

Checklist for Planning Baseline Studies for Performance Evaluations [PE]

This checklist is designed to ensure the strength of baseline data for performance evaluations

QUESTIONS TO CHECK AT THE START OF THE PROJECT		
	Check	Comment
1. Which of the following baseline data collection scenarios does the project include?		These scenarios are described in TIPS “Baselines and targets” 2010
a. Baseline is already established (data is already available from an earlier project)		
b. Baseline data must be collected		
c. Baselines are established on a rolling basis		
d. Baseline is zero [GO TO question 9]		
e. There is no reference to a baseline survey in the PE design		
f. The PE was not commissioned until late in the project and no baseline data collection was planned [GO TO question 11]		
2. [If scenario 1a. was checked]		
a. Was the baseline data required for the new project actually collected in a timely manner?		
b. Is the data of a satisfactory quality and does it provide all of the required information?		See question 8 for a discussion of how to define the types of data to be collected
c. Does the information cover all of the groups defined in Question 3?		
3. Which groups will be covered by the baseline data?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to decide whether the baseline will only cover people who receive benefits from the program or whether it should cover the total target population eligible to receive benefits. This second option can be important in order to understand why eligible families do not access services. Is this from choice or are there barriers to
a. Data will only be collected on families or communities that have directly benefited from the project		
b. Data will be collected on families or communities in the target population – including those who have not received any benefit from the project		
c. Data will also be collected on comparable families or		

communities not covered by the project.		<p>access that should be addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some PE also study groups covered by other programs to compare the quality, coverage and costs of service delivery. • A few also survey comparison groups that do not have access to any program to provide a basis for assessing changes produced by the program
4. [If options 3b or 3c are selected] Does the PE design include a methodology for identifying non-beneficiary groups and collecting data on them?		The manager may need to consult with an evaluation specialist
[If Scenario 1b or 1c was selected]		
5. Have adequate budget, staff and time been provided to collect baseline data?		
5A. Is there a clear definition of who is responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of the baseline data?		
5B. Will these resources be available in time to collect the baseline data before project implementation begins?		Check carefully as many baseline studies are delayed due to administrative problems in hiring staff, obtaining funds etc
5C. Are there any other factors [political, administrative etc] that may delay conducting the baseline study before the project begins?		
6. How will the baseline data be collected [check all appropriate options]		The manager should consult with an evaluation specialist
a. The data will be obtained from the project M&E system		Ensure that the evaluators assess the possibility of using M&E and other project records before they decide to conduct a new survey. Many evaluators automatically assume that a new survey will be required and tend to ignore data already available from the project
b. The data will be obtain from project administrative records		
c. Surveys will be conducted		
d. Other methods will be used [specify]		
7. List or sample frame used to identify and select the		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many registries are not kept up-to-date or some of the

groups to be studied		
7A. Does the list of project beneficiaries adequately cover all beneficiaries?		<p>data is inaccurate so the quality of information on the different populations should be assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is also common that when people move or stop receiving services their names are not deleted so there may be an over-estimation of beneficiaries. A key issue is that vulnerable groups may not have registered with the program through lack of knowledge or problems with documents, distrust of government or fear (for example in the case of the internally displaced population)
7B. Does the list or sample frame of the total target population adequately cover the target population?		
7C. Does the sampling frame used to identify and select a comparison group adequately cover the non-beneficiary population?		
8. Defining the questions to include in the baseline study		
8A. Have stakeholders been consulted on the appropriate output and outcome indicators to measure and other information to include?		
8B. Was an exploratory [diagnostic] study conducted to help identify key questions to include and to ensure the use of appropriate language that will be understood by respondents		
8C. Was a program theory [logic] model used to help define the key indicators and questions.		
8D. Does the survey instrument include questions on service delivery as well as outcomes?		
8E. Has a mixed method design been used with both quantitative and qualitative questions?		
9. If the baseline value is zero		
9A. Which of the indicators discussed in question 8 should be used to measure outputs and outcomes?		
9B. What other kinds of information should be included in the baseline survey?		
[If the design does not include a baseline survey]		
10. Is it possible/appropriate to take actions to arrange for baseline data to be collected?		Baseline data is critical for a strong impact evaluation so consider carefully the options. If the issue is budget or time there are ways to reduce the cost and/or time

[If a baseline study was not conducted] QUESTIONS TO CHECK AT THE END OF THE PROJECT WHEN THE POST-TEST SURVEY IS BEING CONDUCTED		
11. Does the TOR for the post-test survey include strategies for reconstructing baseline data?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is critical to make every effort to reconstruct baseline data as it is extremely difficult to measure results or estimate impacts without a baseline reference. • If consultants claim that baseline data is not necessary, management should consult with an independent research specialist
[If YES go to question 13]		
[If NO]		
12. Can strategies for reconstructing baseline data be included?		
12A. Are there sufficient resources and time?		
12B. Do the consultants have the expertise to use these reconstruction techniques		
12C. Are there other reasons why these strategies cannot be used?		
[If the TOR does include reconstruction of baseline data]		
13. Do the consultants plan to use an adequate range of reconstruction strategies or do they propose to only use only a single technique?		It is strongly recommended to use a range of different reconstruction techniques as no single method is completely adequate. If consultants propose a single statistical or qualitative technique they should either be encouraged to review the notes from this course or an independent research specialist should be consulted.

