman, 2010).

In resource-constrained environments, there is also a benefit in delineating how certain evaluation functions contribute to sustainability. Carman (2011) encouraged the adoption of such thinking by leaders as “ritualistic behaviors” (p. 365). Funders can contribute in this regard by rewarding grantees that proactively or positively use
evaluation data. Long-term impact assessments developed internally may also avoid the *sui generis* attacks on program design because they may avoid the stigma of purposeless activities that displace core functions of service delivery. There is further benefit, of course, if leaders can illustrate how assessments contribute in resource-constrained environments (Hall, 2004).

This kind of participatory design and focus on multiple benefits can address critiques of externally determined evaluation design. Evaluations can confer legitimacy, but ratios and other external measures push organizations toward conformity and comparability—they recognize efficient organizations more than effective projects, critics complain (Eckerd, 2014). If we recognize that organizations are operating in “a complex evaluation environment,” (Eckerd, 2014, p. 439), then leaders must be wary of standards or measures that promote thresholds for acceptable limits of performance or behavior rather than overall quality. Put another way, these evaluations focus on operation efficiency over strategic achievement (Allio, 2012). By opting for assessments that are beneficial on a number of fronts, leaders may further incentivize the process of their development.

Field Design and Changing Behavior. Given the nature of the conventional weapons destruction community of practice and the areas in which this work is undertaken, it is vital also to consider the feasibility of conducting long-term evaluations. There is a large body of literature on externally imposed evaluations in stable environments but relatively little about operations in contested or post-conflict zones (see Baum, 2012). Ultimately, while data collection in conflict areas is difficult (Clark, 2006; Romano, 2006), doing so provides data that is systematic, reproducible, reliable, and valid (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).
This study adopts Cohen and Arieli’s (2011) definition of a conflict environment: “A conflict environment is one in which people, whether individuals or groups, perceive their needs, goals, or interests to be contradicted by the goals or interests of the other side...” (p.424). Conventional weapons destruction activities are working at the edges and amidst these transitional spaces as well as in more stable environments. The literature suggests that these factors are important to weigh—specifically if donor-governments require data collection in impacted communities—because individuals or groups may view government-sanctioned interventions skeptically at best or against local interests at worst. While most CWD implementing partners require consent from local communities, returning populations may not have been socialized to the work required before their return. In this way, the expertise on data collection methods, community liaison practices, and shifting population demographics resides with the implementing partners conducting operations within the relevant communities.

If we recognize the ways in which operational environments can influence assessment activities, we must also recognize the ways such assessment can change organization behavior. In a study of nonprofits in South Carolina, Zimmerman and Stevens (2006) examined the interplay between capacity measures such as organization size, budget, and evaluation activities. Not surprisingly, most of the organizations indicated that they were required to conduct performance oversight and management by an outside source. In addition to recognizing that evaluation activities were sometimes cumbersome, the organizations surveyed had made changes in programming as a result of the evaluation results. There has been an emphasis on accountability and compliance across the sector as donor-governments and other entities devolve service delivery.
Where leaders can take action, both within the recipient organizations and at the donor level, is to raise the profile of accountability mechanisms and resource them more fully. As Carman and Fredericks (2008) note, “Given that some nonprofit organizations are still struggling with the logistical and technical aspects of program evaluation, funders are uniquely positioned to support nonprofit organizations in ways that help them invest” (p.67-68).

Additionally, interactions with other organizations may affect monitoring and evaluation practices. NGOs play a critical role in disseminating management and accountability practices within civil society circles. Such knowledge transfer practices may be particularly effective and pervasive in smaller, more technically focused communities of practice. Marshall and Suarez (2013) surveyed NGOs operating in Cambodia in an attempt to identify influences in self-regulatory evaluation practices. The authors noticed an increase in self-regulatory behaviors in the organization, and that these entities served as carriers of community practices to indigenous organizations. However, the authors had difficulty pinpointing the influence of monitoring and evaluation, donor preferences and guidance, and overall professionalization. There may also reflect interconnectedness or a small pool of donors with similar requirements.

As has been noted, there can be a benefit to leaders outlining positive aspects of new evaluation and accountability regimes in resource-constrained environments (Carman, 2011). Where externally imposed evaluations may present a cumbersome impediment without clear benefits in exchange for modifying operations or programming, internally developed methods can offer gradations and nuance if championed by the organization’s leadership (Eckerd, 2014). This study also recognizes
that performance management mandates for NGOs are coming from multiple sources (Carnochan, et. al., 2014). Organizational capacity is critical to effective performance management and data collection, and leaders are responsible for developing and monitoring this capacity. It can be difficult to know how long and at what distances organizations manage coordination and decision-making mechanisms (Daniell, et. al., 2011), so having a more inclusive and participatory development model may help with field design and behavior change concerns.
Theory Development

Starting with a grounding in resource dependence theory, accountability, organizational development, this study reviewed NGO leaders’ evolving relationships and power dynamics as donor-governments increase an emphasis on accountability. These theories provide a logical starting point because the international assistance and development sector consistently manages across multiple accountability mechanisms. Structural factors influence the relationships between donor-governments, host governments, implementing partners, recipient populations, and a constellation of other stakeholders and actors.

The overall study is concerned with whether NGOs in the CWD community of practice develop long-term impact assessment practices in response to donor prompts and the ways they attempt to do so. While many accountability mechanisms may be donor-led or donor-influenced, this study recognizes the capacity NGOs have as agents of change to influence measurement and evaluation regimes. This conceptualization of NGOs as valued contributors is important because it puts the relationship between donor-government and NGO front and center. The call for increased accountability and achievement is not only focused on donor requirements but also on the logical byproduct of relationships between stakeholders throughout the sector.

This study interrogates the nature and processes for making choices in evaluation design because these choices influence and impact service delivery. If donor-governments give NGO leaders the option of developing LTIA components, those same leaders can then make determinations about how best to incorporate LTIA into service delivery, adapt strategy to changing donor guidelines, and to develop internal capacities.
As a subset to the overall research question, this study engages with two additional questions: if NGOs develop impact assessments, are there organizational factors to support the inclusion of LTIA; and, how are CWD organizations proposing to improve service delivery by implementing these LTIA components. For leaders in the technically complex conventional weapons destruction field, they must balance the needs of both accountability and service delivery while proactively engaging stakeholder groups to manage these forces.

**Resource Dependence Theory.** There is a long history of research and discussion on how leaders and organizations respond to the provision of resources, strategically deploy internal capacity to secure those resources, and adapt to changing conditions related to external resources. First codified by Pfeffer and Salanick (1978), resource dependence theory postulates that there is an identifiable series of consequences for organizations seeking external resources. Resource dependency theory grew from the study of population ecology, a subsect of biology, which focused attention at the level of “conspecific individuals” as a way of “delineating units for management action” (see Wells & Richmond, 1995, p. 462).

Since the initial treatise, which primarily concerned organizational studies and structure in the private sector, there has been broad discussion of the theory’s application to the nonprofit sector. The literature suggests that resources are an obvious and pervasive basis of power between resource-seeking and resource-granting organizations. This study includes research from this branch of theory because resources are especially dynamic and require attention from leaders. Resources (primarily funding from donor-governments) can also give NGO leaders the flexibility to pursue new strategies or
develop internal capacities. By making strategic choices about the deployment of scarce resources, NGO leaders make a statement about organizational objectives and values—setting the overall tenor of operations and helping to realize mission goals.

Resource dependence theory helps parse the dynamics of power in the nonprofit sector. Unlike the hierarchical relationships and structures of the private sector, the nonprofit sector includes more engagement and negotiation between stakeholders. While the relationship between public and nonprofit sectors is hierarchical when resources are being exchanged, there is evidence of cooperation and coordination. Leaders in both sectors tend to operate more cooperatively, especially when the sectors conduct advocacy for policies and develop best practices. As Verbruggen and Millis (2011) noted, resources inherently limit choices for nongovernmental organizations. Where governments set standards and provide funding and resources, there is increasing leverage within the resource dependence framework.

Similarly, in this theoretical framework, Burger and Owens (2013) conducted a study of large-scale NGOs in Uganda and those organizations’ propensity to survive. NGOs are particularly important in developing communities because of the lack of indigenous capacity and resources. Despite the belief that older and larger NGOs would be more likely to survive, research showed this hypothesis correct but dependent on short-term funding mechanisms like grants. The survival of an organization was largely dependent on seeking a grant; the sourcing and use of resources were critical determinants of organizational structure. Leaders of NGOs should be attuned to such dynamics, which could cause a change to long-term organization capacity and strategy in service of short-term resource seeking.
Batley (2011) observed that organizations with nongovernmental funding made strategic decisions and exercised greater strategic latitude than service providers with greater diplomatic tendencies exercise. This dynamic makes sense if we understand that organizations delivering services in place of governments must also advocate their cases to ensure continued funding rather than representing a particular donor perspective. Even if an organization were successful in securing funding over a long period of time, the organization must continue to mobilize resources. AbouAssi (2014b) postulated that NGOs struggle with resource dependence from a variety of sources. By examining a subset of NGOs in Lebanon, the author found evidence that a high resource dependence on external funding sources might indicate a willingness or tendency to be more compliant with external requirements. Carman and Fredericks (2008) noted that many organizations are using data to improve activities—but more than half of the organizations surveyed also admitted to using this data primarily to solicit additional money. NGO leaders can capitalize on outside pressures from donors to develop internal competencies and build capacity.

We see in these studies a tendency toward an NGO/donor-government bifurcation. Some of the literature characterizes donors as part of a monolithic class—one that makes decrees to a responsive, flexible pool of NGOs seeking resources. Such perspectives are unhelpfully simplistic because they miss the depth and breadth of the relationships between NGOs and donor-governments. Such an interpretation also suggests an understanding of power dynamics that undersells the leadership of NGOs and undervalues their strategic planning capacity. Research has shown that tension between
donor-governments and NGOs has the ability to generate creativity and solidify identity (Arvidson, 2018).

Leaders at NGOs and donor-governments occupy distinct but convergent spheres of activity and influence. As donor-governments have devolved responsibility for direct foreign or international assistance, NGOs have filled the gaps to promote agendas, deliver services, and manage stakeholders. Conventional weapons destruction projects have significant startup and fixed/running costs, often involving large capital purchases to supplement labor, supplies, and other expenses. Of course, NGOs and donor-governments are concerned with reigning in costs where possible; however, there is significant leverage for NGOs already operating in the space. They have the technical expertise, capital assets, and other resources—in short: donor-governments to CWD projects could not easily replace these capacities.

For those organizations seeking federal funding, a grant is now more akin to a performance agreement—such as with a contract—thereby making funding to support measurement and evaluation critical. Carman (2009) found that federal funding was a significant predictor of organizational compliance with external monitoring requirements. At the same time, research suggests a new paradigm that represents and recognizes NGOs’ agency (Bryce, 2006). In many places, third sector entities and NGOs represent social capital and economic power—effectively serving as semi-independent contractors for the donor government. Even if these organizations do not articulate power vis à vis donor and host governments, NGOs have considerable impact and influence on the communities they serve.
AbouAssi (2014a) speculated that there is an interplay between factors considered by resource dependence theory, including revenue, sustainability of funding sources, and the availability of alternatives. That having been said, the sector is impacted by resource dependence theory every time an NGO voluntarily accepts donor priorities over organization mission. As Batley (2011) noted, a formal working relationship can be followed by informal or trust-based relationships (both positively and negatively). In an environment with multiple accountability mechanisms, structural factors influence these relationships—but NGOs can adopt strategies to better manage these connections. This adoption of strategic responses is particularly key for NGO leaders to understand as they develop relationship with donor-governments and host-nation stakeholders. Especially in CWD programs, where NGOs are the front-facing contact with service beneficiaries and donor-governments may be geographically distant, NGOs are the principal intermediary for the donor-government.

**Power Dynamics.** The devolution of services from governments to implementing partners represents an important change in the balance of power dynamics between donors and the organizations they fund (Marshall & Suarez, 2013). When considering the NGO sector in Lebanon, AbouAssi (2014b) found evidence that increased financial support limited information asymmetry in the relationship between governments and the implementing organizations they supported. Limited asymmetry in practice may reflect the reality that governments have an inherent interest in better preparing the agents they select to carry out services in their name—more transparency levels the balance of power but also allows the NGOs to better serve as representatives of the donor governments. As noted, the literature has been interested in these changing dynamics as part of broader
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changes to the relationships between donor-governments, host-nation government, service providers, and communities.

The literature has offered a defense of at least tangential benefits to this increased use of data in leveling the power imbalance between donors and implementing partners. Building on previous research (see Brown & Troutt, 2003), Brown and Troutt (2004) investigated power dynamics between governments and NGOs and found evidence that organizational stresses over financing were diminished by a more cooperative relationship. They write, “The uneven relationship between governments and organizations, the divergence of government goals and organizational, and, in particular, government control of organizations through the definition of contract details heavily influence the existence and level of transaction costs to both recipient organizations and funders” (Brown & Troutt, 2004, p. 9). A more collegial or reciprocal relationship between leaders in donor-governments and service providers may help smooth out the power imbalances that persist—measurement and evaluation mechanisms once seen as edicts from the donor-government may become a way for the NGO to demonstrate value and initiate a conversation about overall impact.

In addition to relevant critiques about governments as donors, the literature notes there are significant structural barriers for organizations seeking to influence donor preferences or divine funder policy changes. We recognize and must account for the issue of information asymmetry in such a multi-agent operating environment—not just between donors and NGOs but also between donors and communities (Burger & Owens, 2013). An inherent goal for international development activities is sustainability, and information asymmetry threatens the potential for capacity building.
The change in sector power dynamics is a critical component for NGO leaders to understand and strategically plan for when soliciting potential donors or delivering services for existing donor-governments. At the same time, the devolution of services understandably, for governments, results in an emphasis on accountability and compliance (see Carman & Fredericks, 2008). It is important to think of ways to improve the utility of these accountability and compliance mechanisms because they are increasingly a part of the operational environment for NGOs. Governments are a central fixture in the realm of foreign affairs—by extension, then, governments have a place in advocating for international development and conflict recovery (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). Furthermore, the cost components for CWD activities are significant, running into the millions of dollars per year. Such funding requirements quickly overwhelm all but the largest institutional donors. As we have seen in the literature and in the field, governments serve not only as the primary interlocutors for diplomacy and foreign affairs but also as primary resources for funding and engagement.

Beyond the clearance of explosive hazards, CWD activities seek to promote indigenous capacity (see IMAS 14.10) and engender the preconditions for sustainable management of residual CWD tasks. By supporting long-term impact assessments, donor-governments can help crystalize the focus of an intervention around the longer-term outcomes from present-day activities in collaboration with implementing partners and other stakeholders. Organizational effectiveness theory (Herman & Renz, 2008) and multiple consistency theory (Ebrahim, 2005 and 2010) offer a compelling framework from which to interrogate the mechanisms and dynamics of power in international development. Using the aperture of organizational effectiveness theory, Herman and
Renz (2008) postulated that organizational capacity and management are most appropriately measured as a development objective rather than compliance with a best practice. Multiple constituency theory also allows us to view the overlapping or competing motivations in collecting information on services and measuring growth (Campbell & Lambright, 2016). From this perspective, leaders of donor-governments and implementing partners can justify using performance metrics because they can be linked to development, community representation, and long-term impact. Criticism of single sets of evaluation criteria (see Connolly, Conlin, & Deutch, 1980) underscore the opportunity for leaders of donor-governments and NGOs to work collaboratively.

Organizations have subsets, diverse stakeholders, and varied missions (see Balser & McClusky, 2005; Herman & Renz, 1997 and 2008). As discussed when considering multiple accountability and cooperation relationships, these informal and formal relationships support each other (Batley & McLoughlin, 2010). Donors (and governments as donors) must do the same or risk serving as a hegemon. As Campbell and Lambright (2016) note, applying multiple constituency theory to performance measurement practices allows leaders to access a variety of inputs and perspectives across stakeholder groups. In their survey, the authors found that outcome data was important to donors, as were expenditure reports—these data points demonstrated both a provision of services and reiterated need.

It can be beneficial, as Ebrahim (2010) posited, to visualize donor-governments in a broader framework with multiple stakeholders and leaders. The upward and downward accountability of the donor-NGO relationship encourages a collaborative process. Leaders must also develop internal capacity to properly conduct performance
management and data collection. It is can be difficult for donor-governments to understand how NGO leaders manage coordination and decision-making mechanisms, so a more participatory model may help with field-driven LTIA design (Daniell, et. al., 2011). As will be discussed further, NGO leaders can encourage a mutually beneficial partnership on issues like monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments. The CWD community of practice itself has historical antecedents in just such a multi-stakeholder reality. The Ottawa Convention could not have appeared without leaders in advocacy organizations identifying a need and simultaneously designing service delivery mechanisms to address it. Donor-governments were a critical component but not the catalyst—in the case of the Ottawa Convention, somewhat abnormally for international diplomacy, service providers were in communication with affected communities before resources had been identified. The strident advocacy of the NGOs involved with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines birthed the CWD community of practice and sparked the lobbying for specific resources from governments.

Even without a consensus on how best to enforce accountability, the use of public funds to support public goals via non-public entities is a primary driver for calls to measure nonprofit impact. NGO perspectives are disrupted, as has been discussed, by asymmetric power and information (Eade, 2007). Given that standardized or mandated reporting often does not match the needs and patterns of an organization, capitalizing on NGO creativity with optional post-intervention impact assessments may help in the search for “an approach to solidarity-based partnerships with an infinite variety of expressions” (Eade, 2007, p. 637). This study investigated these factors at additional length. Beside the lingering imperative to report for compliance and legitimacy, a
participatory model further improves the accountability process by increasing the benefits to implementing partners and donor-governments. If donors adopt a more fluid process, it could see not only increased accountability but also the development of more effective metrics as part of that framework.

Donors already provide an existing framework for evaluation (and with it comes the expectation of assessment) with required quarterly and final reporting on project deliverables and financial management. LTIA's would be adding an additional layer of scrutiny—or an additional opportunity for leaders to tell the story of their efforts and advocate for greater resource provision. Participatory evaluation design, or at least a measurement and evaluation framework that is less prescriptive and more experimental, allows implementing partners to provide work in a more cooperative environment. The question then becomes how to develop the evaluation regime within existing mechanisms to better develop internal capacity and avoid disrupting ongoing service delivery.

Given the standardized nature of CWD activities, we may expect clustering of certain evaluation components across the sector. We may also reasonably expect that optional LTIA elements will be relevant to those organizations conducting similar work in different contexts. Broader utility is especially important, as optional LTIA prompts have not been included in all notices of funding opportunity but will be equally beneficial to implementing partners undertaking CWD activities in other places. Each competitive announcement contains specific information on the context of CWD activities under consideration (for example, background on the kind of weapons contamination in a specific country or the interest in a global problem set). The vast majority of the funding opportunity announcement remains unchanged from previous announcements (see
Appendix A) and focuses instead on the technical qualifications (proposal length, eligible organizations, etc.) for applicants to consider.

Donor-governments providing an optional prompt for LTIAAs as part of project solicitation may activate internal organizational factors related to capacity—prior funding relationships and dynamics, staff capacity and management—and overall mission factors (see Figure 1). The LTIAAs developed are an outcome of a more participatory model with optional rather than prescribed monitoring and evaluation activities.

Figure 1

A Model for LTIA Development
The optional LTIA component in competitive announcements also recognizes that NGO agency in the international development field—the mechanisms and dynamics of relationships between donor-governments and NGOs may be imbalanced, but the ecosystem requires both working together (Herman & Renz, 2008). While NGO leaders must respond to changes in donor requirements, they can determine how those changes will be implemented within the organization.

At the same time that NGO leaders are making decisions about pursuing funding from a donor-government, they may also activate organizational factors related to the NGO’s mission and relationship to service recipients and other stakeholders. The inclusion of LTIAAs may become another opportunity for NGO leaders to demonstrate value and tell a story about positive impact. There is a clear interplay between capacity measures, organizational mission and objectives, and evaluation activities (Zimmerman & Stevens, 2006). By developing and implementing long-term impact assessments, NGO leaders can activate positive organizational factors within donor-government monitoring and evaluation regimes.
Questions of the Study

Working from this theoretical framework, we understand the dynamic nature and interrelatedness of assessments, donor requirements, and NGO agency. Theory suggests a conflicted relationship between donors and NGOs, one in which accountability is important but stakeholder buy-in is not guaranteed. Besides lacking a clear path for collaboratively developed long-term impact assessments, there are legitimate critiques of governments as donors and of measurement and evaluation displacing overall organizational mission.

Resource dependence theory reminds us that resource-limited organizations will simultaneously respond to donor prompts but are constrained by their internal capacity. Such power dynamics related to information, resources, strategy, and priority setting are central to this study because NGO and donor-government leaders must consistently balance the needs of accountability and service delivery proactively. These relationships in the humanitarian assistance field are not always clear—NGOs must advocate for continued funding while representing a particular donor to a community in need.

The literature underscores this perspective—while various stakeholder groups encourage or require accountability mechanisms, the focus of most NGOs is on delivering services to meet overall mission goals. We have seen significant critiques of government performance as donors, given the power dynamics of working between two sectors (public and nonprofit) with an imbalance in information and funding. That said, the literature recognizes that NGOs exercise considerable discretion when functioning as the primary interface between affected communities in need and the entities providing resources and strategic guidance. In the humanitarian assistance field in general and the
CWD community of practice in particular, the devolving of services from governments to NGOs has led to a more fluid relationship *vis a vis* accountability.

This devolution of services has increased the need for increased accountability mechanisms to ensure quality (Marshall & Suarez, 2013). While NGOs may have more latitude in how measurement and evaluation regimes are deployed, there are still structural questions about how to select metrics and design evaluations to ensure quality service delivery. As we have seen, there is a further complication to this process when selecting appropriate metrics and evaluation designs for field deployment to transitional and post-conflict spaces (Baum, 2012). Donor-government and NGO leaders must hold all of these factors in balance while serving and responding to their independent and mutual stakeholders.

Every year, the Department of State makes part of its operational budget available to implementing partners under competitive announcements. The announcements have required and suggested components, in line with federal grant regulations and office standard operating procedures. The required and suggested components of each competitive announcement help guide the core and supplementary material submitted by implementing partners as part of their application packets.

The Department decided in part to make the LTIA component optional because the International Mine Action Standards are mostly silent on the subject of impact assessments. Without input from the community of practice, there was concern about rolling out new measurement and evaluation requirements and the potential disruption to service delivery. At the same time, there was interest in incentivizing the development of such measures on an optional basis. Given the energy, creativity, and cost-consciousness
of the nonprofit sector, donor-governments can anticipate receiving proposals that implemented LTIA measures that would not disrupt overall CWD project activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Based on this theoretical framework and the practical limitations of the CWD sector, this study sought to understand if CWD implementing partners develop interventions and distinguish themselves in response to donor-prompted changes. As has been discussed, the nature of LTIA allows NGOs maximum flexibility to creatively develop an intervention that will not negatively interfere with service delivery. In this low-stakes, no-fault environment, NGOs can develop assessment components that integrate into CWD activities—so assessments can reflect program delivery rather than drive it. This study will interrogate the development of LTIA in response to donor prompts by also seeking to understand what organizational factors may support the inclusion of LTIA and how those same organizations propose to improve service delivery by implementing components of LTIA.

Mixed Method Design
NGOs are resource-sensitive both in the need to solicit additional funds and the desire to conserve scarce resources when implementing accountability mechanisms and other services. At the same time, it is important for donor-governments to incentivize their priorities. Doing so not only ensures compliance with stated priorities but also promotes the broader adoption of long-term impact assessments across multiple implementing partners and contexts.

The Department has increased the number of opportunities it releases in response to Presidential and Congressional directives to transparently and openly award foreign assistance funds. This process obviously represents an important investigation for CWD practitioners but also a sample of convenience. The selection of this sample is tied to the overall analysis plan for the study (see Fowler, 2009) and the interest in how NGO leaders are developing LTIA activities.

**Population.** The overall population of interest was the applications submitted by international NGOs and other entities (public international organizations, institutions of higher education) as they sought grants from the United States Government.

Currently, the Department funds more than 50 organizations conducting CWD activities in over 60 countries. Additionally, while the Department is the largest bilateral donor-government, there are other major and minor donor-governments, private foundations, and other donor stakeholders influencing the service delivery and measurement practices of implementing partners. The competitive announcements are made available for bilateral (country-specific) activities or global support for conventional weapons destruction projects.
The total population was 315 applications over 43 competitive announcements. To limit interference of project-level duplication in application materials, I decided to only use one announcement per country and project type. If there were multiple competitive announcements in a single country, I did not include applications from competitions with similar objectives as these might contain duplicate elements. For example, there were six announcements for landmine clearance in Afghanistan; this study only reviewed applications received from one of those competitions. This resulted in 117 applications from 25 competitive processes. Four countries (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, and Iraq) had multiple competitions with project activities that were sufficiently different that organizations could not duplicate material (see Table 1).

**Mixed Method Investigation.** This study assessed the responses of grant-seeking organizations to determine if they develop long-term impact assessment at the prompt of a donor-government. Using a convergent design (see Figure 2 below), this study adopted a parallel mixed methods approach consisting of quantitative and qualitative strands to better understand the components of long-term impact assessments (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). The convergent parallel design allows strengths and weaknesses of the quantitative strand to balance and engage with those of the qualitative strand, thereby building a more fulsome picture of the research question. The quantitative data gathered during the investigation substantiates the observations from the qualitative assessment; likewise, the qualitative data provides a better understanding of the interactions observed in the quantitative section. Quantitative data was collected from the 117 applications submitted during the 25 competitive processes. Qualitative data was gathered from the applications that proposed LTIA activities to determine if there was consensus about best
practices from the field. The information gathered from each strand was then interpreted separately and together.

Figure 2

*Mixed Methods Research Design – The Quantitative and Qualitative Strands*

**RQ:** Do NGOs develop long-term impact assessments in response to donor prompts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Strand: If they do, are there organizational factors to support the inclusion of LTIA?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Does <em>existing funding</em> in a country make an organization more likely to include LTIA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Does <em>staff size</em> make an organization more likely to include LTIA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Does <em>total funding requested</em> make an organization more likely to include LTIA?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Strand: How are organizations proposing to implement components of LTIA?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there consensus or best practice being proposed in applications to implement LTIA in the field?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study used a convergent parallel mixed methods design because it addressed separate but equally important aspects of the intervention (see Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). For quantitative aspects, the logistic regression elucidated factors that were influencing particular organizations to compete for grants. For qualitative analysis, a review of the successful applications helped determine what LTIA components arose consistently. The combined results from both the quantitative strand and qualitative strand build internal consistency (Cresswell, 2014) while drawing out commonalities of service delivery structure, evaluation focus, organization characteristics, and best practices.
Quantitative Strand, Theory Development, and Hypotheses

The quantitative strand of this study explored the research question: What organizational factors support (or associated with) the inclusion of long-term impact assessment in response to donor-prompted change? Hypothesis development began with the organizational characteristics that might support the development of LTIA.

Variables. This study sought to measure previous funding and its relationship to continued success with specific donor types (in this case, funding from donor-governments). As discussed in the literature review, the international NGO sector has seen an increased emphasis on LTIA or long-horizon objectives (see Britian, 2008, and Riddell, 1999) but some structural elements may explain why organizations opt to include LTIA elements in their project proposals. Previous research has examined the interplay between capacity measures such as organization size and budget with evaluation activities (Zimmerman & Stevens, 2006).

Previous Funding. Lu (2015) found that previous funding from donor-governments was a strong determinate of continuing funding—an established relationship between donor-governments and a particular NGO might engender a preference for continued funding. Hodge and Piccolo (2005) found that a funding source is a strong factor in NGO strategy selection and development. Further, previous funding and a positive response to funder requirements have been found to have a determinate relationship on NGO actions unless a strategic process is in place (Stone, Bigelow, & Crittenden, 1999). Gronbjerg (1991) found that strategic decisions depend on stable funding sources and a desire by nonprofits to lock in funding over the long-term. Prior funding may also indicate that an organization has the capacity to apply for and manage
donor-government grant funds. This study collected information on whether the
Department had previously funded the successful CWD organization in-country.

H1: Receiving funding from the donor-government in the previous year will increase the
likelihood that an organization included LTIA.

Staff Size. In previous studies, organization size has been shown to impact
strategy (see Pope, 2009). Larger full-time staff numbers have been linked to increased
professionalism and rationalism in nonprofit organizations (Hwang & Powell, 2009).

Additionally, Stone, Bigelow, and Crittenden (1999) found that organization size was
negatively related to closure or vulnerability—larger organizations had larger capacity
and could take proactive steps to develop a strategy to withstand external shocks. I based
this continuous variable on project staff counted in each application. Larger staffing
levels might allow project staff to take on roles related to LTIA development and
deployment and is expected to be positively associated with LTIA inclusion.

H2: Larger staff size will increase the likelihood that an organization included LTIA.

Funding Requested. Each competitive opportunity issued has a ceiling on total
funding available. NGOs may apply for the full amount or a smaller amount. Larger
grants have been found to attract more attention and competition than smaller grants
while also allowing organizations to expand their capacity and develop larger
interventions with more thorough services. McClusky (2002) found that budgets and
staff affected the division of roles and responsibilities—governance structures change
based on the size of an organization’s budget and staffing. Larger grants attract more
attention but may also allow NGOs wider latitude to implement creative solutions, take
risks, pursue strategic objectives, and develop new capacities. Behn, Devries, and Lin
(2010) linked larger organizational budgets with greater organizational transparency, which may contribute to more sharing of data on successful service delivery. Research indicates that increased funding brings additional scrutiny while potentially providing more resources to staff and implement accountability mechanisms. Additionally, if organizations are requesting larger amounts of funding they may be more inclined to address the optional LTIA prompt as a way of satisfying donor-government inclinations. H3: A larger project budget request will increase the likelihood that an organization included LTIA.

**Quantitative Sample and Procedures.** My sample was drawn from the total population of 315 applications submitted across 43 competitive announcements between 2014 and 2019. I took applications that had been submitted in announcements that included a prompt for LTIA—117 applications from 25 competitions (see Table 2). The inclusion of the LTIA prompt was left to the discretion of the donor-government team responsible for administering the grant. The sample included 19 countries and three global project areas with a majority (54%) including some component of LTIA (see further discussion below). Applications from two competitions that received the LTIA prompt had to be excluded because they were incomplete or had been lost.

This study included applications from the same organization but excluded multiple applications from the same organization in each competitive process. For example, if an NGO submitted two applications under one competitive announcement, I kept only one application for review (this was uncommon; three applications had to be excluded over two competitive announcements). Given that this study’s attention is on the field-level deployment of project-specific LTIA, I did not attempt to control for the
clearinghouse effect or to make determinations about country-specific issues (security, financial risk, etc.).

The selection of this sample was tied to the overall analysis plan for the study (see Fowler, 2009; Peng, Lee, & Ingersoll, 2002) and the interest in how to encourage LTIA development in a more participatory process.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Announcement</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Applications including LTIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan Clearance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan Survey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia Clearance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia Clearance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia Survey</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Arms Review</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq Risk Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq Monitoring</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANPADS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Reaction Force</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total applications: 117
The dependent variable noted whether an applicant responded to the prompt for long-term impact assessments and included such activities in its proposal (coded 0 for no and 1 for yes). To make this determination, I conducted a textual analysis of all 117 applications in the sample (Lacy, Watson, Riffe, & Lovejoy, 2015). Using a keyword search or manually scanning the proposal packets, I noted whether an application included provisions for LTIA (coded as 0 for no or 1 for yes). Further textual analysis would be added to the qualitative analysis, discussed in later sections.

The first independent variable was previous funding. I based this bivariate indicator on providing a grant to the organization within one year of the award recommendation (coded 0 for no and 1 for yes). The independent variable of organization size was a continuous variable based on the project staff size denoted in each application gathered either from budgets, proposal texts, or organograms. The independent continuous variable of grant size was based on the level of funding requested in each application. The descriptive statistics for the average of the independent and dependent variables is given in Table 2.

Slightly more than half (54%, n=63) of the sample included some component of long-term impact assessment methodologies and half did not (46%, n=54). Fewer than half (44%, n=51) had previously received funding from the donor-government within the previous calendar year; the majority (56%, n=66) of projects had not received funding from the donor-government in the previous year. The mean proposed project team size was almost 46, though the median staff size of 25 indicates smaller teams. The smallest proposed team size of one individual and the largest 230 staff members. The smallest amount of funding requested under the competitive announcements was $120,175 and the
largest was $4,000,000. The mean funding level of $924,955 and median of $819,500 suggests that projects tended to have smaller budgets requests.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Range Min.</th>
<th>Range Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: LTIA inclusion</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: Previous funding</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: Staff size</td>
<td>45.85</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: Funding requested</td>
<td>$924,955</td>
<td>$819,500</td>
<td>$120,175</td>
<td>$4,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=117

Quantitative Results. To test the relationship between the dependent variable of response to the LTIA prompt and the independent variables, I conducted a direct logistic regression using the categorical (previous funding) and continuous (staff size and funding requested) independent variables with the categorical dependent variable (LTIA included).

The direct logistic regression model selected all 117 cases; no data was missing from the applications selected based on the previously described criteria. The SPSS classification report for the baseline model, before inputting explanatory variables, had an overall predictive value of 53.8 percent correct (representing a near-random classification; see Field, 2004). See Table 3 for an overview of the baseline model.
Table 3

_Initial Model_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>-2LL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td>.691</td>
<td>0.2480</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>161.503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Note._ n=117

The initial model indicated a lack of statistical significance (p=0.406) and a coefficient of the constant (i.e., the intercept) of 0.154 in the model (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). The lack of statistical significance in the baseline indicates that the coefficient for one or more of the independent variables will increase the model’s predictive power.

SPSS then ran the direct logistic regression model with the three independent variables. The assessment of fit, based on the results in Table 4, indicate a moderate fit of $R^2=0.78$ (the initial -2 Log likelihood of 161.503 divided by the model -2 Log likelihood of 126.025). Logistic regression models input to SPSS can produce a number of pseudo $R^2$ statistics. Cox & Snell’s $R^2$ coefficient, which accounts for sample size, is 0.262. Field (2004) noted that the Cox & Snell $R^2$ coefficient of determination for the logistic regression model never reaches the maximum value of 1 and recommends a number of other statistics. The regression model indicated a Nagelkerke $R^2$ coefficient of 0.349, which indicates that the variables are exerting a limited amount of influence on the outcome of the model. The Hosmer & Lemeshow Test is not statistically significant, which is desired (Field, 2004). The regression also produced a Chi-square probability distribution statistic of 35.478 (df=3, p<.001), which suggests that the model is not over-
dispersed (see Field, 2004). The regression shows a moderate positive relationship in the model.

Table 4

*Logistic Regression – Assessment of Fit*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-2LL Model</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell $R^2$</th>
<th>Nagelkerke $R^2$</th>
<th>Hosmer &amp; Lemeshow Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>126.025</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.349</td>
<td>5.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* n=117

Based on the results of the logistic regression (see Table 5), the study did not find sufficient evidence that the independent variable for previous funding is a predictive factor on whether an organization included LTIA in its proposal (H1). The model did find support for the hypotheses that suggest a relationship between the inclusion of LTIA and the proposed staff size (H2) and requested funding level (H3). Both of these variables indicate a positive relationship in the model and were statistically significantly different from zero (see Table 5). The coefficient for proposed staff size (H2: Exp(B)=1.017) and for funding requested (H3: Exp(B)=1.000) indicate a positive interaction between the dependent variables and the independent variable of LTIA inclusion. A larger funding request level and larger staff size were found to be positively related to the probability for LTIA inclusion, and the overall model is statistically significantly different from zero. Each additional staff member requested in the proposal increased the odds ratio of receiving funding by two percent, which may be related to a wide range of staff sizes proposed. With a Beta coefficient of 0.000001 (or a 0.0001% increase in the likelihood of funding for each additional dollar requested), every $10,000
in additional funding requested increased the likelihood of funding by one percent. This variable also had a wide range of values, as funding requested had a minimum value of $120,175 and $4,000,000. The impact of these relationships on leaders’ decision making and prioritization process will be taken up following discussion of the qualitative results.

Table 5

*Proposals Include LTIA.s and Prior Funding, Staff Size, Requested Funding*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>95% C.I. for Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Included</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prev. Funding (1=yes)</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>1.091</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.296</td>
<td>1.653</td>
<td>0.644 4.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Size</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>4.325</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.038*</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td>1.001 1.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Req.</td>
<td>0.000†</td>
<td>0.000††</td>
<td>5.671</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.017*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000 1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.009</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n=117, *p<.05; † = 0.000001; †† = 6.1226E-7*
Qualitative Strand and Data Integration

To augment the quantitative analysis, this study also aimed to refine what is known about the CWD sector in particular and donor-NGO relationships more generally by exploring the potential similarities between applications submitted under competitive announcements and their LTIA activities. The essential research question of the qualitative strand was: Is there consensus or best practice being proposed in applications to implement LTIA in the field?

To this end, the study used qualitative analysis to determine what, if any, emergent themes or practices were being proposed in responses to the LTIA prompt. Any emergent themes or practices would help supplement the quantitative results and provide further understanding of the field's approach to impact assessment through a more participatory model. Qualitative results also help build a better picture of how NGO leaders can manage coordination and decision-making mechanisms in a more participatory model (Daniell, et. al., 2011). The qualitative research strand was designed to elucidate areas of consensus from the field that might inform best practice and improve service delivery. In the absence of formal guidance on how best to deploy long-term impact assessment measures, the implementing partners could (theoretically) lead on the initiative and propose mechanisms that best met donor intent while engaging NGO creativity and capacity.

Qualitative Sample and Procedures. To conduct the qualitative analysis, I reviewed the 117 applications that had been submitted under a competitive process between 2015 and 2019 that included the LTIA prompt. Having conducted textual analysis for the quantitative strand to determine whether an application contained LTIA elements, I
returned to the applications that had proposed LTIA measures. That resulted in 63 applications (54% of the sample of 117).

Data from the 63 applications was collected by not immediately categorized. While quick categorization helps with researcher recall (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), there is not broad consensus within the mine action community of practice to guide such data coding. Instead, I conducted a word search based on the literature review to determine relevant responses (Lacy, Watson, Riffe, & Lovejoy, 2015). I recorded this material with the application data. I reviewed each of the full proposals (both funded and unfunded) not only for LTIA methodology but also for any measurement or evaluation procedures based on common terminology discussed in the literature review. The review of both funded and unfunded proposals was intentional—the qualitative analysis would benefit from a fuller understanding of the components developed by operators even if the proposal had not been successful.

The keyword search was primarily conducted by electronic search functions (some existed only in paper format and had to be manually scanned) for words related to impact assessment throughout the entire application. This included “impact,” “measurement,” “outcome,” “evaluation,” “quality,” “assurance,” “assessment,” and “control.” Terms selected for the keyword search came from the operational language of the two International Mine Action Standards on monitoring and evaluation. As previously noted, the IMAS are primarily concerned with compliance, safety, and conformity; however, despite not reflecting the best practices in monitoring and evaluations, the IMAS represent the minimum requirement for operations undertaken by the CWD community of practice. These words reflect a broad range of activities related
to impact assessment in the research literature as well but seen through the lens of the field protocols and international standards.

I reviewed the entire application to determine what measurement and assessment activities might be included because the donor-government has standard terms and conditions for all of its grants that include short-term monitoring and performance data. Beyond the requirement for quarterly programmatic and financial reporting (including performance indicators for specific project outputs and objectives), the donor-government requires implementing partners to complete quarterly metrics tables that track quantitative progress over the grant’s lifecycle. Implementing partners must also submit a final report covering the same information at the end of a grant’s period of performance. Given that these short-term monitoring activities are required, I anticipated compliance; a more thorough search of the entire application allowed me to conduct qualitative information analysis to determine if components were related to the research question or standard reporting (see Patton, 1980; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

In conducting the search and recording responses, I used thick descriptives to more fully illustrate the study’s findings and potentially influence policy guidance in the future. Research has suggested that emergent themes or practices would help verify the quantitative results and provide further understanding of the field’s approach to impact assessment. This thorough reading provided information not only on whether organizations were proposing potential LTIA measures but might be using a different nomenclature than the one adopted by the donor-government.

**Data Analysis.** After conducting the keyword search, I transcribed responses related to long-term impact assessment into a spreadsheet. Without an *a priori* assumption about
the nature and techniques for long-term impact assessment activities within the
community of practice, I relied on a review of the responses to assess emergent attributes
(Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). I reviewed each application packet—technical
proposal, budget and budget narrative, and any supplemental/annex material—that was
provided by the grant-seeking organization.

Having looked for the words that related to the theme of inquiry, I looked for
grouping around themes or practices (Terrell, 2012). In most cases, responses clustered
into five dominant codes or areas that are important characteristics or practices for long-
term impact assessment. These included:

1. Structure—specific mechanisms or deliverables
   a. Identifiers: Internal or external components to gather impact data, such as
      surveys or assessments; a process by which implementing partners will
      solicit input or gauge progress; data collection and information
      management

2. Information sources—specific data sources
   a. Identifiers: References to specific or general sources of information to
      build into the impact assessment structure described above; identifying
      beneficiaries (direct or indirect); disaggregating information as evidence
      of an understanding of impact

3. Tools/Implementation—how to carry out data collection
   a. Identifiers: General or sector-specific tools and techniques to support data
      collection; technologies to support data collection and analysis; listing
equipment needed (either in proposals or in budgets) to support information management

4. Time horizon—events or a schedule for assessment
   a. Identifiers: Timelines for impact assessment or monitoring/evaluation activities; program deadlines or project milestones for data collection; events or timelines unrelated to required reporting (quarterly and final project reporting as discussed)

5. Information dissemination—mechanisms to share results
   a. Identifiers: Intention to analyze and synthesize data collected above; discussions of impact data improving learning, planning, training, or service delivery; linking impact assessment activities with strategic goals and objectives

Of the applications that did include LTIA elements (those above and beyond standard reporting requirement), all contained multiple elements of the five long-term assessment methodology components: structure, information sources, tools/implementation, time horizon and information dissemination. These categories are described in greater detail below; the frequencies for specific response elements are included in Table 6.
Table 6

*Frequency of Specific LTIA Components in Applications*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Structure</th>
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Note. n=63

The first two areas of analysis—structure and information sources—are part of broader discussions about how best to collect data on project delivery, performance, and impact for all nonprofits. It is important to note here that, of the applications that included LTIA, all of them included multiple qualitative components to facilitate the LTIA collection process. Only a few responses fell outside of these categories and tended to include assessment activities or follow-on benefits that were vague in description or relevance. For example, three applications suggested tying impact assessment to sustainability but did not indicate the scope of sustainability or how impact data would be used to measure and evaluate it. The inclusion of multiple qualitative components suggests a field that is actively engaged in developing foundational LTIA elements while developing a working understanding of how best to do so. NGO leaders can channel this creativity into a more participatory model of assessment development and co-opt the process to build internal capacity and plan strategically.
Structure. Many of the applications that included LTIA elements included specific assessment deliverables or frameworks. I clustered these responses under the category of structure because they provided a concrete way of arranging or constructing a systematic data-collection process—they told how the organization would conduct long-term impact assessments. This was the most broadly represented category; every application included some discussion of LTIA structure. Examples of structure included comparing data internally across project components, collecting qualitative and quantitative data from beneficiaries, or using data to actively plan for future operations or interventions. One application wrote, “Post-clearance surveys will identify the socioeconomic outcomes of the clearance in terms of the amount of land in use, the type of land use, the financial benefit for the beneficiaries in terms of annual income received and the investment enabled by clearance.” While not all responses were similarly detailed, all applicants that included LTIAs noted some kind of process or structure to implement the LTIA.

For this category, I noted both internal and external structural factors driving LTIA implementation. While the LTIA prompt focuses attention on an external structure from the donor-government, several of the responses highlighted internal process changes to make better use of the data collected. Several applications indicated that assessment information would be used to improve internal training. Beyond measuring “a real increase in the quality of life for the people in the communities selected for the project,” as one applicant wrote, LTIAs could also support improvement to technical standards and internal processes.
Information sources. I reviewed the applications to see if any had identified specific (or unique) information sources. I considered responses related to this category if they identified where to gather impact data. This was the second most broadly represented category, with 79 percent of applications identifying a specific source for LTIA data collection. Most included references to community groups, direct beneficiaries, local leaders, national authorities, or other sources of information. I also considered the collection of information disaggregated by gender, age, occupation, or other factor as a distinct component of information management—anything to capture additional nuance in responses might indicate a deeper understanding of an intervention’s impact and provide benefit to a number of reporting mechanisms.

Information sources are important to identify before an intervention to determine if the appropriate level of information will be gathered from sources with sufficient experience with the intervention. Further, as Ebrahim (2003b) has written, accountability structures between NGOs and beneficiaries are inherently relational. Details in this category were not as fulsome as with structure. Nearly all of the applicants indicated that the “beneficiary community” would be the source of information. One application did note that the project goal of improving livelihoods was linked to “reducing poverty and reducing socio-economic marginalization, inequalities and exclusion of vulnerable groups.” This potentially could identify subsets of communities (vulnerability as a determining factor) and encourage engagement with these specific, often excluded beneficiaries.

Tools/Implementation. Given the technical nature of the work being conducted under most CWD projects, this study was concerned with any field-level activities or
techniques that might improve impact assessment procedures. Responses recorded in this category answered the essential question of how implementing partners would gather LTIA data. Slightly less than half (49 percent) of respondents included specific tools.

The CWD community of practice has already adopted a number of thorough information management systems (see IMAS 05.10: Information Management for Mine Action) and technologies to improve the capturing, retention, and use of data in the field. To date, the focus of these systems and technologies has been on the collection and retention of project outputs rather than impacts.

The historic focus technical competencies in CWD projects—and a need to put safety and quality of operations before impact assessments—makes the use of existing tools or implementation mechanisms of particular interest. Several applications proposed to develop capacity by training specific staff on impact assessment; to use key staff as embedded personnel during operations or to develop key assessment practices; or, working with local leaders to develop questionnaires. One applicant proposed to conduct impact assessment “through short interviews at community and user level and output reported through ‘evaluation tables.’” Another applicant proposed using its current information management system to collect additional impact assessment data. By identifying specific tools, applicants detail necessary capacities for leaders to provide.

The use of specific assessment teams to work directly with communities and service beneficiaries would remove measurement requirements from field/operational staff conducting technically challenging and safety-related responsibilities. This would require an increase in funding or the lengthening of project time but would increase the profile of data collection. It would also professionalize LTIA activities.
Eighteen of the applications (a majority of those that included tools) made specific reference to using core staff (meaning operational leaders and management) to carry out assessment activities—possibly indicating the high level of attention LTIAls would receive from the country team. While the other applicants did not mention using staff members, it is important to note that none of the applications proposed outsourcing impact assessment. Insofar as organization leaders are pursuing a strategy of LTIA development, they are planning to use internal capacities to do so.

*Time horizon.* I assessed organizations’ use of time horizons or major project events for data collection. These activities or time points needed to be separate and discrete from the standard reporting requirements (quarterly and final programmatic and financial reports) described in previous chapters and in the competitive announcement itself (Appendix A). As noted in Table 6 above, fewer applications included a specific time for LTIA data collection (only 25 percent of the applications that included LTIA elements stated a period in which to gather information). All of the applications that included a time horizon used six months as a reference period. A few applications included major events like land handover ceremonies or other specific post-project events that would tie overall project milestones to impact assessment activities but might fall within the normal period of operations. These are important to note because they represent concrete opportunities to gather information and are built into the overall project delivery even if they do not meet more rigorous measurement and evaluation practices. Major events or project milestones have a forcing function of directing attention to phases of project completion that may occur at multiple times—raising the
profile of impact assessment with stakeholders and underscoring its importance with staff.

The lack of responses here may indicate a level of uncertainty from the operators. Although descriptions of LTIs frequently tied assessments to “sustainability” or socio-economic improvements, very few of the applications gave any concrete time horizon (6-12 months). The lack of specific time horizons in a majority of the applications may also indicate a lack of consensus on when to incorporate assessment activities into project delivery. All of the applications that listed a specific post-project time to conduct impact assessments were for competitive announcements with higher budget thresholds. In these instances, requested budgets ranged from $500,000 to $2,600,000 (most were above the mean funding level of $924,955 and median of $819,500 for all applications that included LTIA elements).

Information dissemination. Finally, I reviewed the proposals’ integration of monitoring and evaluation—a hybrid of basic assessment measures and sector-specific activities that bridged the four previous clustered LTIA components. In 12 of the 63 proposals reviewed, applicants included a multifaceted activity that recognized the importance of impact assessment, transformed the data collected, or spoke to a specific investment in capacity to support collaboration and transparency with internal and external stakeholders. These activities not only indicated some kind of information management but also feedback loops or continuous improvement processes (Ebrahim, 2003a).

Applications noted that LTIA deliverables could improve future proposals and reporting. Applications also indicated that assessment activities could give operators the
chance to talk about the donor with beneficiary communities. Although this is obviously of more interest to the donor than the beneficiaries, it does move assessment beyond compliance and into a position of stakeholder engagement. One application also noted that the overarching mission of improving livelihoods needed to be linked to reducing poverty, which would require broader metrics and assessments than land cleared (see IMAS 7.40, Monitoring of mine action organizations). In these instances, proposals identified a greater use for data than compliance and presupposed NGO command of a valuable resource. Some of the applications that included elements of information dissemination also centered control of data with the NGO and not the donor—one of the applications compared the processed of information dissemination with storytelling.

By proposing more complex components that assumed a framework for data collection and assumed the importance of impact assessments, these organizations were attempting to integrate capacity development and service delivery. Information dissemination suggests that there is value in gathering and synthesizing data for use with internal and external stakeholders. As Ebrahim (2003b) has noted, continuous learning and feedback loops are preferable to other types of evaluation; by incorporating LTIA into the structure of project implementation, organization leaders can build capacity and satisfy donor-government requirements.

**Integration of Data.** The quantitative results sought to understand what organizational factors supported the inclusion of long-term impact assessment activities in response to donor-prompted change. Two of the independent variables made statistically significant impacts in the model. In the case of the independent variable for receiving previous funding, there was not a statistically significant relationship between an organization’s
inclusion of LTIA activities and the receipt of funding from the donor government in the
country of operations within the previous calendar year. While past funding is often
associated with continued support, the deployment of LTIA activities may not have been
emphasized in the past or previous funding decisions in a particular country did not
account for these factors as heavily.

There was support, however, for the inclusion of the two remaining independent
variables (staff size and funding requested). Both were statistically significant with a
positive relationship between including LTIA activities and increased staff and project budget.
The predictive power of these relationships, when calibrated against the units of measure
(change per $10,000 requested or additional staff member proposed), resonates with the
findings of the qualitative strand and overall needs for capacity development.

Not only did a majority of applicants include some indication of LTIA practices
in their project proposals, but the qualitative analysis also showed responses beyond the
standard, required program and financial reporting. These activities clustered into two
major groups (a normative framework and sector-specific components) that broke down
further into five areas of interest: structure, information sources, tools/implementation,
time horizon, and information dissemination (a hybrid of framework and sector
operations).

The quantitative and qualitative strands augmented our understanding of the
proposed LTIA practices from the study sample. Organizations that received a donor-
government prompt on LTIA activities were more likely than not to respond with some level of
granularity on how to do so. Perhaps most important to the study, of all the applications
that included LTIA activities, all included multiple components to enhance overall LTIA
activities. Further, all of the applications that included LTIAIs proposed some structure by which to gather the necessary information. This commonality in the community of practice suggests a growing consensus on or understanding of the importance (or importance to the donor-government) of LTIAIs in project delivery and a willingness to develop LTIA elements.

The relationships between funding requested and staff size and the information sources and tools suggest that organizations are preparing to bear the responsibility for LTIAIs internally. None of the applications proposed outsourcing impact assessments; indeed, there were proposals to train specialized staff to conduct these tasks in some organizations. Any efforts to develop internal capacities for LTIAIs will require resources—either in funding or in staffing—and require leaders to plan strategically to maximize the benefits of these added responsibilities.

When budgets included line items for impact assessment, it was always for staff travel to beneficiary communities (with some limited training budgeted in some instances). This suggests that organizations are planning and budgeting to subsume LTIA requirements rather than create new project elements. The open-ended prompt did lead to some uncertainty with regard to the time required to conduct LTIAIs. The larger than average funding requested by applications that provided specific time horizons suggests planning for longer engagements with communities or increased flexibility to provide capacity for impact assessments.
Discussion

An engaged leader encourages strategic change (Bryson, 2004) but is also aware of how short-term resource seeking may shift long-term strategic planning (Burger & Owens, 2013). Leaders from the conventional weapons destruction field are actively managing relationship between stakeholders throughout the sector. Given the difficult and dangerous contexts in which they operate, it is imperative that CWD operators strike a balance between safety, compliance, and performance. Leaders at all levels and with all measures of influence can use participatory or transformational leadership to empower others (Bass, 1985; George, 2007). By managing across multiple accountability mechanisms, NGO leaders in the field can activate their organizations’ capacity and creativity within the framework of monitoring and evaluation.

As noted above, while this study rejected one independent variable from the model (previous funding), there is clearly a movement in the community of practice toward developing more rigorous long-term impact assessment procedures. Better defined monitoring systems can be linked with strategic goals and objectives. While the focus of conventional weapons destruction has historically been on technical competencies, there is a demonstrated interplay between capacity development, organization mission and objectives, and evaluation activities (Zimmerman & Stevens, 2006). Focusing exclusively on practical accountability at the expense of strategic accountability (Cavill & Sohail, 2007) further endangers organizations that take on responsibility of seeking external resources (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978).

In many ways, a donor-led emphasis on accountability that is founded on a more participatory process is the logical progression for the landmine-action sector. Besides
being a highly technical field requiring subject expertise on the part of service providers, it is one in which the implementing partner is the primary public face of these efforts. NGOs operating in conflict spaces have significantly more leverage than organizations seeking donor funding for more generic or less public activities. The devolution of services exposes donor-governments to additional risk—leaders in these institutions must recognize NGOs as strategic actors with significant expertise and agency (Fogarty, 2011). A participatory design method of long-term impact assessments recognizes the power dynamics particular to the field and the pursuit of mutual aims by both donor and implementing partner leadership. Additionally, the qualitative analysis completed on the applications has generated a number of rich avenues for research and has the potential to uncover and generate sector-specific best practices that improve service delivery globally.

Assessments are important to operations and strategy as well as overall accountability and legitimacy. The CWD community of practice and the nonprofit sector would clearly benefit from acquiring additional, quality data—by moving forward in a participatory, non-coercive manner, the data collected may have further utility to operations, planning, accountability, and strategy. An overarching goal of CWD projects is to build indigenous capacity; so, while many accountability mechanisms may be donor-led, this study recognizes the opportunity to develop organizational capacity at all levels. In the proposals that included LTIA, there was a common baseline understanding to structure and information sources. Information dissemination emerged as a higher-level integration of these structural elements with the sector-specific tools/techniques and time horizons.
Most theorists on the broader aim of impact assessments recognize that “impact,” for most nonprofits, equates with long-term effects (see Wainwright, 2003). Many NGOs—even the highly bureaucratic and established ones—pursue theories of change over influence on policy goals (Fogarty, 2011). I take here Weiss’s definition of theories of change, which grew from attempts to measure and analyze interventions, as the individual steps leading to long-term change as well as the framework for pursuing a project’s objectives and outcomes at each step (see Weiss, 1995). This is especially relevant to the CWD community of practice, given its function as both an influencer of international development norms and direct service provider to conflict-affected countries. Through this view, CWD activities can rebalance the common power dynamics of the donor/implementer divide and refocus attention on leadership and strategic planning capacities. There is also an opportunity for donors or experts beyond the field to review and augment the initial LTIA proposals—thin proposals suggest a field in transition with leaders who have not yet identified sufficient resources or built capacities to move forward unilaterally.

**Significance of the Study and Limitations.** This study was limited in its ability to customize the competitive process, given the federal regulations governing notices of funding opportunity. This study was further limited in its ability to test across multiple donors within this community of practice. The quantitative analysis evaluated the relationship between the inclusion of LTIA and requested funding and proposed staff size, although other factors could be influencing the model. There are limited countries for operations, implementing partners, operational cycles, and competitive process—further restrictions on the generalizability of this study and its findings. While this model
cannot control for the clearinghouse effect at organizations’ headquarters nor control for country-specific issues, my line of inquiry was mostly unrelated to these issues. This study had access to applications from a large body of organizations operating in the CWD sector and provided insights for operations in post-conflict or transitional spaces. The study is also the first investigation into the giving practices and assessment activities of the sector’s largest bilateral donor.

Additionally, as has been noted, the dangerous nature of the work (and the dangerous places where the work is undertaken) provides legitimate concerns about disrupting standards and best practices. Especially when discussing explosive clearance and remediation, the donor was focused on compliance with standards first and on tangential benefits afterward. That said, the qualitative results of this study yielded interesting results where LTIAAs are included in project implementation and improve service delivery. The sector may benefit as evaluations are designed to be both a compliance measure and organizational development tool. It is currently difficult for donor-government to understand how the leaders of CWD programs manage coordination and decision-making mechanisms. A participatory design may therefore help with field-driven LTIAAs (Daniell, et. al., 2011).

The present study identified two statistically significant organizational characteristics in modelling the inclusion of long-term impact assessment activities. With both organizational size (as measured by the proposed project staff) and requested funding level, there is an underlying theoretical connection to professionalization, entrenchment, dependency, and accountability. Leaders of organizations that are well-funded or stably funded can turn their attention to building internal capacity, thinking
strategically and creatively, and pursuing organizational development objectives. Increased funding also results in a concomitant increase in scrutiny. As we have seen, additional accountability can divert attention if leaders have not prepared their organizations or adopted a strategic vision for using data collected for continual learning and improvement. The organizational characteristics of funding and staff stand in for internal capacity—the larger an intervention (as measured by staff size or funding level), the more resources the organization feels it can or should request. It also suggests an affinity between the donor-government and the organization, which leaders can leverage, and an opportunity to observe leader experience and style as well as leadership decision points. These relationships are ripe for further study.

While this study did not identify previous donor funding as statistically significant to the model, that in and of itself is revelatory. In most of the theory development and contemporary discussion of donor leverage and NGO compliance, funding is a key component. Donors opt to continue funding past recipients while NGOs are at pains to retain existing funders. At least in the limited situation investigated by this study, it would appear that previous funding from a donor is not related to CWD operators’ compliance with donor-prompted change. Additional variables related to context and capacity (such as organization age and scope of operations) may elucidate a more statistically significant relationship.

It is also important to consider issues with clearly and consistently establishing evaluation requirements and components (Scott, 1998). That is to say, donor-governments may need to devote time and resources not only to communicating requirements to applicants but also to internal professional development on the subject of
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assessment and evaluation. Donor-government leadership may need to take internal steps to improve understanding of and emphasis on measurement and accountability mechanisms as part of the competitive application evaluation process. This study may help the donor-government exercise leadership in this regard, working collaboratively to align its strategic goals and objectives with an LTIA development process. It is important to not overstate donor prerogative and stewardship of the CWD sector—simplistic interpretations of donor-government dominance misunderstand NGO agency (Bryce, 2006).

NGO leaders can develop clear and documented needs, and ensure change and innovation are successful (see Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008). Additionally, they can cultivate deeper relationships with donors. This could include information dissemination practices that bring the donor into more frequent or thorough communication with the implementing partner about the donor’s overall goals and strategic objectives as they relate to impact at the field level. Additionally, larger funding amounts may mean more dollars are available to support LTIA activities (see discussion on dedicated teams and training as part of the qualitative strand). Larger budgets may also indicate specific carve-outs for LTIA activities. Finally, the quantitative analysis indicates that organizations both large and small may be devoting more time and resources to implementing long-term impact assessments. The formal and informal relationships between donors and NGOs support each other (Batley & Mcloughlin, 2010). All of these trends may be explored in future studies.

There are also a number of rich findings for the CWD community of practice. The first is that, of the applications that included LTIA activities, all included multiple
components to enhance the overall LTIA collection process. Certainly, these elements were not equally substantial in and of themselves (a framework for LTIA is a minimal effort and not all information sources were well-defined); however, the use of information dissemination suggests a deeper understanding of impact assessment value. A part of the community of practice has identified more robust monitoring and evaluation—it is the imperative for NGO leaders to activate capacity (if donors have not yet provided resources) and creativity (to capitalize on cost-effective measures). Overall, these trends supplement the findings of the quantitative analysis and suggest an increasing level of professionalism in the field and an opportunity to enhance overall monitoring and evaluation of service delivery. Additionally, the inclusion of certain structures and a focus on interacting with beneficiaries suggests a more careful approach to evaluation by implementing partners.

Any steps to integrate data collection, analysis, and reporting into operations represents movement beyond the thin International Mine Action Standards on monitoring and evaluation (and a sense that monitoring and evaluation distract from priorities like clearing land of explosive hazards). The LTIA activities proposed included the use of qualitative and quantitative data as part of an integrated structure for continual learning. This includes the use of data collected for planning future operations. Several proposals included full integration of the data collection and analysis into project delivery—starting with “real and perceived” impact data, the proposals moved to comparing data between project sites, developing key performance indicators, and promoting continual learning by implementing a feedback loop to operations in the field. This kind of higher-level data analysis is common within the private sector and part of best practices; however, its
use in the technically challenging conventional weapons destruction field has been limited to-date. It was especially encouraging to see the use of impact assessments to improve the quality of decision making that will influence future interventions. Further, the proposal to engage with donors as part of information dissemination links organizational capacity and initiative with practice aspects of LTIA development—and substantiates the collaborative approach to reporting and storytelling.

Beyond the structure and focus of the LTIA data collection and analysis, the CWD community of practice can clearly benefit from some of the tools and time horizons established in the proposals this study considered. The common recommendation of a six-month window for post-intervention impact analysis suggests a consensus among operators that at least preliminary benefits will appear in the field within six months of project delivery and that they can use this information in reporting. Such a “long term” assessment window is short by comparison to other fields. It may be sufficient time to the CWD community—it would be sufficient time to determine land use—but should be the subject of future research for validation. This initial assessment window may allow for more proactive intervention design, more realistic budget development, and more thorough pre- and post-impact data collection. Future work should include analysis and engagement between implementing partners and donors. If implementing partners see service delivery benefits within six months, they may be able to advocate for longer periods of performance with the donor-government (or develop an intervention design that incorporates a previous project’s post-impact deliverables under the monitoring regime of a current project). There may also be other limitations on NGO leaders’ attempts to suggest a time period—deployment constraints, security or logistical
considerations, proposal length restrictions, etc. NGO leaders may also not be prepared to fully commit resources to an activity that is only, at present, optional. Future iterations may also allow implementing partners to budget for specific tools needed to conduct the improved pre- and post-impact assessments.

Regarding the tools and implementation of LTIA$s, there was a growing understanding that dedicated staff (and training for that staff) are necessary within the community of practice. Leaders need to understand this capacity requirement and should make sufficient adjustments to strategies, planning, and resources. Several organizations suggested assessment teams that liaise directly with impacted communities and service beneficiaries. Identifying specific personnel would remove additional, potentially onerous, measurement requirements for operational or field staff with other (technically challenging or safety-related) responsibilities. Although adding staff would require a concomitant increase in funding needs or the extension of periods of performance, the focus on data collection from direct beneficiaries responds to increased requirements from donors for accountability and performance data. It also answers questions about overall project legitimacy, need, and impact—especially when structured as part of a process that not only produces data but also disseminates it to key stakeholders as part of strategic goals and objectives.

**Changes for the field.** Based on the results of this study, we can offer both practical and theoretical relevance for leaders and practitioners. Within the CWD community of practice, the outcomes of this study can help refine the measurement and evaluation techniques taken by the community at large. Multiple constituencies have competing and overlapping motivations for measuring services and growth (Campbell & Lambright,
2016). This study should help refine and revise the International Mine Action Standards as well as the standard operating procedures for donor-governments. It specifically has identified opportunities to expand the aperture of the IMAS beyond safety and compliance to a culture of information sharing, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement. As a member of the IMAS Review Board, the donor-government could help initiate a review of the standards for impact assessment and use the IMAS as a venue to engage implementing partners and stakeholders on these issues. For professional peers, this study offers an important insight into the real-time relationship between a large donor and global implementing partners. Additionally, it can help leaders and practitioners in donor-governments and in grant-seeking organizations understand the capacity requirements for the development, deployment, and marketing of long-term impact assessments in the CWD community of practice and international development sphere.

As DePree (2004) wrote, “Leaders can delegate efficiency, but they must deal personally with effectiveness” (p. 8).

At an organizational level, there is considerable support in the literature for leaders to enable the talents and abilities of their subordinates (Kouzes & Posner, 2000). Rafferty and Griffin (2004) reexamined the transformational leadership model promulgated by Bass (1985) and found support for intellectual stimulation contributing to employees’ interest in problems and improvement of the solutions they created. There was a positive relationship between intellectual stimulation and both affective commitment and continuance commitment to the firm. This suggests that if leaders were to more positively involve their staff in responding to changes in donor support for LTIA activities—or donor requirements for assessment and accountability mechanisms more
broadly—they may positively stimulate employees’ idea generation and increase employees’ commitment to the organization more broadly. This presents an opportunity for leaders to engage with the creativity and cost-consciousness of organizations while supporting organizational development.

Visualizing the CWD community of practice within the broader international development context highlights the current moment as an inflection point, one at which leaders in the field can capitalize on momentum to improve impact assessment activities and build lasting capacity. Performance assessment, when adequately resourced, can improve management and strategic planning. While international NGOs have shown initiative in developing practices for impact assessment (Kang, 2012; Rugh, 2004), the CWD community of practice and the International Mine Action Standards have focused on more traditional measures of outputs and outcomes. NGOs play a critical role in disseminating management practices within civil societies, and leaders in CWD implementing organizations can have an outsized impact in this regard because of their direct contact with communities with less capacity and in transitional spaces.

One of the more important opportunities for leaders in CWD organizations is to build on the momentum established by stakeholders calling for increased accountability through long-term impact assessments. The literature and this study recognize that, while specific metrics or checklists may not exist to best deploy LTIs, there is clear support for accountability regimes that offer multiple benefits—but only if they are deployed strategically in coordination with stakeholders. Donor-governments are establishing the policy framework not only to prevent poor performance but also to promote stability (Batley & Mcgloughlin, 2010) and build capacities. The literature sees NGOs as
strategic actors in their own right (Fogarty, 2011). The critical component of that agency will be NGO leaders engaging with donor-governments to substantiate the value of impact assessments. Practitioners can transform rote compliance into a deeper relationship where strategic leaders both in NGOs and donor-governments collaborate to best promote the long-term outcomes of their collective work.

**Further research.** Leadership is fundamentally tied to accountability, and it is the responsibility of leaders to create the framework in which they can demonstrate effectiveness. As this study notes, the development and deployment of long-term impact assessment has the potential to make the most of access and expertise of NGO leaders while responding to outside pressure for monitoring and evaluation. To capitalize on this access, NGO leaders must be aware of power dynamics with donors and be prepared to advocate for their organizations, expand capacity, plan strategically. Future research should attempt to continue this line of investigation to see what additional organizational factors are associated with long-term impact assessment activities within this community of practice.

As noted above, further research may also wish to focus on internal donor practices related to educating and training donor-government review panel members on the priorities and best practices for LTIA activities. It is entirely possible that the community of practice did not respond to requests for long-term assessment methodologies at higher rates because the donor did not effectively or consistently communicate this priority. Although this study could not rewrite large sections of the donor-government’s competitive announcements, the study’s results may spur the donor to more actively solicit both proposals for LTIA deployment and relevant variable data
for further analysis (for example, organization age, the experience of senior personnel, training plans, and organizations’ global operations).

This study represents one of the few opportunities to engage the CWD community of practice with scholarly research. To this point, most responses to donor-government interest in long-term assessments have been passive. Practitioners can use this study to move the conversation in a more active direction. Organizational capacity is critical for measurement and evaluations—leaders must create a workable environment, which may mean actively discussing measurement and evaluation activities with donor-governments. Future research will also have the opportunity to engage with NGOs’ global headquarters to better understand broader monitoring and evaluation schemes that support field-level practice across multiple donor accountability regimes. NGO leaders can strategically use these conversations to continue internal learning while demonstrating value and overall impact.

Further research should continue to pursue the analysis of qualitative data available in successful (and potentially unsuccessful) applications. As we have seen, operators in the field are not completely intransigent to the development and deployment of LTIA activities—and incorporating them as part of ongoing service delivery. Leaders at nongovernmental organizations may be able to encourage or incentivize such activities, and future research should also continue to pursue that course of investigation. Activating NGO creativity helps an organization cohere; so practitioners and NGO leaders can manage internal stakeholders and build capacity while responding to external requirements. By balancing all of these factors with the need to deliver high-quality
services, leaders can pursue a participatory model of impact assessment development and deployment that satisfies donor-governments and builds internal competencies.

This was the first significant review of funding practices by the world’s largest bilateral donor to CWD as well as an attempt to determine how the CWD community of practice might incorporate long-term impact assessments in its service delivery. This study was unique because of the transitional and post-conflict spaces in which CWD activities take place. Conventional weapons destruction activities are often the predicates to other stabilization and development activities. Process improvements to these operations offer a blueprint for leaders to build indigenous capacity as a model for additional stabilization and development efforts in post-conflict or transitional spaces.
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Appendix A

The following is an example of the structure of the competitive announcements used by a donor-government for conventional weapons destruction. Extraneous information has been removed to reduce clutter and better demonstrate the competitive announcement template.

U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Political-Military Affairs
Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA)

**Program Office:** Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement  
**Opportunity Title:** 2014 Survey and Clearance in Western Cambodia  
**Announcement Type:** Request for Application (RFA)  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** 14.PMWRA.Cambodia.RFA  
**Deadline for Applications:** Friday, July 18 5:00p.m. EST

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) is pleased to announce a competitive process for Fiscal Year 2014 funding for survey and clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Western Cambodia. The overarching purpose is to reduce threats to civilians from ERW. U.S.-based and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are eligible to apply. Pending Fiscal Year 2014 appropriations, the Office anticipates awarding at least one grant not to exceed $1.5 million. Multiple awards will be given pending the availability of funds.

**BACKGROUND**

The Office allocates foreign assistance based upon its mission statement: “To reduce the harmful worldwide effects of at-risk, illicitly-proliferated, and indiscriminately-used conventional weapons of war.”

This solicitation announces the 2014 grant competitive process in which the Office requests applicants to submit a full Proposal for the above stated project title. Following a competitive review panel, the successful IP/IPs will be considered for funding.

**2014 PM/WRA GRANT COMPETITION OVERVIEW**

Pending the appropriation of fiscal year 2014 funds, the Office anticipates awarding grants for project periods of up to 12 months to organizations that are successful in the competitive review of their proposals. Project start dates can be no earlier than 1 September 2014. U.S.-based and foreign non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGO) are eligible to submit RFA responses. On a limited basis, for-profit organizations
may also be eligible to submit RFA responses; however, they may not take a profit from grant-funded activities.

PM/WRA FUNDING PRIORITIES AND PROJECT EXAMPLES

According to PM/WRA’s Strategic Plan 2014-2018, Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) Program is a set of activities that includes HMA, clearance of ERW, SA/LW destruction (to include at-risk munitions and MANPADS), stockpile and cache reduction, and PSSM. CWD supports the advancement of peace and security throughout the world through the Department’s first foreign assistance objective, achieving peace and security, by reducing the likelihood of illicit trafficking of conventional arms and ammunition that fuel conflict and by responding to humanitarian disasters involving explosive hazards that can prove politically or economically destabilizing.

Project Scope

With the understanding that projects are collaborative in nature, projects for this RFA will fall under the following category:

1. **Clearance of ERW** includes:
   a. Technical and non-technical survey of suspected hazardous areas
   b. Clearance of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and landmines

Project activities must be implemented in one or more Western Cambodia provinces. For the purposes of this RFA, Western Cambodia provinces include the following: Battambang, Pursat, Banteay Meanchey, Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear, and Siem Reap.

APPLICANT/ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

U.S.-based and foreign NGOs, and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply. Some projects may be accomplished by USG implementers through Interagency Agreement. For-profit organizations, including small and disadvantaged businesses, may apply, but such organizations may not take a profit from PM/WRA funded-activities. Foreign governments are not eligible to apply but governments may be beneficiaries of funded programs, provided that funding does not pay salaries of government agency personnel and that such assistance is not restricted by U.S. law or policy.

Organizations should have demonstrated experience administering successful CWD projects, preferably in the target country and/or region, humanitarian demining, weapons destruction, survivors’ assistance, and in similarly challenging security environments.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

All PROPOSALS will be screened to determine whether they meet the Technical Requirements listed below. Proposals that do not meet the Technical Requirements will not be reviewed for funding.
**Technical Requirements**: Proposal Applications MUST include a twelve-page proposal.

1. FULL Proposal and Narrative to include budget breakdown, cost/m²/brief IP historical background.
2. FULL Detailed Budget in Excel as attached Annex to the Proposal.
3. The SF-424 and SF-424B forms (online through Grantsolutions.gov)
4. Project Hazard list as per Project Title Documentation.
5. Full Organizational Structure
6. Description of how the project meets PM/WRA priorities or the RFA announcement
7. Project description, including goals and objectives, and duration. (To include methodology, initial work plan, proposed summer/winter work plans if required).
8. Project description of activities conducted by sub-grantees and/or local partners (if using a sub-grantee). The total costs should be outlined under the Contracting in the Detailed Budget. The actual Subaward/Contract budget must be attached to the application as an attachment. If the subaward operator or budget are unknown at this time the budgets of the subawards/ subgrantees must be approved by the Grants Officer before any pass through costs are allowed.
10. Inventory of proposed DOS project equipment and/or loan agreement for DOS project equipment.
11. Prior year audit submission.

**Detailed Budget:**

12. Provide a detailed line item budget which breaks-down all proposed costs in U.S. Dollars. If cost sharing is offered, include a column for the proposed amount of cost share.

**Optional Impact Assessment Component**

At their discretion, applicants may choose to address the measurement of their proposed project’s long-term impacts. This component must go beyond standard reporting metrics on the project’s immediate outputs and outcomes, and must outline a long-term impact assessment methodology that demonstrates the extent to which long-term change has occurred. While the applicant will design the specifics of the impact assessment plan, it should include the following components:

- **Impact assessment indicators**: The applicant should develop impact assessment indicators that measure the extent to which the project has contributed to change in the project community, population, or area. Successful applications will include a list of long-term impact assessment indicators on which data will be collected.
- **Data collection**: The impact assessment plan should include a baseline assessment phase. Where project activities prevent baseline data collection, the applicant can outline steps taken to establish baseline information on the project. The impact assessment plan must include a data collection phase after the conclusion of the project. Baseline data must be compared to final data to demonstrate the extent to which change occurred in the project community, population, or area. Data collected must be in addition to the standard monitoring and evaluation metrics that are to be collected during the project’s implementation.

It will be the responsibility of the applicant to determine the appropriate data collection methods for their impact assessment. Proposals should include drafts of any data collection instruments to be used. While the results of the impact assessment should be presented in the award recipient’s final report, all primary data must be maintained by the award recipient for a minimum of three years.

As long-term impact assessments are additional to standard grant reporting, PM/WRA may make additional funding available to carry out impact assessments. Proposal budgets should include an impact assessment line item if applicants choose to address this additional component. In some cases, long-term impact data will be collected and submitted after the grant’s period of performance has been completed. The grantee is allowed to budget associated costs into the grant accordingly within the impact assessment line item. Submission of the report must be complete within 18 months after the end of the period of performance. Proposals that do not address this additional component will not be penalized during the application review process. Two additional pages will be allowed beyond the standard proposal page limit for description of the optional impact assessment plan.

**THE COMPETITIVE REVIEW PROCESS**

This solicitation will enable the Office to identify organizations that are interested in and capable of implementing CWD projects in Cambodia.

RFA submissions first will be screened to determine whether they meet the technical requirements stated in this announcement. Applicants must pay attention to and should abide by the specified technical requirements. Submissions that do not meet the technical review requirements will not be read or considered for funding.

Those Submissions that pass the technical review will be reviewed and rated by a panel comprised of individuals with knowledge and experience in CWD programming and regional expertise. The assessment will be based on how well the proposed project meets the priorities outlined in this announcement and addresses the content outlined in the Format and Content section above. Panel results will consider bilateral, regional, and global factors, as well as any policies, restrictions, or limitations on U.S assistance that may apply to each country or region involved. Final approval and Congressional
Notification must take place before each grant, cooperative agreement, or Interagency Agreement is awarded.

**DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

All RFAs must be submitted via www.grantsolutions.gov OR www.grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Friday, July 18 at 5:00.** PM/WRA will **not** accept proposals submitted via email, fax, the postal system, or delivery companies or couriers. Applicants may submit more than one application; however, each application should be submitted only once.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to initiate electronic applications **early** in the application development process, and to submit early on the due date or before. This will aid in addressing any problems with submissions prior to the application deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps to submit applications on www.grantsolutions.gov or www.grants.gov.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This call for Statements of Interest will appear on www.grantsolutions.gov and www.grants.gov.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** The Office will work to execute grant awards to successful applicants pending Congressional authorization of funds in Fiscal Year 2014.

**Reporting and Monitoring Requirements:** Applicants selected for an award must meet the following reporting and policy requirements:

1. **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit semi-annual program progress reports and quarterly financial reports throughout the project period and final reports 90 days after the close of the project period. Access to funds may be suspended if reports are late or incomplete.

2. **Grant Monitoring:** The Office places emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of all funded projects. Grantees should expect to have their programs visited and reviewed by a grants and/or programs officer. On-site reviews include assessment of program and administrative effectiveness.
Appendix B

The following is the language on optional long-term impact assessment measures included in some of the notices of funding availability (competitive announcements) released by the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) in the U.S. Department of State.

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