Developing Program Goals and Measurable Objectives

Program goals and objectives establish criteria and standards against which you can determine program performance. You will need to identify the goals and objectives of the program component or intervention you plan to evaluate. Logic models are a useful tool that can help you do this.

Goal	Objectives
A broad statement about the long-term expectation of what should happen as a result of your program (the desired result). Serves as the foundation for developing your program objectives. **Criteria:** 1) Specifies the STD problem or STD-related health risk factors; 2) Identifies the target population(s) for your program.	Statements describing the results to be achieved, and the manner in which they will be achieved. You usually need multiple objectives to address a single goal. **Criteria:** SMART attributes are used to develop a clearly-defined objective.

Attributes of **SMART** objectives:

- **Specific:** includes the "who", "what", and "where". Use only one action verb to avoid issues with measuring success.

- **Measurable:** focuses on "how much" change is expected.

- **Achievable:** realistic given program resources and planned implementation.

- **Relevant:** relates directly to program/activity goals.

- **Time-bound:** focuses on "when" the objective will be achieved.

Objectives can be *process* or *outcome* oriented.

For more information and examples, see Steps 2.2–2.3 in the Practical Use of Program Evaluation among STD Programs manual.
http://www.cdc.gov/std/program/pupestd.htm

TIP: Complete Exercise 2: "Writing Goals and Smart Objectives" on pages 64–65 of the manual.

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Process objectives describe the activities/services/strategies that will be delivered as part of implementing the program. Process objectives, by their nature, are usually short-term.

> ### Example of a SMART process objective:
> By (month/year), (X%) of providers who reported incorrect gonorrhea treatment in County Z will be contacted within 1 month.

Outcome objectives specify the intended effect of the program in the target population or end result of a program. The outcome objective focuses on what your target population(s) will know or will be able to do as a result of your program/activity.

> ### Example of a SMART outcome objective:
> By (month/year), increase the percentage from (X%) to (Y%) of providers in County Z that fully adhere to the CDC-STD treatment guidelines for appropriate treatment of gonorrhea. [Intermediate objective]

Outcome objectives can be classified as short-term, intermediate, or long-term. Well-written and clearly defined objectives will help you monitor your progress toward achieving your program goals.

> **Short-term outcome objectives** are the initial expected changes in your target population(s) after implementing certain activities or interventions (e.g., changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes).
>
> **Intermediate outcome objectives** are those interim results that provide a sense of progress toward reaching the long-term objectives (e.g., changes in behavior, norms, and policy).
>
> **Long-term objectives** are achieved only after the program has been in place for some time (e.g., changes in mortality, morbidity, quality of life).

Note: **Objectives** are **different from** listing **program activities**. *Objectives* are statements that describe the results to be achieved and help monitor progress towards program goals. *Activities* are the actual events that take place as part of the program. Following is an example of how program activities differ from objectives.

> ### Example: Activity versus Objective
> **Goal:** Reduce gonorrhea rates among male adolescents in County Z.
>
> **Activity:** Educate providers on appropriate treatment for gonorrhea.
>
> **SMART process objective:** By (month/year), (X%) of providers who reported incorrect gonorrhea treatment in County Z will be contacted within 1 month.