

Data Quality Assessment Checklist and Recommended Procedures

This Data Quality Assessment (DQA) Checklist is provided as a recommended tool that an operating unit (OU) may use to complete its DQAs. If the OU prefers or has successfully used a different tool for conducting and documenting its DQAs in the past, they are free to continue the use of that tool instead. The checklist below is intended to assist in assessing each of the five aspects of data quality and provide a convenient manner in which to document the OU's DQA findings.

USAID Mission or Operating Unit Name:	
Title of Performance Indicator: <i>[Indicator should be copied directly from the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet]</i>	
Linkage to Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure, if applicable (i.e. Program Area, Element, etc.):	
Result This Indicator Measures <i>[For USAID only]</i> (i.e., Specify the Development Objective, Intermediate Result, or Project Purpose, etc.):	
Data Source(s): <i>[Information can be copied directly from the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet]</i>	
Partner or Contractor Who Provided the Data: <i>[It is recommended that this checklist is completed for each partner that contributes data to an indicator– it should state in the contract or grant that it is the prime's responsibility to ensure the data quality of sub-contractors or sub grantees.]</i>	
Period for Which the Data Are Being Reported:	
Is This Indicator a Standard or Custom Indicator?	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard Foreign Assistance Indicator <input type="checkbox"/> Custom (created by the OU; not standard)
Data Quality Assessment methodology: <i>[Describe here or attach to this checklist the methods and procedures for assessing the quality of the indicator data. E.g. Reviewing data collection procedures and documentation, interviewing those responsible for data analysis, checking a sample of the data for errors, etc.]</i>	
Date(s) of Assessment:	
Assessment Team Members:	
<i>USAID Mission/OU Verification of DQA</i>	
Team Leader Officer approval	
X _____	

		YES	NO	COMMENTS
VALIDITY – Data should clearly and adequately represent the intended result.				
1	Does the information collected measure what it is supposed to measure? (E.g. A valid measure of overall nutrition is healthy variation in diet; Age is not a valid measure of overall health.)			
2	Do results collected fall within a plausible range?			
3	Is there reasonable assurance that the data collection methods being used do not produce systematically biased data (e.g. consistently over- or under-counting)?			
4	Are sound research methods being used to collect the data?			
RELIABILITY – Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods over time.				
1	When the same data collection method is used to measure/observe the same thing multiple times, is the same result produced each time? (E.g. A ruler used over and over always indicates the same length for an inch.)			
2	Are data collection and analysis methods documented in writing and being used to ensure the same procedures are followed each time?			
TIMELINESS – Data should be available at a useful frequency, should be current, and should be timely enough to influence management decision making.				
1	Are data available frequently enough to inform program management decisions?			
2	Are the data reported the most current practically available?			
3	Are the data reported as soon as possible after collection?			
PRECISION – Data have a sufficient level of detail to permit management decision making; e.g. the margin of error is less than the anticipated change.				
1	Is the margin of error less than the expected change being measured? (E.g. If a change of only 2% is expected and the margin of error in a survey used to collect the data is +/- 5%, then the tool is not precise enough to detect the change.)			
2	Has the margin of error been reported along with the data? (Only applicable to results			

	obtained through statistical samples.)			
3	Is the data collection method/tool being used to collect the data fine-tuned or exact enough to register the expected change? (E.g. A yardstick may not be a precise enough tool to measure a change of a few millimeters.)			
INTEGRITY – Data collected should have safeguards to minimize the risk of transcription error or data manipulation.				
1	Are procedures or safeguards in place to minimize data transcription errors?			
3	Is there independence in key data collection, management, and assessment procedures?			
3	Are mechanisms in place to prevent unauthorized changes to the data?			

SUMMARY
Based on the assessment relative to the five standards, what is the overall conclusion regarding the quality of the data?
Significance of limitations (if any):
Actions needed to address limitations prior to the next DQA (given level of USG control over data):

IF NO DATA ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE INDICATOR	COMMENTS
If no recent relevant data are available for this indicator, why not?	
What concrete actions are now being taken to collect and report these data as soon as possible?	
When will data be reported?	

Recommendations for Conducting Data Quality Assessments

1. Data Quality (DQ) assessor should make sure that they understand the precise definition of the indicator by checking the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet. Please address any issues of ambiguity before the DQA is conducted.
2. DQ assessor should have a copy of the methodology for data collection in hand before assessing the indicator. For USAID Missions, this information should be in the PMP's Performance Indicator Reference Sheets for each indicator. Each indicator should have a written description of how the data being assessed are supposed to be collected.
3. Each implementing partner should have a copy of the method of data collection in their files and documented evidence that they are collecting the data according to the methodology.
4. DQ assessor should record the names and titles of all individuals involved in the assessment.
5. Does the implementing partner have documented evidence that they have verified the data that has been reported? Partners should be able to provide USAID with documents (process/person conducting the verification/field visit dates/persons met/activities visited, etc) which demonstrates that they have verified the data that was reported. Note: Verification by the partners should be an ongoing process.
6. The DQ assessor should be able to review the implementing partner files/records against the methodology for data collection laid out in the PMP (for USAID Missions only). Any data quality concerns should be documented.
7. The DQ should include a summary of significant limitations found. A plan of action, including timelines and responsibilities, for addressing the limitations should be made.