

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Are there contexts where I shouldn’t use RAAM?**

RAAM may be used for programs implementing at any level of reduced access, and may be useful in full-access contexts. Since the toolkit was developed for reduced access programs, the analytical approaches and examples are tailored for those use cases, but the methods and process can still be applicable to full-access programs.

There can be contexts where use of RAAM (or use of certain methods) is not advisable due to security concerns or community perception concerns. RAAM Leads should always be careful to include Security, Accountability, and other relevant stakeholders in the RAAM development process to ensure those concerns are properly accounted for. For methods which are considered potentially higher risk (such as Rumor Tracking or Remote Sensing) formal risk analysis (for example through a risk/benefit assessment) is recommended in the method workflow.

**Are the methods contained in the RAAM toolkit the only methods that can be used for reduced access analysis?**

Not at all! The analytical methods covered in the toolkit are designed to address the most frequent informational needs of reduced access programs, but other methods may be useful or relevant for your program. If so, the general RAAM workflow, method matrices, and technical tools may still be useful to you for making an effective analytical plan, carefully considering relevant reduced access factors, assessing risk, learning about different geospatial or qualitative techniques, etc.

**Do I have to follow all of the method workflow steps?**

It is recommended to follow the method workflow to ensure a systematic process. However, different programs of course can decide if individual steps are not applicable to them due to particularities of their context or teams.

**Do I need to read or use all of the tools?**

Most teams who implement RAAM should only select only one or two methods to implement and select the tools that are relevant for their context. The RAAM Lead is usually responsible for reading through the method chapter(s) comprehensively and reviewing the method-specific tools to identify which are relevant. *RAAM Leads are strongly advised to use at least the Matrix Tool for each method* to formally structure the analysis plan and ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly assigned. If teams choose not to use the Matrix Tool, and equivalent planning tool should be used.

**Can I combine methods?**

Yes! It is possible both to plan more than one method at the same time (including planning a Workshop that covers multiple methods) and to integrate methods. For example:

* Information generated from *remote sensing* may be used as a layer in a *context map*
* Information generated from *transaction analysis* tracking may be used as a data source in *data triangulation*
* *Data triangulation* may be used to rigorously cross-check findings from context mapping

Integration depends heavily on the objectives and program needs. Use the method Matrix Tools to help you clearly lay out what information is needed for what objective, how another method can provide it, and ensure the plans align.

**What if I am already mid-program implementation?**

Some methods (such as transaction analysis) should ideally be planned before implementation starts. However, many successful implementations of RAAM have been accomplished when the program was already mid-implementation, and all methods can potentially be leveraged mid-implementation. Review the method-specific chapters to determine if there is any reason why it might no longer be feasible for your program.

**What is the difference between verification, validation, and triangulation in the RAAM toolkit?**

In the context of RAAM, Verification refers to checking select data points from a given dataset against other sources to ensure the source is accurate and consistent across time. Validation refers to confirming the results/findings of a given analysis are accurate or plausible, for example by reviewing them with a subject matter expert or checking with a local contact. Triangulation is essentially validation that is systematic and structured, in which multiple data sources that can produce comparable information are identified and tracked against each other over time.

**Can I really use the RAAM toolkit if I have no available budget?**

Yes! It is possible to use any of the methods (including remote sensing) with no or very minimal budget. However, you will need to be realistic in setting objectives and assessing the capacities available in your team to meet them. Consult with technical experts in your team as much as possible to figure out what is feasible.

**Can I still use the RAAM toolkit if I have a very small team?**

RAAM has been successfully implemented by small teams in the past, for example by a team of 5 persons. Successful small teams usually have a RAAM Lead with strong technical management skills, especially an ability to coordinate internal and external stakeholders and leverage available capacity outside of the team. This is because when personnel are limited, leveraging knowledge and analytical capacity outside of the team (such as Context/Crisis Analysis groups) is critical.

**We don’t have Context/Crisis Analysis teams in our organization – does that affect my ability to use RAAM?**

For many MEL teams seeking to utilize RAAM, internal Context/Crisis Analysis teams have been important partners and leaders in the planning and development of different methods. However, RAAM has been successfully implemented in organizations which do not have such teams. RAAM Leads should consider if the same or similar capacities can be found within the program, in another department (for example Security), or through contracting externally.

**What if I want to try more than two RAAM methods at once?**

Past experiences suggest that even for a relatively large and well-resourced team, implementing 3 or more methods will be difficult. It is strongly recommended that RAAM Leads focus the team on one or two methods at most, since if successful additional methods can always be added.

**Can I see examples of RAAM products?**

You can find case studies of how teams have used the different RAAM methodologies and what they were able to produce in the RAAM Case Studies.

**Can we depend only on RAAM for activity monitoring and program data collection?**

The RAAM toolkit is designed to complement standard MEL in limited-access environments. RAAM cannot replace routine monitoring and data collection activities.

**What is the expected timeline for utilizing and seeing results from the RAAM toolkit?**

Typically, each method involves around two weeks for Preparation, followed by a two-week Workshopping phase. If the RAAM Lead has a strong understanding of the context and program activities, this can greatly enhance the efficiency of the process. Once Implementation begins, results are generally observed within one week, but this can vary depending on the complexity of the analysis.

**At what phases of RAAM are the managerial and technical tools most relevant?**

Managerial tools are designed to be used through all phases of RAAM development, as they not only help to inform Preparation and structure Workshopping but also serve to help document and disseminate results and iterate analysis during Implementation. Technical tools typically are most helpful for analysts during Implementation, but can also be helpful to consult in earlier phases if team members have questions about feasibility, needed capacities, needed technologies, etc.