# Opening Spaces for Unintended Impacts: Complexity Aware Monitoring Approaches for Program Adaptation

# Objectives

**Purpose:** Present lessons learned and best practices to highlight complex-aware monitoring (CAM) methodologies in practice

**Introduction to CAM**
- Understanding CAM
- CAM Tools

**Case Studies**
- Three case studies
- CAM in Practice

**Lessons Learned**
- What did we learn?

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# **A Practitioner's Perspective**

Admiring the problem: complex
environments and complex programs

Finding solutions
within an imperfect
system

Finding new or layered
ways to maximize
existing methods and
data

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# **What CAM *actually* is**

CAM is a tool to help make sense of a **broad range of outcomes (i.e., unintended results)**, other actors and factors contributing to **alternative causes**, and understand the interplay of **non-linear change** in complex environments and for complex programs.

- CAM is **not a silver bullet**

- CAM is an **approach** and **way of thinking**

- CAM is a **specialist** within a team

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# CAM: Textbook Definition

CAM is a "type of **complementary** monitoring that is useful when results are difficult to predict due to dynamic contexts or unclear cause-and-effect relationships."

**Principles of CAM:**

- Attend to performance monitoring's three blind spots

- Synchronize monitoring with the pace of change

- Consider interrelationships, perspectives, and boundaries.

**When to use CAM:**

- Cause and effect uncertain

- Diversity of perspectives

- Contextual factors likely to have an outsized influence on programming

- New program opportunities/needs arise

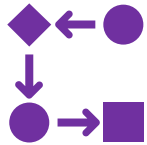- Pace of change is unpredictable

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# CAM: Tools and Approaches

| Visualization methods (mapping) | Visualization Methods (modeling) | Narrative-based approaches | Indicator-based approaches |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Social Network Analysis<br>• Systemigram<br>• Participatory Systemic Inquiry | • International Futures<br>• Causal Loop Diagrams<br>• HERMES<br>• RHEA<br>• JANUS<br>• TreeAge | • Most Significant Change<br>• Outcome Harvesting<br>• Scenario Planning<br>• Innovation System Analysis<br>• Innovation System Enablers and Barriers | • Dynamic Project Trajectory Tracking Toolkit<br>• Process Monitoring of Impacts<br>• Sentinel Indicators<br>• Outcome Mapping Approaches |

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# Five Commonly-Used Approaches

- Sentinel Indicators

- Process Monitoring of Impacts

- Stakeholder Feedback
- Most Significant Change
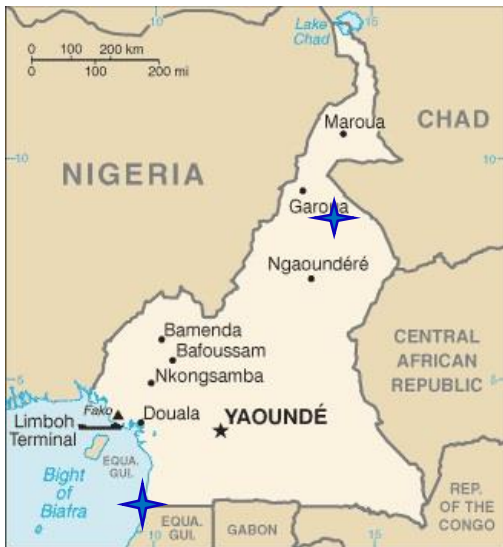- Outcome Harvesting

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# CAM for a "Train and Equip Model"

## Case Study: Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

**Program:** Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT) are capacity-building program for African security partners.

**Why CAM?** Understand the impacts (if any) of a traditional security-focused program on the relationships and perceptions between the local population and local security forces.

Location of survey: Tondibiah





Locations of survey: Limbe (south), Maroua (north)

**Approach:** Gather and analyze **external stakeholder feedback** from community impact surveys in four locations in Niger and Cameroon.

**Methods:** In-person interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, random selection of 200+ residents in geographically appropriate communities; local enumerators; respondent preferred language.

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# CAM for a "Train and Equip Model"
## What did we learn?

Identified and broadened understanding of the second and third-order impacts of security-focused programming on local population needs and perceptions.

### Benefits
- Secondary and tertiary effects
- Data Triangulation
- Program Recommendations

### Limitations
- Clear attribution of program impacts

### Considerations
- Time
- Labor
- Budget

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# CAM for "Institutional Governance"
## Case Study: The Security Governance Initiative

**Program:** SGI provides programming to support six partner countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia) to improve the management and oversight of security and justice sector institutions.

**Why CAM?** Understand what factors and key milestones within process and policy development demonstrate change.


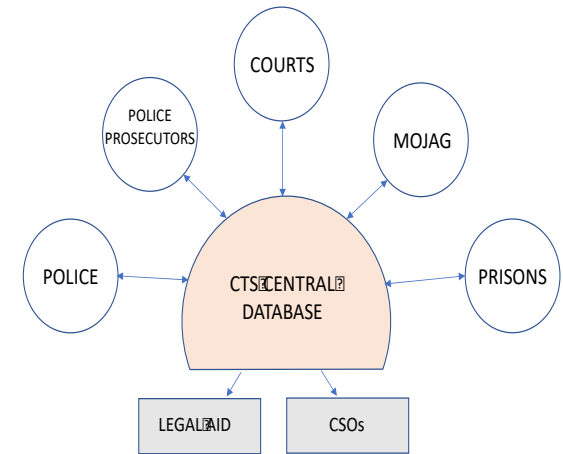
Fig. 2 – CTS Functional Diagram

Ghana justice sector: Understanding how cases are tracked and managed in the justice sector



Niger defense governance: Understanding existing processes (e.g., paper-based tracking system for logistics parts)

**Approach: Monitor development of processes** over time to understand impacts to overall reform.

**Methods:** In-person interviews, focus groups; process mapping with implementers; triangulation with other donors and adjacent programs.

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# CAM for "Institutional Governance"
## What did we learn?

Identified and broadened understanding of key milestones and factors that demonstrate how process and policy development leads to reform and change.

**Benefits**
- Data Triangulation
- Key Milestones in the Process to Policy to Change
- Issue areas for potential diplomatic engagements

**Limitations**
- Access to partner organizations, individuals, and leadership
- Reform dilemma
- Long-term, generational change

**Considerations**
- Time
- Labor
- Budget
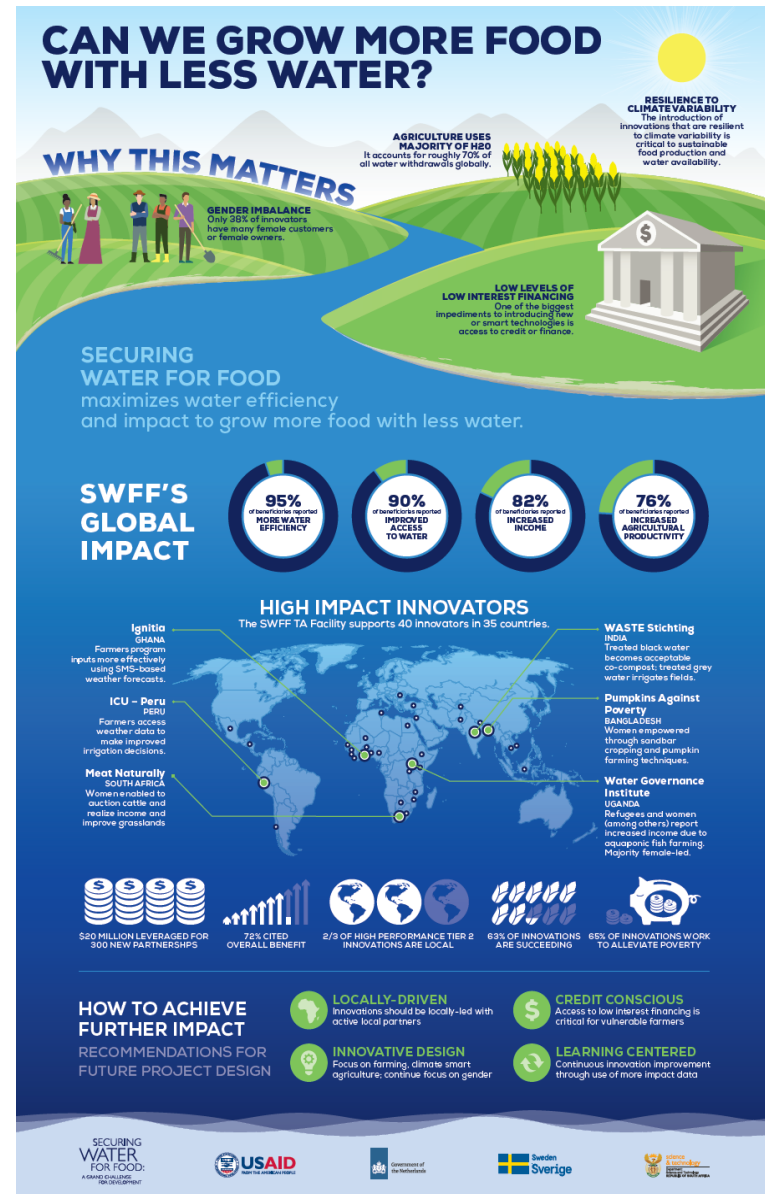
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# CAM for "Complex Programs"

## Case study: USAID Securing Water for Food (SWFF) Grand Challenge

**Program:** SWFF is a multi-donor funding program that aims to support many innovators in developing countries. Not a typical development project model, SWFF was designed to involve as many people across as many sectors as possible.

**Why CAM?** Understand contribution and attribution of results across numerous, diverse stakeholders.

**Approach:** Utilize **outcome harvesting** to examine how changes had occurred and how implementers, partners, and end-users contributed to those changes.

**Methods:** Outcome harvesting analysis, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, surveys, and site visits.

# CAM for "Complex Programs"
## What did we learn?

Identified and broadened understanding of how innovators contributed to change and connected those factors to global impact and results.

**Benefits**
- Key factors and best practices contributing to results
- Program Recommendations

**Limitations**
- Long-term impacts

**Considerations**
- Time
- Labor
- Budget

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# CAM Lessons Observed

- Understand the nature of your problem and your goals. Be practical!
- Build in CAM considerations in planning, personnel, and budget

- Know your audience, stakeholders, and decision makers
- Integrate non-traditional tools and approaches

- Acknowledge limitations and highlight interdependencies
- Analyze and visualize

- Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.

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