



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Performance Monitoring

### **Session 5**

### **Data Quality**



## Session Objectives

**By the end of this Session, participants should be:**

- Familiar with the Data Quality Standards and how they apply to indicators and data
- Familiar with the process of conducting a DQA



## Data Quality Assessment What is it?

Opportunity for both USAID and IP to understand results better and make improvements



## Data Quality Assessment What it is not

- An audit (although reported data are auditable and are routinely audited)
- A exercise that seeks to find fault and place blame
- Something to fear

## What Do Quality Standards Apply to?

- Indicators
- Data collection instruments/tools
- Data collection methods
- Data entry and storage
- Actual data



## What Makes Up A Complete DQA?

- A systematic review of indicators, their PIRS, reported data and the systems that produce it for strengths and weaknesses
- Documentation of identified DQ issues in data (completed checklist), and
- Monitoring of steps taken to improve data quality for management decision-making

*Conducting a DQA is more than just completing the checklist!*



## Tools and Documents for DQA

- Step by Step [DQA Planning and Implementation Guide](#)
- Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) at Mission and Activity level
- Reported data at Mission and Activity level
- Activity M&E Plans and Reports
- Indicator [DQA Checklist](#) (1 per indicator and Activity)



## DQA Checklist Items

- Utility and Relevance of the indicators
- Definitions for indicators are:
  - clear and well-understood by required staff including **all relevant** IP staff
  - consistent with USAID definitions
- Data are collected using a consistent collection process, from
  - year to year
  - location to location
  - partner to partner
- Correct data management procedures are described, implemented and **written down**





## Process of Implementing DQAs

- Identify roles and responsibilities:
  - Who leads the DQA process for the Mission or each technical or DO team?
  - How will USAID communicate with partners?
  - Schedule fieldwork?
- Identify indicators to be included in the DQA
  - In partnership with PRO
- Develop an overall approach and schedule
  - Which indicators have multiple IPs?
  - How long will it take to cover it all?
- Hold working sessions with DO team members to review indicators
  - Are they good measures?
  - Are data available for assessment (or when will they be available)?



## Process of Implementing DQAs

- Review relevant IP documents ahead of time
  - AMEP, esp. **PIRS**
  - Other PM-related procedures/documentation
  - Reported data and narrative
- Review DQA checklist and prepare questions for how you will get the answers
  - DQA Checklist is not an interview guide!
- Communicate with partners/stakeholders
  - Why and when are USAID visits?
  - Who needs to be there?
  - What background documents are needed?
  - Are there particular areas of focus already identified?
  - Are there IP-conducted DQAs?
  - How can/should IP prepare?



## Process of Implementing DQAs

- Conduct IP office visits and other site visits
  - Ask lots of questions
  - Many questions for multiple indicators will be answered at the same time
  - Include Management, program and M&E staff
  - Review **samples** of required documentation at **all key points** in the system
  - Let **USAID decide** sampling methodology/select reviewed documents
  - Ask for help if you need it (PRO loves DQAs!)



## Questions to Help With DQA in the Field

### If you want to know...

Does the indicator actually measure what you want it to measure?

What procedures are used for data collection and analysis?

Are there systems to ensure consistent collection, analysis and reporting of data?

What is the quality of data entry system to record and maintain data?

Do data reflect the current situation?

### Ask the partner...

Is this indicator useful for monitoring your activity's intended results? Why or why not?

Describe to me how data are managed from point of collection to final reporting? Show me the different tools along the way.

Who are all of the people that are involved in data collection and reporting? Are there different field offices or sub-contractors that are involved? How do you ensure consistency among different staff/offices?

How are data checked for errors in entry, transcription or math errors?

How long does it take to go from data collection to reporting?

## Process of Implementing DQAs

- Complete DQA tools for each indicator and IP
  - “Not applicable” is an option
  - “Not enough information to assess” is an option
- Assess the findings and determine if improvement is needed
- Write up findings and recommendations for making data acceptable where applicable
- Solicit and incorporate IP responses and action items into completed checklist
- Share completed checklists with PRO
  - Checklist with explanations and details
  - Scanned documents/data reviewed during DQA
- Update PIRS with relevant information
- Implement and Monitor recommendations

# Exercise

**25 minutes in groups**

- 1) Read the scenario and fill out the Data Quality Assessment Checklist.**
- 2) After you have filled out the Checklist, discuss with your group the overall data quality status and what mitigation measures you would take.**

- Inappropriate indicators for intended results
- Inadequate, inconsistent, and/or untimely data resulting from:
  - Unclear or varying definitions for indicators
  - Unclear or varying data collection tools/methods
  - Unclear or varying calculation methods
  - Duplication of beneficiaries or units of intervention
  - Inappropriate or biased interview or observation methods
  - Data management issues
    - Math errors
    - Transcription errors
    - Data loss



## How Should IPs Prepare for DQA?

- Ensure sufficient resources are dedicated to M&E
- Use standardized templates for data collection and reporting
- Add additional information to forms to ease calculation
- Develop written guidelines for all staff clarifying their roles and responsibilities
- Document details about data management, calculation, etc.
- Ensure staff and partners understand indicator definitions and are reporting consistently across sites





## How Should IPs Prepare for DQA?

- Ask USAID what indicators will require DQA for your activity and when – put in AMEP M&E Calendar
- Complete your PIRS and review Mission/USAID PIRS for required indicators to ensure compatibility
- Collect and store all required documents in one location
- Review your data, documents, and processes in same way that USAID will (use DQA checklist)

- How do I document DQA for indicators reported by multiple activities?
- How many pieces of data or documents should be reviewed?
- Should reported data be corrected if issues are found and how?
- What if I don't know what DQ standard an issue identified falls under?
- What if I don't know as much about M&E methods as the IP or USAID staff?
- Should IPs do their own DQAs and how should they be used in USAID DQAs?



## DQA Is An Opportunity

- Don't be afraid of the unknown – we all learn and grow through DQA
- Remember – you get to fix the problems identified
- We are all in this together – no one looks good if data issues are identified late and by others
- DQAs build support for M&E resources