DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE EARLY GRADE READING STUDY (EGRS I), READING SUPPORT PROJECT (RSP), BENCHMARKING AND COVID-19

QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN

Submission: 2 September 2021

Contract Number: 72067418D00001, Order Number: 72067421F00001

Activity Start Date and End Date: October 2020 – June 2022

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This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Khulisa Management Services (Pty) Ltd, South Africa.

TASK ORDER 4
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE EARLY GRADE READING STUDY (EGRS), THE READING SUPPORT PROJECT (RSP) AND BENCHMARKING

Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

BWE	Benita Williams Evaluation
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DDL	Development Data Library
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EGRS	Early Grade Reading Study
FWM	Fieldwork Manager
GPS	Global Positioning System
HL	Home Language
HO	Home Office
HOD	Head of Department
IRB	Institutional Review Board
Khulisa	Khulisa Management Services
PED	Provincial Education Department
PM	Project Manager
PPE	Personal Protection Equipment
QA	Quality Assurance
QASP	Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan
ReSEP	Research on Socio-Economic Policy
RSP	Reading Support Project
RTI	Research Triangle Institute International
SMT	School Management Team
TO	Task Order
UID	Unique Identity
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

1 OVERVIEW

Background to the Task Order 4

Khulisa Management Services (Khulisa) and our subcontractors – Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP), Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, and Benita Williams Evaluation (BWE) – were awarded the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Southern Africa Task Order for **Data Collection and Analysis for the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS), the Reading Support Project (RSP) and Benchmarking**. This is a Task Order (TO) proposal under the Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management: Analyze, Collaborate, Evaluate (PERFORMANCE) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract.

Quality Assurance (QA)

The maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product, especially by attending to every stage of the process of delivery or production. The oversight process, which includes adherence to standards and guidelines, or the arrangements / activities meant to safeguard, maintain, and promote quality of services or a product.

The purpose of this assignment is to contribute to the body of research around early grade reading interventions, to make progress towards establishing reading benchmarks in South African Home Languages (HL) and English First Additional Language (EFAL) and to conduct research on the psychosocial effects of Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) on early grade reading learning and teaching.

The study findings will be directly applicable to the program funders, implementers, the North-West province Department of Education (PED), as well as the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The information generated through this evaluation will add to the evidence base for policy decisions about the most effective way to support the teaching of Home Language and English as First Additional Language (EFAL) in the Foundation Phase, in South Africa. **Research authorization** is not required as the DBE has an agreement with USAID. The DBE in turn is mandated by law to have oversight on program implementation in schools.

Purpose

As stated in the Task Order 4 **Evaluation Methodology Plan and Study Protocol** (2020, pg. 65), before data collection, the Project Manager, Senior Education Researcher and Evaluation Coordinator will develop and follow a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), which will be developed in collaboration with USAID and the DBE.

The QASP will guide quality assurance across all elements of the research process. The detail of implementing the fieldwork and administrating the instruments for this Task Order is detailed in the Fieldwork Manual.

2 QASP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of team members regarding the development and implementation of the QASP are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Principal Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Roles and Responsibilities
USAID	
Contracting Officer Representative (COR)	• Provide feedback to the QASP and quality control activities. • Accept and approve final deliverables and activities.
KHULISA	
Project Director	• Proofread all deliverables after editing prior to submission as part of quality assurance process. • Provide quality control of all deliverables, incl. draft and final reports. • Support Sr. PM in providing oversight/setting strategic direction.
Project Manager (Snr)	• Ensure all deliverables are of high-quality and delivered on time. • Oversee the QASP and its updates. • Oversee the compliance of all deliverables to requirements and adherence to non-technical quality standards. • Human Protection Administrator and Contact Person for all ethical related issues and complaints
Project Manager (Mid)	• Coordinate, manage and organize activities to ensure an acceptable, professional process with integrity, with on-time deliverables within the workplan.
Senior Evaluation Specialist	• Oversee development of QASP during preparation for fieldwork phase. • Oversee implementation of QASP across all phases of the data collection, analysis and report writing. • Support the staff in updating the QASP and in providing training around QA processes, challenges, corrective actions, and continuous quality improvement strategies. • Review deliverables for adherence to technical quality standards.
Fieldwork Manager	• Manage piloting, including contacting schools, accompanying technical and assessment specialist to schools, conversion and revision of tools, pilot testing, debriefs and tool finalization. • Manage fieldwork, providing monitoring, logistics and quality control. • Manage data entry, cleaning, screening and quality assurance. • Responsible for drafting and finalization of fieldwork report and training manual. • Screen and interview all Fieldworkers and Supervisors prior to selection and, with the Human Resource Manager, finalize contracts with support from Fieldwork Coordinators.
Statisticians (Snr)	• Provide statistical expertise with emphasis, providing guidance to mid-level statistician, and delegate analysis tasks accordingly, in particular related to the impact evaluations. • Participate in validation/analysis of tool piloting data. • During fieldwork, perform key statistical functions for data monitoring and quality control. • Oversee data cleaning and screening post-fieldwork phase. • Review and quality assure mid-level statistician's analyses.

Position	Roles and Responsibilities
Statisticians (Mid)	• During fieldwork, perform key statistical functions for data monitoring and quality control. • Participate in data entry and quality assurance, and clean, screen, and analyse data after fieldwork rounds.

3 STRUCTURE OF THE QASP

The detailed quality standards presented in Annex 1 are organized across the project phases and activities of the research process. Annex 2 provides examples of daily quality assurance activities during fieldwork. Annex 3 illustrates the flow of data and quality assurance processes.

The QASP will guide quality assurance across all elements of the research process.

4 IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS AND COURSE CORRECTION

The project activities, outputs or deliverables identified as not compliant with the quality standards set forth in this QASP will be investigated by the Khulisa Project Director, Snr Project Manager and Senior Education Evaluator. All identified issues will be investigated and corrective action taken.

Each cause and risk will be addressed through the set of actions described below:

1. ***Technical implementation risks***. Non-compliance with quality standards that are associated with external factors beyond the project's direct control are considered technical implementation risks. To the extent possible, technical implementation risks and related mitigation strategies will be anticipated in the Task Order workplan, Evaluation Methodology Plan and Study Protocol, in the weekly Team Lead meetings and the monthly USAID / DBE management meetings. Responses to un-anticipated technical risks will be proposed to the COR within 5 days after the risk is identified, and mitigating actions will be taken upon the COR's approval.
2. ***Low qualifications or performance of Key Personnel***. Khulisa will immediately assign a Khulisa home office member to support the Key Personnel and review his/her performance. The Consortium will consider providing training or other support to increase his/her qualification or performance. If these measures do not produce the desired effect within a pre-determined period, a replacement will be proposed to the COR.
3. ***Low qualifications or performance of other local full-time staff***. If the cause of the low quality output/deliverable is determined to be the low qualifications or performance of the local full-time staff, Khulisa will, as necessary recommend to: (1) assign a temporary home office substitute or support person to the identified team member; (2) provide immediate training to the specific staff member and develop a training program for all local office staff to prevent similar issues in the future, and/or (3) take steps to replace the identified person with another qualified candidate.
4. ***Low qualifications or performance of the Khulisa home office staff***. If the cause of low quality is determined to be low qualification/ performance of the Khulisa home office assigned to the project, Khulisa will immediately replace the Khulisa home office member with a qualified full-time Khulisa employee.
5. ***Low qualifications or performance of the partners***. The Consortium members will work together to find a qualified employee or contractor as replacement and seek COR approval. The COR will be notified immediately if these changes will delay deliverables, and necessary revisions to the workplan proposed.

6. ***Budget overrun or shortage of resources***: If it is determined that mitigating low quality of outputs/deliverables will affect the budget or the project does not have sufficient resources to implement mitigation measures, Khulisa will immediately notify the COR, and propose alternative sets of measures for their consideration.

Potential threats to data quality are addressed in Annex 1. The table below highlights additional threats to data collection and possible mitigating actions that will be taken.

Table 2. Mitigating Actions to Data Collection Threats

Threats during Fieldwork	Potential Mitigating Actions
Fieldworkers falsifying data	• Include Global Positioning System (GPS) readings documenting location when completing the form • Measure survey completion times using timestamps • Require fieldworkers to photograph locations (with consideration to confidentiality requirements) • Check guidelines for supervisors to implement and quality controllers based on survey experience and cleaning syntax • Use in-built data validation checks in the software • Require fieldworkers to use the guidelines in the data collection protocol throughout the data collection process • Retrain field workers during data collection if need is identified • Conduct daily data quality checks in the field and during data cleaning • Use software that allows immediate data transfer either via blue tooth or internet to the next level to avoid manipulation of data
Unauthorized data transmission and apps	Incorporate defenses (against malware or non-prescribed uses, such as transmitting data to an external source or consuming data quota) for the device software, such as an app that limits the functionality of the device (e.g., only allow the app and/or GPS tracking to function without an administrator password).
Broken devices	Help fieldworkers physically protect their devices, e.g., confer liability of the device to field workers through a simple contract outlining the state of the device when received and returned, provide protective device cases, and take precautions when transporting and storing devices.
Device lost/stolen	Track device based on GPS location. If tracking does not work, use the device's remote capability to wipe data from the device.
Unforeseeable school disruptions /closures	Work with the DBE and relevant stakeholders (such as provincial and district education offices, school principals, School Management Teams (SMT) and teachers) to ensure smooth and uninterrupted access to the schools under assessment. In the event of an unforeseen school closure due to COVID-19, Khulisa has planned for additional fieldwork if required to return to a number of schools.
Fieldworkers unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances	Train an additional 16 Fieldworkers and additional 3 Supervisors who will serve as replacement Fieldworkers. All Fieldworkers and Supervisors will also be trained on all tools (and will have participated in piloting the tools) and will be able to step in to quickly replace a Fieldworker if unavailable (e.g. illness, COVID-19, death in family, etc.) until further arrangements are made.
Potential COVID-19 spread	Test all team members participating in training/piloting and fieldwork for COVID-19 and receive adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). We will follow all physical distancing and sanitizing protocols, and have proposed a Wellbeing Researcher.

Threats during Fieldwork	Potential Mitigating Actions
Attrition and Absenteeism In the previous EGRS I Wave 4 of data collection (2018), average learner attrition rate from the original EGRS I sample was as high as 27%[1] and 9% of the sample were absent from school on the day of testing.	Institute a multi-stage learner tracking mechanism will a) ensure learners are in school and b) assess those who are absent but still reachable. Results will be scaled/weighted for all absent learners, based on those who were reachable (if outcomes between present/absent learners differ). This is especially important if learners who are absent on the day of testing tend to be chronically absent.
Absent/ Unavailable principal	Work directly with the Deputy Principal, if the principal is absent or unavailable during the school visit. If the Deputy is absent, Fieldworkers will liaise with, and interview, a member of the SMT, prioritizing the relevant Head of Department (HOD).
Fieldworkers unable to locate schools	Map out all schools prior to fieldwork to ensure fieldworkers can successfully reach schools. The Fieldwork Manager (FWM) has plotted all schools on a map using the GPS coordinates provided by the DBE. Where additional information is required, Khulisa will obtain this during telephonic calls to schools or with a visit to the school prior to fieldwork.
Home Questionnaire return rate Previous experience in the EGRS with administrating the Home Questionnaire using the above stated approach resulted in an 82% completion rate (4,202 questionnaires distributed and 3,459 returned).	Maximize response rate that includes sharing questionnaires on day 1 of data collection, ensuring teachers follow up with learners/parents/ guardians and having Supervisors collect returned questionnaires throughout the week.
Internet connectivity	Use Tangerine® and KoBoToolBox off-line functionality which allows its user to store multiple learner assessments on the device and uploading it centrally once connected to the internet. Internet data bundles will be provided to each Fieldwork team to ensure they are always able to upload data if the internet connectivity is not strong enough at their accommodation.
School strikes, or other disturbances closing the school thus preventing fieldwork	Utilize agile management to 1) reschedule fieldwork and 2) send fieldworkers to another site so their time is not wasted (e.g. they may join another fieldwork team and therefore complete the school in one day rather than 2). If the fieldwork does not occur, Khulisa will conduct fieldwork during the contingency mop up period.
Principal refuses to allow fieldworkers to proceed	Use Khulisa's protocol of 1) notify FWM and 2) ask the DBE to step in to ensure fieldwork can proceed.

[1] On average, 27% of the original sample of EGRS I learners were not identified in EGRS I Wave 4 of data collection. Attrition is a mix of absenteeism, death, learners moving schools or province, etc.

Additional risks not envisioned above, but identified during project implementation, will be addressed by Khulisa and its partners using an adaptive management approach to identify workable solutions. Every effort will be made to develop solutions which can be implemented within the available project budget. Khulisa will notify both the COR and DBE about any unforeseen risk, and propose mitigating solutions, applicable costs, and implications for project implementation timeline and quality of deliverables. Khulisa will seek CO and COR guidance on the way forward and may need to request contract modification or other contractual actions to execute the agreed-upon solution.

5 ETHICS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

In line with the Common Federal Policy for Protection of Human Subjects in research (the "Common Rule") – 22 CFR 225, Khulisa and the sub-consultant's practice is to uphold high ethical standards that are aligned with the type of respondents involved in an evaluation. In addition, Khulisa is registered with the US Government Federalwide Assurance (FWA) for the Protection of Human Subjects (OMB No. 0990-0278) and has a designated Human Protections Administrator and Contact Person.

Khulisa's Data Privacy Policy (2020) will guide the use of data collection, storing, retrieving, amending, deleting, archiving and sharing of data, unless Consortium members are guided by their institutions policy.

The QASP includes details on how ethics will be upheld, confidentiality maintained and data protected.

6 COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Throughout implementation Khulisa will adhere to COVID-19 guidelines issued by the DBE, follow World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, and respond to the changing circumstances and regulations immediately.

Adequate PPE will be provided during training and fieldwork. These include, but not limited to the following:

- Face masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Sanitizer and blue cloths for cleaning screens and laminated assessments.
- Screens placed between the fieldworker and learner during learner assessment for Grade 3 and 4 as masks muffle the sound made by the learners
- Individual stationery packs for each fieldworker and supervisor to minimize contact and contamination of field work stationery

Relevant information will be included in the Fieldworker manuals, and time will be included in the training of Fieldworkers and Supervisors on the required protocols.

A distress protocol has been developed for the COVID-19 Questionnaires to be administered by GeoPoll, and for the fieldwork. Prior to attending fieldworker training, all team members participating in training/piloting including all potential Fieldworkers and Supervisors will be tested for COVID-19 as a risk mitigation strategy.

7 STAKEHOLDER INPUT AROUND QUALITY

Khulisa will closely work with experts or specialists among USAID, DBE and partners during the delivery of the services to ensure quality processes are designed and implemented, and outputs are of high quality and relevant to the users.

Khulisa will seek stakeholder feedback on their satisfaction with all surveys/research and learning/dissemination products and services (through for example, requesting comment and feedback on the instruments and reports, providing approval of tools prior to administration, and reflecting on implementation of fieldwork). This feedback will serve as a basis for establishing the overall performance of the partners.

Additionally, a complaints process will be established which will allow stakeholders to report sub-standard performance. To be reported to dataprivacy@khulisa.com. The Consortium will investigate each complaint to validate its accuracy before acting.

ANNEX 1: QUALITY STANDARDS

1.	PROJECT MANAGEMENT – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS	
1.1	**Documentation**	a. Relevant templates are used for all project documentation (agendas, minutes, attendance registers, presentations, reports, etc.).
		b. Version control is used consistently for all documentation.
		c. All project documentation (instruments, reports, presentations, publications, etc.) undergo internal quality reviews by Khulisa with a focus on • ensuring responsiveness to scope of works and contract requirements, and • high quality writing (e.g. coherence, clarity, well developed ideas, internal logic, use of strong sentence construction with active voice and smooth transitions, correct spelling/grammar/punctuation, good formatting, visualizations etc.).
		d. Feedback/comments from external reviewers (and Khulisa subsequent actions on these) are documented in a tracking or comments matrix (or equivalent).
		e. All information generated by the project is accurate, reliable, clear, complete, unbiased, and useful. Every phase of information development (creation, collection, maintenance, and dissemination) is governed by these information quality principles.
		a. Regular telephonic, virtual or face-to-face meetings are carried out throughout the assignment to ensure the client is aware of risks, mitigation plans, issues confronted in the field, data quality, progress etc.
1.2	**Meetings** (face-to face, telephonic and/or virtual)	b. Agendas are prepared for all meetings and sent ahead of time to all meeting participants (and designated alternate staff).
		c. Minutes are kept for every meeting and circulated to meeting participants (and alternate staff as appropriate) within an agreed upon timeframe.
		d. Action points from the previous meetings are reviewed at the beginning of every meeting or integrated as part of the agenda.
		e. Virtual meetings are held using appropriate technology that allows for adequate security, privacy and enables participation of client and staff.
1.3	**Workplan and Budget**	a. Workplans include: key steps and deliverables, project time lines and designated responsibilities.
		b. Budgets include detailed level of effort (days) and are based on sound accounting principles.
		c. Workplans are reviewed regularly and deviations are flagged, explained, and addressed in consultation with relevant staff and stakeholders.
		d. Budgets are reviewed regularly, variances explained, and adjustments made to the workplan as necessary in close consultation with relevant staff, consortium partners, and stakeholders.
		e. All electronic equipment and purchases will meet the requirements of USAID and the contract.
		f. Workplans include decision points to address changing situations regarding COVID-19.

2	RESEARCH PREPARATION – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS	
2.1	**Methodology and Approach**	a. The survey/research protocol/methodology will be designed collaboratively with relevant stakeholders.
		b. Sample size and sampling method will be checked by a senior statistician or methodologist to ensure that the sample is suitable for the local environment, suitable for the mode of data collection, and likely to yield the appropriate statistical power.
		c. The methodology/protocol will include call-back, tracking or mop-up procedures that will be set up for cases where respondents could not be reached.
		d. The study protocol and methodology will also allow for and detail the replacement of learners where they cannot be traced.
2.2	**Tool/Instrument Development**	a. The design of tools/instruments will incorporate global standards for education-related indicators and questions.
		b. Tools/instruments will be designed in close consultation with the DBE, USAID and evaluation team members to ensure that the designed research satisfies the information needs and takes context into account.
		c. Tools/instruments will be designed with response constraints (e.g., skip patterns, blank prompts, ranges, etc.) to ensure data validation and mitigate against unusual outlier responses.
		d. Tools/instruments are internally reviewed and revised by the team.
		e. All data collection tools will be pre-tested and piloted with schools and learners with similar characteristics to that of the intended beneficiaries and revisions made as necessary.
		f. Finalized tools will be shared and submitted to DBE and USAID for quality review and approval prior to pilot and fieldwork training.
		g. Only revised and finalized tools/instruments will be used for data collection in the field.
		h. A team of statisticians from the evaluation consortium will review variable naming and value labels before finalization of the data entry tools.
		i. All tools will be quality assured once uploaded onto the respective software and electronic devices, and before they are deployed and made available for use on devices by fieldworkers.
		j. Protocols for administering tools/instruments will be developed and made available to the survey/research team as well as to relevant stakeholders (i.e. fieldworkers). These will be detailed in the **Fieldwork Manual.**
		k. Software updates and/or revisions to tools/instruments will be undertaken upon the instruction of the Senior Education Specialist and/or Fieldwork Manager
2.3	**Tool Translation (for the learner COVID-19 questionnaire, COVID-19 GeoPoll telephonic survey to teachers, principals, HODs**	a. Translation of tools/instruments administered by the evaluation team/fieldworkers will be undertaken by the Setswana language experts.
		b. The translated tools/instruments will be checked for accuracy by project team members (including fieldwork supervisors and the client) fluent in English and Setswana.
		c. A back translation into English will be done by someone who has not seen the original English tools/instruments to ensure translation quality.
		d. For the telephonic surveys administered by GeoPoll, the GeoPoll team will do the initial translation and thereafter the Setswana language experts will check and quality assure the translation.

	and parents, parent consent/opt out forms only)	e. The tools/instruments will be reviewed and updated as per the experts' comments.
		f. The translated tools/instruments will be submitted to DBE/USAID for final review and approval prior to fieldwork.
2.4	**Ethics (Institutional Review Board) Clearance**	a. The DBE is mandated by laws to have oversight on program implementation in schools. Research authorization is not required as the evaluation activities fall under DBE Research, Monitoring & Evaluation directorate. There is an existing agreement between DBE and USAID regarding research.
2.5	**Upholding ethical practices across the assignment**	a. All research will be conducted within the internationally acceptable moral imperatives, ethical principles and national legal framework, including honesty in all aspects, accountability in the conduct of research, professional courtesy and fairness in working with others, and good stewardship of research on behalf of others (refer to the Singapore Statement) and respect for persons, beneficence (treat people in ethical manner and secure their wellbeing), and justice (fairness) (refer to the Belmont Report). b. When research involves vulnerable groups, they are entitled to special protection against abuse, exploitation and discrimination. c. Standards of privacy and confidentiality must protect the access, control and dissemination of personal information and protect mental and psychological integrity. d. All researchers and evaluators have a responsibility to do no harm and to endeavor that research will contribute to the overall good of the beneficiaries. e. All research and evaluation fieldworkers will be trained in ethical practices and standards of privacy and confidentiality. f. Informed consent must be gained prior to conducting any research or evaluation activity. g. When conducting research with children (under the age of 18 years) at schools, if personal data is to be collected then parental consent is required. If assessments of child ability are to be undertaken, DBE approval is required. h. Irresponsible and breaches of research practices must be reported to the Human Protections Administrator and Contact Person (privacy@khulisa.com). All reports will be investigated by the Human Protection Administrator, a Khulisa Director and an external party, and necessary action taken.
3	**STAFFING AND TRAINING – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS**	
3.1	**Staffing**	a. Fieldworker (data collector) recruitment is undertaken in a competitive and transparent manner, to ensure the most appropriate candidates are selected.
		b. Fieldworkers (data collectors) will be recruited based on the following key criteria: • Ability to read and speak the language of the assessment (i.e. English and Setswana) • Previous experience collecting data in schools and/or administering assessments with learners • Proficiency using a smart phone or tablet • Ability to follow written instructions and read maps • Ability to handle conflict situations • Ability to self-organize and execute data collection activities with limited supervision • Experience and ability to working as a team member

		c. Fieldwork supervisors will be recruited based on the following key criteria: • Prior work experience with fieldwork supervision and/or leadership and management of research teams • Strong people management skills (such as communication, patience, show respect for all and motivating colleagues) • Ability to handle conflict situations • Good organization skills • Attention to detail • Strong computer skills including ability to download and review electronic data, and • Experience with research and data collection - including quality control.
		d. A description of the role with clear job requirements (responsibilities and deliverables) is in place for all positions (and included in the fieldworker or supervisor contract).
		e. Penalties are built into all staff contracts to ensure timeliness as per the established due dates of the approved workplans.
		f. More fieldworkers and supervisors will be recruited than needed to ensure that the most competent individuals are deployed and to allow for a list of alternates in case individuals drop out.
		g. A data base of all enumerators will be maintained to keep track of their performance (timeliness, quality, and ability to work with others and follow instructions) and only those who have a record of good performance will be engaged in subsequent surveys.
3.2	**Training**	a. All training activities have clearly articulated training objectives, training materials and agendas.
		b. The length, methods and content of training activities are relevant to and sufficient for the research objectives to be met and reflect best practices.
		c. Training of fieldworkers and supervisors will include: • Roles and responsibilities of supervisors and fieldworkers • Understanding the data collection tools/instruments • Entering data into the electronic devices, • Learner selection and sampling • Respondent or learner selection criteria and processes (as outlined in tool/instrument administration protocols in the **Fieldwork Manual**) • Minimizing non-response rates resulting from refusals by training fieldworkers in techniques on gaining respondents' confidentiality, assuring them of anonymity, motivating respondents to co-operate, and arousing respondents' interest with appealing opening remarks, etc. • In-school simulations to prepare training participant for the actual data collection by giving them an opportunity to experience a day of data collection in a school • Practical activities that include role-plays in specified languages using the data collection tools • Filling in administration documentation to aid data consolidation and fieldwork reflections • Understanding of the data collection quality assurance processes • Quality assurance and best practices for conducting data collection guidelines on how to physically protect data collection devices by conferring liability of the device to fieldworkers, providing protective device cases, precautions when transporting and storing devices etc. • Maintaining **COVID-19 protocols** during fieldwork (refer to section 4.3 of this QASP and the **Fieldwork Manual**) • The purpose and use of the **COVID-19 distress protocol**, ethical practice, data privacy and protection, and child safeguarding

		d. Accommodation and transportation arrangements for all training participants and facilitators will be confirmed prior to commencement of the training
		e. Ensure adequate time is given to incorporate comments from the training into the tool before deployment of staff to the fieldwork
		f. All data capturers will be trained to capture the paper-based tools accurately and undertaken data checks to increase accuracy.
4	**DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS**	
4.1	**Fieldwork Logistics**	a. A tool/instrument implementation strategy (i.e. **protocol and administration guide in the Fieldwork Manual)** will be developed to guide all stages of the data collection process (pre-pilot, pilot and fieldwork). The protocol states the administration procedures, data quality and logistical standards for the field work (e.g., includes the time fieldworkers must arrive at the school).
		b. Schools will be notified of the fieldwork visit in advance via a DBE letter and telephone calls from the DBE and the evaluation team.
		c. School rotation schedules will be captured through calling schools to inform fieldwork schedules prior to fieldwork.
		d. The information required from the schools will be confirmed prior to the fieldwork. This includes the class/grade lists to identify learners that need to be assessed. These lists will be compared to the learner tracking data to identify learners for inclusion in the sample to be assessed at each school.
		e. Fieldwork schedules include realistic timelines for on-site data collection as well as travel between sites.
		f. Fieldwork material packaging will be administered prior to each field visits. A box per school storage system will be used.
		g. With support from the DBE, provincial/district level departments and school management will be engaged as far as is reasonable in fieldwork logistics.
		h. Fieldwork equipment and devices will be procured in accordance with specified requirements.
		i. Accommodation arrangements will be made prior to each field visit.
		j. Car hire will be secured for all field-going staff, as required. (i.e. one car per team going into a school)
		k. **Fieldworkers must adhere to the fieldwork protocols as detailed in the Fieldwork Manual** (e.g. arrive at school at 07h00 to allow for meeting of the principal to maximize the fieldwork day)
		l. Clear communication protocols will be shared with the fieldwork team prior to deployment.
4.2	**Fieldwork Ethics**	a. Consent (and the written recording of the consent) must be obtained without participant coercion prior to administration of tools.
		b. The fieldworkers will be orientated on specific ethics requirements prior to fieldwork, and issues or concerns raised and immediately addressed if necessary during fieldwork.
		c. Each Research team member will sign a non-disclosure agreement as well as declaration of conflict of interest forms.

4.3	**Maintaining COVID-19 protocols during Fieldwork**	**a. Before leaving the overnight or home accommodation, field staff will:** • Know the full range of symptoms of COVID-19. • Administer the COVID screening tool and submit the results via your tablet. Follow the instructions and recommendations made by the screening tool. • Stay home and self-isolate even if they have minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, Contact relevant supervisors. • In cases where they have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention immediately. Call by telephone first, if you can and follow the directions of your supervisor. • If they have any of the COVID-19 symptoms, they will be advised NOT to leave their accommodation until they have received directive from their supervisors and other fieldwork coordinators and fieldwork managers.

		b. Before entering the school premises, all fieldwork staff will:
		• Administer a temperature check.
		• Ensure that they have signed in and meet the school COVID-19 administration requirements.
		• Ensure that they are wearing the required PPE.
		• Administer the COVID screening tool and submit the results via their tablet. They will follow the instructions and recommendations made by the screening tool.
		• If field staff have any of the COVID-19 symptoms, they will be advised NOT to get into close contact with anyone until they have received directive from their supervisors, and Khulisa staff (fieldwork coordinators, fieldwork managers or home office staff).
		  • If any field staff member has minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, they will contact relevant supervisors and self-isolate (avoid transport with others), if possible travel to own room and stay there until supervisor makes contact and Khulisa notifies them of the action to be taken.
		  • In cases where they have severe symptoms such as a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, they will be advised to seek medical attention immediately. Call by telephone first to make a medical appointment. Follow the directions of your supervisor and Khulisa.
		• The fieldwork manager will immediately notify (verbally and in writing) the project management team, the school visited during the proceeding days and week, the DBE and USAID if there is a confirmed COVID-19 case.

		c. While on school premises, field-based staff will: • Maintain at least a one-meter distance between each other to reduce risk of infection, particularly if anyone coughs, sneezes or speaks. • Wear a mask (and not a shield or buff/scarf or a mask with a valve) as a normal part of being around other people and on the school premises. • Ensure appropriate use, storage, cleaning and disposal of masks. • Wash hands with soap and water, or sanitizer, before they put your mask on, as well as before and after removal, and after touch the mask at any time • Ensure that the mask covers the nose, mouth and chin. • Regularly and thoroughly clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. • Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. • Cover their mouth and nose with their bent elbow or tissue when they cough or sneeze. • Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently especially those which are regularly touched, such as door handles, assessment areas, faucets, electronic devices and phone screens.

		d. When leaving the school premises, field staff will: • Sanitize all areas and equipment used prior to leaving. • Sanitize hands.
		e. <u>Specific protocols for administering the learner assessments while at the school</u>: To ensure the quality of the data for the learner assessments, it will be necessary for fieldworkers to: • Set up the desk with the PPE screens. • Prepare the seating arrangements for the fieldworker and learner to sit next to each other with appropriate spacing. • Request the learner to remove their mask once they are seated in order for the fieldworker to hear them clearly. • Upon completion of the learner assessment the screen, desk, assessment charts and all other materials used must be sanitized.
4.4	**Fieldwork monitoring and compliance**	a. Fieldwork Supervisors must: • observe fieldworkers as they conduct interviews and other measures, noting errors and misconceptions, and taking remedial action where necessary. • discuss the identified errors with the data collector (fieldworker) at the end of every data collection day to correct identified issues and errors. • conduct re-training sessions with their teams if they observe similar mistakes being made by most of their team members. • hold daily field work meetings to discuss any challenges faced by the team and provide corrective on spot measures.
		b. Fieldwork Supervisors will check completion of submitted tools and identify and resolve any data quality issues immediately.
		c. Fieldwork supervisors will complete fieldwork control sheets each day to document data collection undertaken and any partial or full non-responses, including the reason for non-response (e.g., eligible but refused; eligible, but no one available; eligible, but unable to access/contact; not eligible, etc.).
		d. Fieldwork Supervisors will be expected to compile a daily report to documents everyday experience and lessons on data collection. A matrix for fieldwork will be developed for daily report compilation.
		e. Oversight and monitoring visits will be conducted by a Fieldwork Coordinator to provide further technical and moral support to the fieldwork team (including supervisors and fieldworkers) and address all technical issues.
4.5	**Management of electronic devices**	a. The Fieldwork Coordinator will be responsible for the quality assurance and preparation of all devices (including downloading all required software applications), with support from Khulisa IT staff. b. Supervisors will be trained on how to install data collection software version in the event of emergencies in order for them to support their fieldwork teams while in the field. c. Supervisors will be trained on how to check on the data collection devices whether submissions have been successfully submitted to the Khulisa cloud. d. Electronic devices will be clearly numbered and labelled prior to being allocated to Supervisors and Fieldworkers. e. Supervisors and Fieldworkers will sign a device collection sheet that clearly indicates who collected which device (including power banks and chargers). f. Supervisors and Fieldworkers are accountable for the general maintenance and operation of the data collection devices once it's in their custody.

4.6	**Data Quality and Security**	**a. For the data collected electronically, the quality of collected data will be ensured by:** • Extracting data daily to administer data quality checks (see Annex 2 for examples of in-field data quality checks). • Daily data extracts will be 'dumped' into data cleansing templates to identify rate of error, fieldworker affects and capturing errors. • Supervisors will be responsible for overseeing the administration of the research tools, specifically the learner assessments. • Field teams will be briefed daily to rectify any errors observed by the data cleansing templates. • Daily completion rates will be monitored to ensure a strong representative sample will be collected. • Data will be stored on Khulisa Private Server and will be shared ONLY with recognized project resources. • Initial data cleaning will be done by Khulisa. These include only cosmetic type data cleaning such as removing incomplete responses, duplicates, variable names, etc. Further cleaning will be done by analysts. • Final clean data sets will be stored and shared with relevant project stakeholders (as detailed in this QASP). • Integrate sign-offs which indicate that the data was checked for quality before initial use will be implemented. • Change logs will be maintained. • De-identify data sets will be uploaded on the DDL following USAID guidelines. • Finalize datasets will be uploaded to Data First.

		a. For the data captured on paper, the quality of collected data will be ensured by: • Fieldworkers will be trained to ensure tools/instruments are completed accurately while at the school as per the **Fieldwork Manual.** • Supervisors will check that fieldworkers from their teams have collected data accurately prior to packing them into school boxes. • Fieldwork Coordinators will check that each school box has been packed adequately prior to sending them back to the office at the end of each fieldwork week. • Once the boxes arrive at the Khulisa office, the junior project manager will go through all the boxes and identify the tools/instruments that require data capturing. • Data Capturers will be assigned to different tools OR schools and will capture data onto software on electronic devices as per the **protocol detailed in the Fieldwork Manual.** • The junior project manager will follow a number of steps to ensure data quality: 1. Count number of paper tool/instruments captured, compare with what is in data submission files as numbers should match. 2. Check that the tools/instruments are marked as captured, and who captured it, and make sure they follow instructions for packing tools/instruments for archiving. 3. Check how long it takes to capture one tool/instrument: if some people are a lot faster, or slower, investigate why. 4. Download data file and check that: • Data was extracted correctly. • Every record (row) has a unique identifier. If there are unexpected gaps (the Unique ID may be sequential), explore why. If there are any duplicate UID, explore why. • If the data needs to link to another data set, ensure that the linking variable is included in the data set. • After every day of capturing, draw a sample of 10% (ensuring a range across data capturers) of instruments/tools for quality review to confirm accuracy of data capture. Any errors found will be recorded and provide feedback to data capturers on errors. Errors to be fixed. If more than 10% of the sample records errors, all data is to be checked. For those data capturers that had a significant number of errors, draw a sample of docs on day two and double enter and compare again. Proceed with this throughout the week until errors have been minimal. If there is no improvement in data capturing by day 3 the identified data capturer will be replaced by a new data capturer. • Paper-based data will be stored safely in a locked room at Khulisa. • Once uploaded, electronic datasets will be stored on Khulisa Private Server and will be shared ONLY with recognized project resources. • Initial data cleaning will be done by Khulisa. These include only cosmetic type data cleaning such as removing incomplete responses, duplicates, variable names, etc. Further cleaning will be done by analysts. • Final clean data sets will be stored and shared with relevant project stakeholders (as detailed in this QASP). • Integrate sign-offs which indicate that the data was checked for quality before initial use will be implemented. • Change logs will be maintained. • De-identify data sets will be uploaded on the DDL following USAID guidelines. • Finalize datasets will be uploaded to Data First • All original paper-based tools will be returned to the school box and filed. All boxes will be stored securely at Khulisa offices.

		b. Data Security will be ensured by: • Using only Khulisa, DBE and USAID approved electronic devices for data collection. • Access to devices being limited to only Khulisa approved data collection team members. • Protecting devices with passwords. • Backing up collected data on secure Khulisa servers. • When capturing data, all instruments/tools will be archived as soon as finished capturing and data quality checks have been completed. • Keeping paper-based data in sealed and protected envelopes in a secured location.
5	**DATA CLEANING AND ANALYSIS – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS**	
5.1	**Data Consolidation and Cleaning of primary data**	a. The original data set(s) is downloaded to the secure Khulisa server and saved as protected "DO NOT TOUCH - Protected Master (Raw)" file.
		b. A copy of the original data set(s) is cleaned using the following procedures: • Check completeness of all data sets. • Implement process for managing personally identifiable information of respondents in line with good data practice and in compliance with relevant legislation. • Run basic exploratory analysis on every variable in the tool to check for data entry mistakes, outliers, duplicates, missing values, or coding errors. • Re-coding and cleaning will be carefully documented with explanations within the syntax where applicable. • Consolidate where applicable. • Assign a senior person who was not involved in data consolidation and cleaning to validate the consolidated/cleaned data file against raw data. • Use software such as WHO anthro or ENA for smart to check the anthropometric data quality.
		c. The final cleaned data set is saved on the secure Khulisa server as a "DO NOT TOUCH - Protected Master (Cleaned)" version.
		d. Data set(s) version control is implemented in accordance with agreed upon nomenclature.
		e. The clean data set will be stored safety by Khulisa and shared appropriately with RTI and ReSEP.
		f. The final anonymized data set will be uploaded to the USAID DDL (refer to USAID DDL requirements).
5.2	**Consolidation of secondary data**	a. Sources of secondary data will be documented, date of receipts will be noted, and basic data quality investigations will be conducted prior to using the data in any analysis. The same steps will be followed as for cleaning of primary data.
5.3	**Data Analysis Plans**	a. A **Methodology Plan and Study Protocol** will be developed by the sub-consultants and senior researchers to guide the evaluation and research. The plan will be reviewed and quality assured by the Project Director, Project Manager (snr and mid) and the Senior Education Specialist and submitted to USAID / DBE for approval.
		b. As necessary, the **Methodology Plan and Study Protocol** may be updated with more detail. Changes will be appended to the original study protocol and methodology plan, and noted in progress meeting minutes.
		c. A data analysis plan will be developed and updated as necessary to ensure that the analysis responds to the evaluation questions as articulated in the **Methodology Plan and Study Protocol**.

		d. The analysis plan for the impact evaluations must be registered prior to data being analyzed (refer to **Methodology Plan and Study Protocol**).
5.4	**Data Analysis**	a. Only copies of cleaned data set(s) will be used for analysis. The ORIGINAL cleaned and raw master data sets are not to be touched, and will be saved in a limited access folder on the Khulisa server.
		b. Version control is implemented for analysis in accordance with agreed upon nomenclature.
		c. Quantitative Data analysis will use sound scientific analytical methodology, including statistical tests as appropriate.
		d. Qualitative Data analysis will use sound scientific analytical methodology, including coding books.
		e. Processed data sets, syntax and output will be organized and stored in a central repository.
		f. Analytical outputs will undergo internal review to assure the quality of the analysis.
		g. Response rates and bias introduced by non-response will be investigated and documented.
6	**REPORT/ LEARNING BRIEF PRODUCTION – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS**	
6.1	**General**	a. All report / learning brief versions will undergo internal quality reviews by Khulisa with a focus on: • ensuring responsiveness to scope of work requirements and evaluation questions, • high quality writing (e.g. coherence, clarity, well developed ideas, internal logic, use of strong sentence construction with active voice and smooth transitions, correct spelling/grammar/punctuation, good formatting, visualizations etc.), and • the USAID style guide will be used to standardize all reports.
		b. All reports / learning briefs prior to submission (draft or final) will be quality assured by Khulisa (internal and/or external copy-editor).
		c. The reports / learning briefs will be presented to all relevant stakeholders in a clear and accessible manner.
		d. Feedback from stakeholders and reviewers (and Khulisa actions) will be documented, using a tracking or comments matrix.
6.2	**Preliminary Findings**	a. Prior to drafting a report / learning brief, preliminary findings will be shared with DBE and USAID (and other relevant stakeholders) (preferably in an in-person or virtual workshop or a meeting).
6.3	**Draft Report Learning Brief**	a. The draft report / learning brief will be based on feedback from the presentation of preliminary findings and these feedback items (and Khulisa actions) are documented in a comment or tracking matrix.
		b. Stakeholders are given a minimum of two (2) weeks to review and comment on draft report / learning brief.
6.4	**Final Report / Learning Brief**	a. The final report / learning brief is based on stakeholder feedback and Khulisa actions documented in a comment or tracking matrix.
7	**DISSEMINATION – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS**	
7.1	**Disseminated Products**	a. Disseminated information, including the Learning Briefs, meet the standards of quality including: objectivity, utility, and integrity; and provide information that is accurate, reliable, clear, complete, unbiased, and useful to targeted audiences e.g. schools, provinces etc.
		b. Presentations will conform to USAID branding requirements.

		c. Attribution is given whenever external sources are cited in internal and public products.
		d. Data is visualized in a user-friendly and meaningful manner.
7.2	**Pre-dissemination Review**	a. Internal review by Khulisa is undertaken to maximize the quality of all information products.
		b. All materials are submitted to the DBE and USAID for review and approval prior to dissemination.
7.3	**Online Platform Products:**	a. All online communication products adhere to online platform guidelines to be developed as necessary.
		b. Confidential or proprietary information is not posted/shared.
8	**LEARNING EVENTS (meetings, workshops and conferences) – GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS**	
8.1	**Learning Events**	a. Invitations to events are issued with enough lead time to allow for maximum attendance/ participation.
		b. Clear, relevant, and achievable event goals and objectives are established and documented.
		c. Events have clear agendas.
		d. Speakers/presenters are identified and confirmed in a timely manner.
		e. Event expenditure is within budget.
		f. Reports summarizing the events are prepared and shared in a timely manner.
		g. Ongoing stakeholder and participant feedback inform the USAID and DBE ongoing PERFORMANCE and education objectives.

ANNEX 2: EXAMPLES OF DATA QUALITY CHECKS DURING FIELDWORK

Daily data quality checks

Statistical checks

The daily checks on electronic data uploaded and tracking of all evaluation tools, including the learner assessments, will be programmed in statistical analysis package and salient findings will be summarized in an Excel file ("TO4 data checks tracking Day XX"), which will be sent by the statistician to the Education Specialist, Project Managers and the Fieldwork Manager, on the same day. Issues from the analysis will be flagged immediately to the Education Specialist, Project Managers and Fieldwork Manager for action to be taken.

Manual checks

In addition to the statistical checks, the following manual capture and checks will be done by the mid-level statistician on a daily basis:

- Capture the linking forms and other accompanying documentation for each team on a daily basis.
- Check that all schools assessed are on the school list for the day
- Check the number of principal consent forms and teacher consent forms captured
- Check the number of class lists submitted versus required
- Check the number of Grade 3 learner workbooks assessed
- Check that the Grade 3 learner names in the workbooks and the ID captured on the linking form match
- Check the number of learners assessed versus the number of learners on the linking forms
- Check and record the number of learners that transferred
- Check and record the number of learners that transferred
- Check and record the number of learners assessed
- Check that the learner assessments for the day have been marked and results entered
- Complete the information on the school checklist included in each school pack/box

The manual checks will be a crucial part of the day-to-day fieldwork activity. As described above, fieldworkers will be required to perform various checks. Before leaving the school visited for the day, fieldworkers will have to complete all checks baring the capturing of the learner assessment which had to be completed by 17:00. Supervisors will be responsible for checking in with each of their allocated teams before submitting their data for the day.

Daily learner assessments quality checks

The following process will be implemented for the learner assessments:

1. **The Fieldworkers** who administered the assessment will mark the learner written assessments daily.

2. Marking of the learner paper sheet will be entered directly on the tablet. This means they **do not** first manually mark the written assessment in pen and then capture that onto Tangerine/tablet. The rationale is removing the in-between hard copy marking to reduce room for error.

3. The template for marking will allow each fieldworker to capture their own name to track and monitor who marked each learner written script.

4. **Supervisors** will moderate a 5% sample of the marked scripts ensuring that each fieldworker marking has a sample moderated.

5. This will allow the **statisticians, Education Specialist and Field Work Manager** to immediately identify if a specific fieldworker is marking incorrectly, and take corrective action.

6. The supervisor moderation will allow a comparison between the supervisors own marking and the fieldworkers marking to confirm consistency of standards.

Weekly data quality checks

Each week following a full week of fieldwork, the following investigations will be done using all data collected in the linking file, learner oral assessment, and learner written assessment from the Monday to Sunday of the previous week:

- The number of school and number of learners to be assessed will be determined from the linking file.
- Using the “Comments” field in the linking file, learners who are marked absent, ill, transferred, or untraceable will be removed from consideration.
- The learner oral assessment data file will be stripped of records that are empty, start before 07h30, and are duplicate linking IDs with missing data. Remaining duplicates (by linking ID) will be documented.
- Next, the learner oral assessment file and linking file are merged by linking ID.
    - Mismatches due to linking ID mistyping will be corrected by hand as far as possible.
    - The number of learners in the linking form, but with no oral assessment, will be documented.
    - The number of learners with oral assessments who were not in the linking file, will be documented, and reasons for the existence of these records will be sought.
    - Next, among the records that matched directly on linking ID, the number of true teacher name mismatches (excluding spelling errors, inclusion of second name, etc.) will be determined.
- The learner written assessment data file will be stripped of records that are empty and are duplicate linking IDs with missing data. Remaining duplicates (by linking ID) will be documented.
- Next, the learner oral and written assessment files will be merged by linking ID.
    - Mismatches due to linking ID mistyping will be corrected by hand as far as possible.
    - The number of learners in the linking form, but with no oral assessment, will be documented.
    - The number of learners with written assessments who were not in the oral assessment file, was documented, and reasons for the existence of these records were sought.

The checks will be programmed and reported in the same manner as the daily checks.

ANNEX 3: DATA PROCESS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE