# Data Accuracy and Reliability

The Department ensures the accuracy and reliability of the performance data in its Annual Performance Plan and Report (combined) and in measuring progress towards its Agency Priority Goals, in accordance with the five data quality specifications in the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 for:

* Means used to verify and validate measured values: All performance data reported in the Annual Performance Plan & Report and on [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov/) by the Department is subject to the data verification and validation standards initially published in 2003 and reissued in 2007 (see <https://www.doi.gov/performance/data-validation-and-verification>).  Implementing organization heads or chief officials confirm in writing the validity of the data. In the case of Agency Priority (Performance) Goals, senior officials in the implementing organization personally present the data on a quarterly basis to the senior Departmental leadership.
* Sources for the data: Bureau directors and/or managers provide performance data from observations or extrapolations of selected representative samples, past history, or the probability of changing conditions.
* Level of accuracy required for the intended use of the data: Performance data reported in the Annual Performance Plan & Report and on [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov/)  is used for management purposes, as a representative indicator of progress in relation to a target or goal established by the corresponding implementing organization.  The accuracy of the data is that considered necessary to provide a reasonable representation of the progress being made relative to a target or goal for discussion purposes so as to help:
  + determine if the progress is considered adequate
  + provide understanding of the ability for the processes and methods being implemented to achieve the goal
  + indicate if any further exploration or evaluation is needed to better ensure achievement of the goal
  + and/or if alternative action, including adequacy of funding levels, facilities, workforce, IT capabilities, etc., are needed to help better ensure achievement of  the goal.
* Limitations to the data at the required level of accuracy: Performance data is subject to potential errors from the use of estimations and extrapolations, especially where direct measurement is impractical and/or considered too costly, individual observation, miscommunication, and/or failure to effectively employ the guidance described in the performance measure template or the “Indicator” description in [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov/).
* How the agency has compensated for such limitations if needed to reach the required level of accuracy: The measurement procedures for each performance measure used in the Annual Performance Plan and Report is described/documented in data measurement templates posted on the OMB MAX website, or described in the “Indicator” block for each Agency Priority (Performance) Goal on [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov/).   Along with the implementing organization’s official assurance of faithfully employing the data verification and validation standards, submitted data is reviewed within the context of the scope and nature of the activity, plans, and past experience to help confirm accuracy. Individual programmatic data components also are made publicly available on corresponding websites and/or through press releases (e.g. BLM’s renewable energy project website and WaterSMART grant selection press releases).  For those performance measures employing estimation and extrapolations, a repeatable means for these calculations is used, often based on past typical experience (e.g. multiple-year rolling average), industry estimation techniques (if applicable for engineering based activities), or science.
* In addition to employing the Department’s data validation and verification standards, and internal reviews of submitted data, the best “test” of the data’s accuracy is in its use; i.e. Agency Priority (Performance) Goal data is reviewed during quarterly status reviews where senior officials report their data directly to the Department’s senior leadership; is made publicly available through [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov/); annual performance plan and report data is provided with historical, organizational, and supporting context providing the reader with a fuller perspective of the data being reported; and is reviewed annually at the “strategic objective” level.