Guidance on Data Quality Assurance – for programmatic/project result data based on Project Indicators

1. Purpose and scope of this guidance

This guidance addresses persons dealing with project and programme results data as per the approved Logframe with agreed CBM Standard/Mandatory Indicators. It is intended to be a **hands-on practical guide for users who need to do day-to-day operational data quality assurance.**

Mechanisms for ensuring high quality of data (point 3) are outlined and include related checks of data reported by partners via the ProMIS Indicator Tracker (point 3 and table 2).

During the process of agreeing project relevant Standard Indicators, understanding their counting, and reporting correct figures, the 3-way-working method shall be applied. Main responsibilities are outlined under point 5, table 1.

The guidance does not outline processes related to monitoring project progress along indicators; those are set out in the QPRGs for Project Development and Monitoring and Reporting.

Ethical integrity of data is a critical component of quality assurance. However, the scope of this paper does not allow for any ethical guidance. In addition to data accuracy and completeness, attention must be paid to ethical considerations around data privacy, secure storage, and restricted access. It is crucial that all data collection and storage activities adhere to local legal and ethical standards. Ethical oversight ensures not only the integrity of data but also the credibility of CBM and its partners. For further guidance on universally accepted standards, country offices and partner projects are advised to consult resources such as the "OECD Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data."

2. Why does CBM collect data of project/programme results?

CBM collects project result data from its partners to

a) enable CBM and its partners to showcase achievements in improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities at country and global level;
b) monitor project progress against agreed indicators; and
c) make informed decisions on the way forward of project implementation.

Note: CBM uses Standard Indicators (SI) that are clearly defined and allow for aggregation and reporting on project, country, and global level. Data aggregation is the process where raw data is gathered and expressed in a summary form for statistical analysis.

3. What is data quality and why is it important?

Data Quality means that the information collected as part of a monitoring and evaluation system is relevant, accurate, timely, complete, consistent, plausible, and unique. For details of the quality dimensions, refer to Graph 1 page x of this guide.

Ensuring high data quality is crucial for obtaining data, data management, data analysis and decision making. By prioritising data quality, CBM can enhance the reliability and trustworthiness of its data assets for improved decision-making and insights.

Ensuring that data is of high quality requires a procedure for **Data Quality Assurance (DQA)** and starts with:

a) **Verification of source:** Project officers/managers shall confirm that the partner is ready to monitor progress of its project in an efficient, regular, and coherent manner. Rather than verifying each number of participants reported, one might examine each project's system for collecting and maintaining those data. If there is a good system in place, it is highly likely that the data produced will be accurate and of high quality. This should ideally be verified during the partner assessment as component of the project cycle management.

b) **Verification back to source** means that the reviewer follows a specific datum to its source, confirming that it has supporting documentation and is accurate. Project managers may choose a few indicators to verify periodically throughout the implementation period or conduct occasionally spot checks during monitoring visits.

4. What can each project officer/ manager do to enhance quality of data?

- Ensure availability of the latest approved version of the logframe.
- Ensure that CBM Standard Indicators are understood, that partners know how to count and disaggregate and re-orient partners regularly during project visits.
- Train / re-train partners on data input to ProMIS Indicator Tracker.
- Ensure continued monitoring of project progress - reporting is just the end-product of regular monitoring.
- Ensure that the partner has assigned focal person/s for handling monitoring data and reporting to CBM.
- Ensure that partners have their own data collection and reporting system in place and use it consistently through time and across staff.
- Apply the below quality dimensions for each data report / indicator tracker submitted by the partner.
- Applying a **four-eye principle** (letting another person review/check) is recommended to ensure that accurate data is captured in its completeness.
- Additional verification by a second person is required when that data is transferred manually from the excel based Indicator Tracker to ProMIS.

5. Who is responsible for what in the 3-way-working approach? Graph 1

Institutional Donors

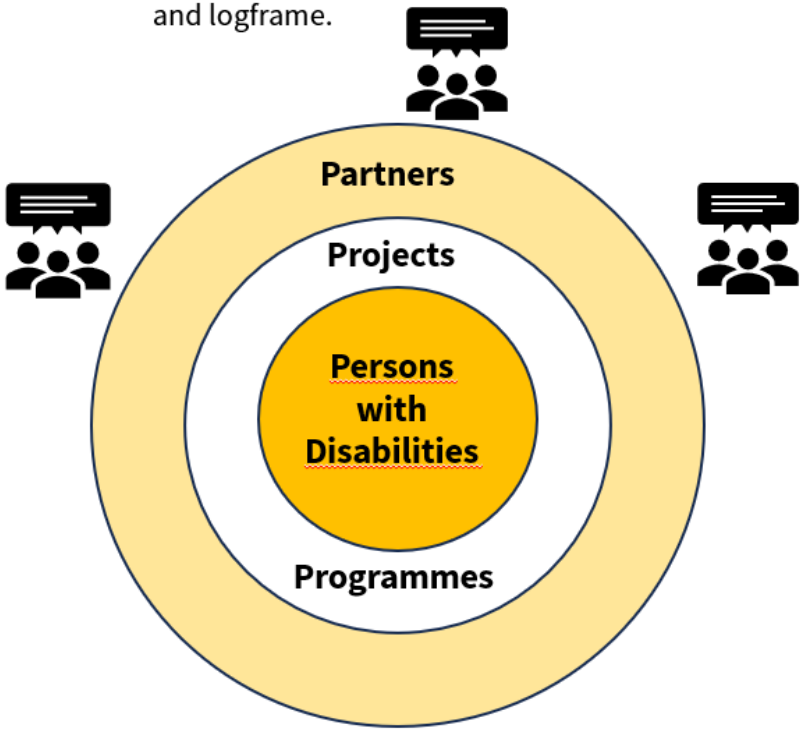
Ensure inclusion of CBM Standard/ Mandatory Indicators in project and logframe.

Country Offices

- Ensure partners understand data collection and reporting requirements and adhere to deadlines;
- Timely distribution and collection of Indicator Tracker in excel format;
- Train partners on the ProMIS logframe and indicators tracker;
- Ensure timely delivery and insertion of project result data in ProMIS.

Regional Hubs

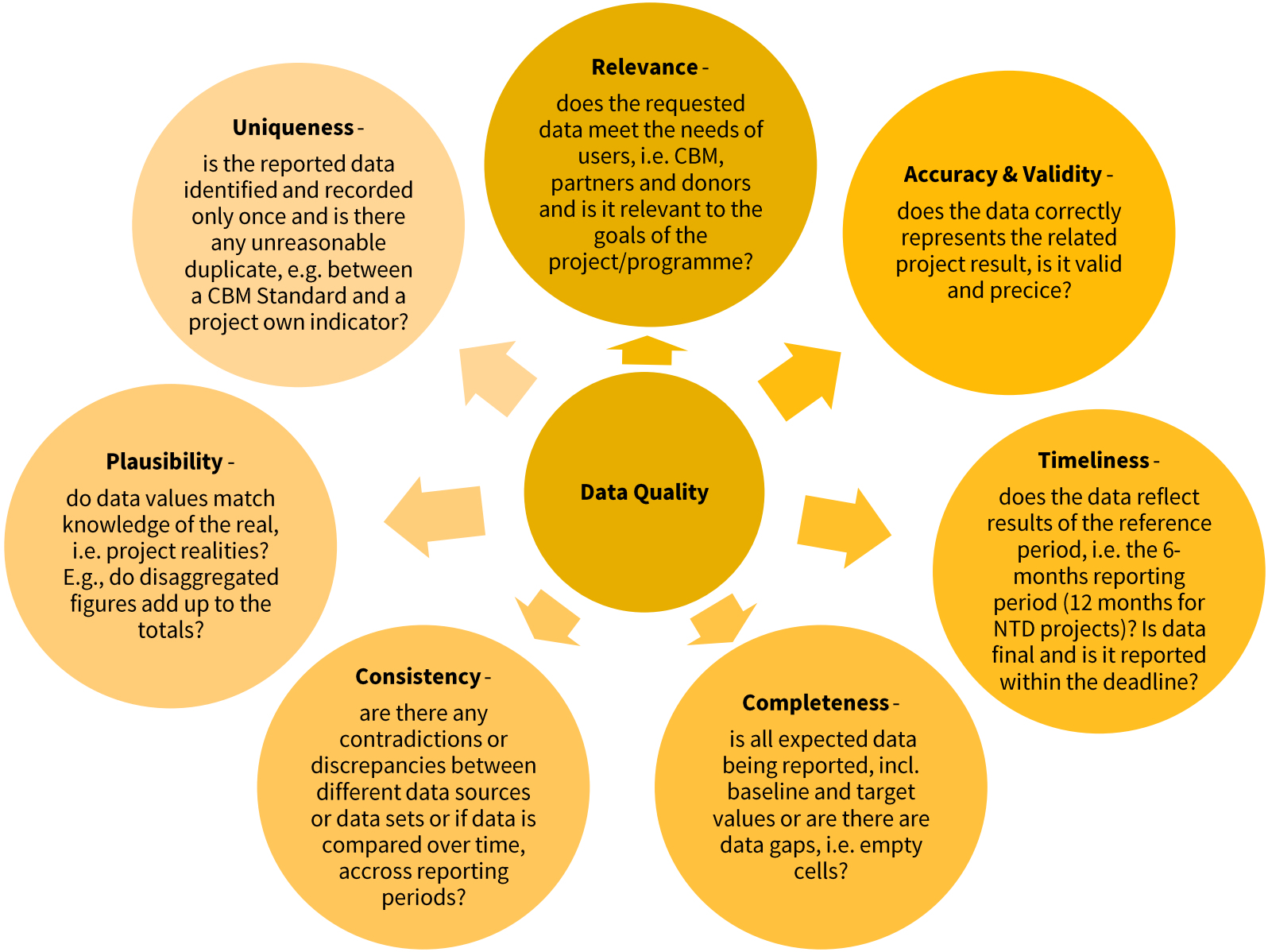
- Support COs in applying this guidance and supporting its implementation;
- Conduct regular quality checks and monitor the process;
- Taking up suggestions for further improvement of data quality.



Initiatives = Owners of CBM Standard Indicators

- Ensure the correct understanding of Standard Indicators, their counting, and data aggregation;
- Ensure inclusion of Mandatory Indicators that must be used and reported on for organisational level aggregation;
- Update Indicator Definitions and Mandatory Indicators as required.

6. What are the most important data quality criteria [1] - Graph 2



7. Quality Criteria, checks needed and responsibilities – Table 2

Data Quality Criteria	Confirmation and Checks needed	Responsibilities
Relevance: Data needs to be relevant to the intended project purpose and align with specific (donor) requirements. • Data requested from partners must be relevant and needed. • Data is collected for project results, i.e. outputs and outcomes. • Data can be used for donor reporting.	• Agree on relevant CBM SIs plus maximum of 5-10 custom indicators per project. • Ensure that a custom indicator is not another formulation of a CBM Standard Indicator • Do not include additional indicators only because this data is "nice to have". • Do not include input indicators such as "Medical equipment purchased". • Do not include a management activity as an indicator: "Audit or Evaluation conducted" or "number of monitoring visits" or "number of project steering committee meetings" or "project staff employed".	3-way-working method: IDP, CO and Initiatives during project development
Accuracy and Validity: Data must be correct and precise, providing the needed information without errors and distortion.	• Be clear about the data sources of partners. • Ensure that the partner's data collection system/tool allows to capture CBM data and for the correct reporting period. • Understand partners reporting lines and dates and how they match with those of CBM, i.e. ➢ 6-monthly periods (January to June and July to December) with reporting deadlines 4 weeks after each period ends; ➢ exception for NTD projects with annual reporting period and deadline end of March each year.	CO project managers/officers during partner assessment and monitoring visits, Supported by technical advisors as needed.

[1] The categories are reproduced from Data Quality Audit Tool (2008) by MEASURE Evaluation.

	• Confirm when and in what frequency partners count/record persons, service users, interventions, devices, and trainings. • Ensures that data include sufficient detail, i.e. baselines and targets, and breakdown categories (age, gender, disability status). • Confirm how partners record this data, for example on paper or in digital systems such as HMIS and how/which data can be extracted from their own HMIS for CBM reports. • Provide support as needed to partners.	
Timeliness: Data needs to be up-to-date and must reflect the most recent information for the reporting period to ensure its relevance. • Ensuring regular reporting of data can have a huge impact on reliability and accuracy of data.	• Partners must make sure that figures are reflecting the situation in the actual reporting period. • Ensure submission of data by below deadlines: ➢ 31 July and 31 January each year (all non-NTD projects) ➢ 31 March for all NTD projects • If a partner is unable to report by these deadlines this might indicate that they collect data on an ad-hoc basis once CBM asks for it, instead of keeping a regular record. • If deadlines cannot be adhered to, the reasons must be addressed with the partner and documented. • It is important to confirm that the data is final and complete at the time of submission to CBM. "Draft" data should not be accepted. • Ensure that partners report final and approved data, especially if data is provided by authorities/ government at a certain time (e.g., NTD data).	CO project managers/officers
Completeness ensures that there are no missing values or significant gaps in the dataset.	Check that all cells are filled as expected: • Availability of data on all agreed Indicators of the logframe: ➢ If there is no number to be reported in the respective reporting period, a "0" must be inserted.	CO project managers/officers

All required/expected data elements must be reported.	➢ Any non-reporting of an indicator or any over- or underreported value against the target must be justified with a comment. For example: “Related activity not yet carried out/started” or “activity delayed due to floods” etc. • Availability of data for all agreed breakdown categories: ➢ CBM breakdown template includes 12 categories based on age (adults/children), gender (female, male, diverse) and disability status (persons with and persons without disabilities) ➢ Breakdown values must be included as applicable and be based on the agreed activity and its result, e.g., activities targeting children must report numbers of girls/boys/diverse children, only. • Availability of target values: ➢ Each indicator must have an agreed target value. • Ideally, availability of baseline values. ➢ If baseline is unknown, this must be marked (by „N/A”) or a comment shall be provided.	
Consistency refers to the absence of contradiction or discrepancies within the database or across different data sources. Data values of the same item stored in different systems must be identical, also in regard of their format.	• Check the correctness of the project number and title in relation to the indicators reported. • Check that reported numbers are based on the same way of counting and consistent for the given project across reporting periods - compare data of current with that of previous reporting period. • Ensure that counting of persons vs. counting of participations is correctly understood and done. • Check that data is consistent with expectations, that it is not over - or underrepresenting values that are expected. ➢ Confirm whether data has increased or decreased according to expectations set out in the related result.	CO project managers/officers

	➢ For example, the target value for the total number of persons reached for the given reporting period or year was 1.000 and the actual value reported is 10.000 is or is 3. ➢ The reason for the deviation must be included as a comment, or else this needs clarification with the partner. • Check that data is included in the correct manner: ➢ When typing numbers into ProMIS there is no need to use separators such as commas or full stops; this is done by ProMIS automatically. ➢ Only whole numbers must be reported, not using decimals. ➢ Do not use text such as “five”; type “5” instead. • Ensure correct selection of indicator type, i.e. number, percentage, binary or text and that data reported is coherent with this type. ➢ Don’t write “5%”; use “type of indicator” = percentage instead.	
Plausibility of data is the degree to which data values match knowledge of the real. It refers to likelihood that the figures are true and traceable.	• Confirm that the numbers reported can be traced to the activities. • Confirm that the number of disaggregated categories add up to the correct totals. ➢ Number for persons with and without disabilities must be equal or higher than number of persons with disabilities. ➢ Ensure that any “total” is correctly added up from the underlying values. • Confirm correct reporting of numbers for persons of male/female and diverse/third gender as applicable. • Ensure that for an indicator that focuses on children (for example pre-school enrolment, retinopathy of prematurity, early intervention) only number for children are reported.	CO project managers/officers

Uniqueness means that a figure is identified and recorded only once or that there is no duplicate. Duplicates can cause overcounting, inconsistencies, or biased analysis.	• Check alignment of project own (= custom indicators) with CBM Standard Indicators (confirming that they are not simply another formulation of the same thing), by using the correct "Associated Standard Indicator" in ProMIS. • A donor may require a certain formulation of indicators, such as "250 children received refractions during an outreach in 4 schools in the 2 project regions" – The Associated CBM SI would be "number of refractions performed" and data would be reported for children. Do not include the CBM Standard Indicator again as separate indicator. • Check that there is no double entry of an indicator as a Standard or Associate Indicator and again as a Custom Indicator for the same result. • Ensure that in such cases there is no double reporting of a number under a Standard or Associated Indicator and again under a Custom Indicator. • Ensure that data of one project is only transferred once into the ProMIS portal.	CO project managers/officers

This document was developed in consultation with Regional Programme Managers and Initiatives in August/September 2023.