

Chapter 8: QUALITY CONTROL MONITORING ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the details of the survey operations' quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) activities conducted by the Consortium as part of the Main Survey for Strand C of PISA-D.

This quality control and monitoring programme was designed to: i) support the collection of data and results that are valid, reliable and comparable across countries and over time; ii) satisfy accepted quality assurance goals by gathering evidence of the quality of data collection; iii) keep the OECD and the Consortium informed about the progress of data collection; and iv) identify and provide advice to countries needing assistance. The aim was to implement a programme that represents the best tradeoff of quality and cost within the constraints of the project.

The principal objectives of the QA and QC programme for survey operations/data collection were the following:

- Undertake activities that monitor the implementation of the PISA-D Strand C Technical Standards (TS) – included at Annex C of this Report - for survey operations during the Field Trial and Main Survey.
- Review the progress of data collection and identify potential problems and solutions on a timely basis during the Field Trial and Main Survey.
- Make recommendations to enhance the Main Survey based on the Field Trial experience.
- Identify sources of non-sampling related error to inform analysis.
- Make recommendations for future cycles of PISA-D Strand C.

The PISA-D Strand C QC process provided continuous support to countries in following the TS before, during and after data collection. Furthermore, it informed OECD and the Consortium of the status of data collection in each country on a regular basis throughout the process. The level of co-operation from countries was very good overall.

The process described in this chapter was followed for the collection of most of the information presented in Chapter 7.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL ACTIVITIES

Quality assurance (QA)

The QA process for survey operations consisted of the development of standards and guidelines, including the QC process, a QC and management manual, and the training of national teams on QC activities. Specifically, the following activities were carried out.

Development of standards and guidelines for survey operations

The first step in the implementation of the PISA-D Strand C quality assurance programme was the specification of standards and guidelines covering all aspects of the survey life cycle, from sample and instrumentation design to data processing and analysis. A significant portion of the TS (Chapters 8-11) deals specifically with survey operations concerns such as field staff recruitment, management and training, and field management practices. The PISA-D Strand C standards are based on generally agreed-upon policies or best practices to be adhered to in the conduct of the survey.

Development of survey operations QC and management manual

The purpose of this manual was to:

- Provide national teams with details on important survey operations standards with practical suggestions on how to implement them (e.g. field management reports, fieldwork quality control, tools to increase respondent cooperation).
- Provide national teams with details on the logistics of the PISA-D Strand C quality control programme (e.g. forms to be submitted, quality control call schedule).

International training on survey operations QC

The international training on survey operations QC took place after the Field Trial international interviewer training in November 2016 and covered the essential points in the QC manual.

Quality control (QC)

The QC process consisted of regular communication in the form of reports, conference calls and ad hoc e-mail exchanges with the national teams. This section provides a summary description of each activity.

Survey Planning Report (SPR) review

Each country was required to submit an SPR covering all aspects of data collection at least six months prior to the beginning of data collection. The Consortium reviewed each section of the report submitted by each country (Initial Planning for the Survey, Field Management, Training, Data Collection, Data Confidentiality and Ethics) and reported on any serious deviations from the TS.

Data collection QC conference calls

The Consortium conducted conference calls (see Chapter 5 in QC and Management Manual for more details) with each of the PISA-D Strand C countries on a regular basis throughout the critical Field Trial and Main Survey data collection periods. The goals of the calls were to: i) review the content of the data collection QC forms submitted by countries (see below); ii) give countries the opportunity to ask questions in real time; and iii) discuss any survey operations issues that may have arisen in each country.

Calls were held prior to the start of data collection, during data collection and one month after data collection ended. Calls were held twice monthly with each country during Field Trial data collection and reduced to once a month during the Main Survey. However, calls were held more often if needed.

Conference call participants varied somewhat from month to month, depending on study timeframe and issues at hand, but generally they included the country's NPM, key Leading Survey Institute (LSI) staff and key Westat survey operations staff.

Conference calls followed a specific agenda guided by the data collection QC form and were documented using QC meeting minutes reports which summarised the items discussed, the decisions made and the pending action items.

Data collection QC form

Countries were required to complete monthly QC monitoring forms. These forms were used to guide the conference call meetings and focused on the topics covered in Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the PISA-D Strand C TS. Topics included:

- field staffing and management
- plans for contacting households/respondents
- respondent outreach materials
- strategies for dealing with nonresponse
- response rates and production
- field QC measures
- plans to train staff on ethics and confidentiality.

Interviewer training QC form

To ascertain adherence to the interviewer training programme designed by the Consortium, countries were required to complete an interviewer training QC form at the end of every interviewer training session in each country. The form included questions about the:

- number of trainers and trainees
- experience profile of trainees
- training materials used
- topics covered at training.

Interviewer debriefing questionnaire and report

Countries were required to administer a debriefing questionnaire to interviewers following the conclusion of data collection in order to ensure that interviewer feedback was obtained. The form covered the following topics:

- training
- the administration of the Youth Interview

- the administration of the exercise
- the interview in general.

Each country was required to summarise interviewer feedback to each question on the questionnaire and submit the report to the Consortium.

Ongoing e-mail communication

Via e-mail, countries could ask for and receive responses from Westat to ad hoc questions arising throughout the planning and implementation phases of PISA-D Strand C data collection.

COUNTRY COMPLIANCE

As shown in Table 8.1, virtually all countries fulfilled the QC requirements for Main Survey data collection albeit with some delay. A notable exception was the Interviewer Debriefing Report that only one country submitted for the Main Survey (three had done so in the Field Trial).

Table 8.1 Compliance with the Main Survey QC programme (survey operations)

Required QC Activities	Percentage of Countries Complying(n=5)
Survey Planning Report	100
QC calls	--
- at least once prior to data collection	100
- at least every other month during data collection	100
- once after data collection	80
Data Collection Form	--
- at least once prior to data collection	100
- monthly during data collection	100
- once after data collection	80
Interviewer Training Form (1 form per training session)	100
Interviewer Debriefing Report	20

Next, we report in detail how countries fulfilled the QC requirements.

Survey Planning Report

All participating countries submitted an SPR, although none did so by the original 31 August 2016 deadline (see Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 **SPR submission dates**

Country	Submission Date
Guatemala	14 Oct 2016
Honduras	28 Jan 2017
Panama	17 Nov 2016
Paraguay	11 Jan 2017
Senegal	26 May 2017

Source: PISA-D Strand C SharePoint site timestamps.

Data Collection Form submission and conference calls prior to data collection

All countries submitted the required Data Collection Form and participated in a QC call or meeting at least once prior to the beginning of data collection (see Table 8.3 for details).

Table 8.3 **Actual schedule of Data Collection Form submission and associated QC monitoring calls prior to Main Survey data collection**

Country	Prior to Data Collection		Prior to Data Collection	
	Form	In-person Consultation	Form	Call
Guatemala	X	6 th NPM meeting	X	20 June 2018
Honduras	X	6 th NPM meeting	--	--
Panama	X	6 th NPM meeting	--	--
Paraguay	X	6 th NPM meeting	--	--
Senegal	X	6 th NPM meeting	X	8 Nov 2018

Source: SharePoint and e-mail timestamps, QC meeting minutes reports.

Interviewer training forms

All countries reported on their interviewer training sessions. The requirement was for countries to report on each training session held by submitting a separate report for each. Across all participating countries, 14 interviewer training sessions were held. Countries conducted between one and four training sessions each.

Data Collection Form submission and conference calls during data collection

All countries submitted one Data Collection Form for each month of fieldwork as required. All countries complied with the requirement to participate in a QC call every month (see Table 8.4 for details). However, due to the varying length of the data collection period, the number of calls held was not the same across countries.

Table 8.4 Actual schedule of Data Collection Form submission and associated QC monitoring calls during Main Survey

Country	Month 1		Month 2		Month 3		Month 4	
	Form	Call	Form	Call	Form	Call	Form	Call
Guatemala	X	26 Sept 2018	X	17 Oct 2018	X	19 Nov 2018	--	--
Honduras	X	9 Oct 2018	X	15 Nov 2018	--	--	--	--
Panama	X	24 Oct 2018	X	29 Nov 2018	X	21 Dec 2018	X	22 Jan 2019
Paraguay	X	10 Oct 2018	--	12 Nov 2018	--	--	--	--
Senegal	X	21 Dec 2018	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: SharePoint and e-mail timestamps and QC meeting minutes reports.

Data Collection Form submission and conference calls after data collection

All countries either submitted a Data Collection Form after completion of data collection or participated in a call or both (see Table 8.5 for details).

Table 8.5 Actual schedule of Data Collection Form submission and associated QC monitoring calls

Country	After Data Collection	
	Form	Call
Guatemala	X	23 Jan 2019
Honduras	--	11 Feb 2019
Panama	X	--
Paraguay	--	25 Jan 2019
Senegal	X	22 Jan 2019

Source: SharePoint and e-mail timestamps, QC meeting minutes reports.

Interviewer Debriefing Report

Countries were required to debrief interviewers on their Main Survey experience and provide a report to the Consortium. Only Paraguay submitted the debriefing report for both the Field Trial (FT) and Main Survey (MS) (see Table 8.6). Honduras and Senegal submitted reports for the Field Trial only. Guatemala and Panama did not submit this report.

Table 8.6 Main Survey interviewer debriefing report submission dates

Country	Date
Guatemala	--
Honduras	22 Jan 2018
Panama	--
Paraguay	13 Dec 2017 (FT) 28 March 2019 (MS)
Senegal	28 Feb 2018

Source: SharePoint and e-mail timestamps.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the PISA-D Strand C quality control programme for survey operations met the intended goals. During the Main Survey data collection:

- country compliance was satisfactory
- the OECD and the Consortium were kept informed about the progress of data collection
- countries were supported by having their questions answered, and any areas of concern were pointed out promptly throughout the critical months before and during data collection
- the programme experience will serve countries and the OECD as they plan for future cycles of PISA-D Strand C.