**Frequently Asked Questions about the Five-Year Evaluation Reports**

January 2012

Terminology

*Is there any formal list of terms for helping interpretation of the IMLS guidelines?*

Two documents were distributed with SLAA partners last May in launching the phase of virtual collaboration with SLAA partners in the Measuring Success initiative. They can be found on the Extranet as well on the Measuring Success Wiki page (click on the left-hand tab for “Resources”). The first PDF document titled “FAQs about the Five Year Evaluation Guidelines” contains a slide on page 8 which lists key terms used in the evaluation guidelines document. In addition, another document titled “Definitions 05.17.11” contains a more detailed listing of terms focusing particularly on those that we used extensively in the summer webinars for the Measuring Success Initiative.

*I’d appreciate definition/more information about the phrase “selection of strategies” – exactly what is IMLS looking for here?*

Strategy refers to whatever policies, directions, etc. that were used by the state in formulation.  Strategy contrasts with process.  Process involves the actions undertaken in implementation.  The significance is in determining to what extent outcomes (successes, failures) were attributed to the formulation of strategies versus process of implementation.

Federal Guidelines versus State Goals

*How should the findings of the report be organized?*

The findings should be organized around the federal priorities. For most states, this equates to the six federal priorities included in the 2006 IMLS reauthorization that guided SLAA submission and approval of the five-year plans in 2007. In several cases, an SLAA opted to amend their five-year plan to address the increase of federal priorities from six to nine in 2010. If this is true for your SLAA, the findings should be organized around nine federal priorities.

*How should the SLAA organize the presentation of findings for activities undertaken through its approved five-year plan in 2007?*

The activities should be organized around each of the federal priorities rather than any state goals specific to an SLAA. There were six federal priorities in tact when each SLAA submitted and subsequently received approval for their five-year plan in 2007. Federal legislation in 2010 amended the authorization, leading to an increase of nine federal priorities in 2010. In most cases, an SLAA did not request and obtain approval for modifications in their five-year plans following the 2010 authorization so the evaluation reports should be organized around the six federal priorities in place in 2007. For those several SLAA that successfully modified their five-year plans in 2010, their evaluation reports should have activities organized around the nine federal priorities.

*Is it acceptable to organize the findings around the specific goals of the SLAA in the evaluation report?*

No. The report should organize the findings around the federal priorities. A state agency may want its own evaluation report that aligns activities with state goals, but this information is not necessary for federal reporting.