

ANNEX F : Survey Validation

Third Party Independent Monitoring of MICS TECHNICAL REPORT

a) Introduction

The Government of Balochistan in collaboration with UNICEF carried out Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2003-04. Main objective was to collect information for key social and economic indicators in the province with the view to establish credible baseline for districts support at the outset of devolution plan. The survey was coordinated and supervised by Planning and development Department, Government of Balochistan, MICS Secretariat working under the Chief Economist, P&DD, Federal Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF

Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC) was selected as a third party monitoring agency to support and report on the quality during all phases of the survey. The BLCC was to play a supportive role with the purpose of extending timely feedback to allow for fine tuning and corrective action.

b) Scope of Work for Monitoring of MICS

The scope of work for the monitoring was as under:

- a. Review of MICS technical and preliminary documentation to ascertain current position of the MICS survey planning.
- b. Review and provide feedback on the survey design including definition of indicators, sampling plans, survey instruments, field strategy and training material, plan and methodology.
- c. Assess the quality of the listing and survey fieldwork including spot checks of the field operations, quality of interviews/measurements and questionnaire editing, etc.
- d. Assess the handling, control, entry and management process of the data and make recommendations for improvements. Also verify data sets after post entry cleaning and validation, as well as physically monitoring the data handling process.
- e. Provide comments on draft survey report prepared by P&DD, govt. of Balochistan with a view to improve its quality.

3. Strategy for the Monitoring

Keeping in view the nature of its functions the monitoring being provided by BLCC was named as "Supportive Monitoring". It was not in fact conventional type of monitoring which is synonymous to "checking". Instead, the task before BLCC was to keep continuous watch on all the actions and processes of MICS, evaluate them and suggest timely corrective actions so that MICS methodology could be fine tuned for quality data collection.

Major components of the supportive monitoring strategy were to:

- a) Review, supervise, evaluate and provide technical support at the stages of planning, designing, sampling, devising survey instruments and training of staff using participatory approach;
- b) Monitor, provide technical support and assess the quality of field data collection through field visits and back checking of field data;
- c) Monitor and guide M/s Eycon at the stages of questionnaire editing, data entry, cleaning and analysis to minimize data errors;
- d) Review and comment on the quality of draft MICS report.

4. Third Party Assessment of MICS

While remaining within the limits of their scope of work the monitors tried their best to provide unbiased opinions and evaluations at various stages of MICS implementation. The monitors' feedback was always timely which was openly discussed and adopted. Throughout the process there was close harmony between the monitors and supervisors. Our input not only contributed towards improvement in the survey but also added confidence in the MICS data. The monitoring achievements are briefly discussed in this section.

4.1. MICS Documentation Review & Feedback on Survey Design

Soon after having agreement with the UNICEF the monitors reviewed MICS documentation including MICS manual, survey tools, list of indicators, list of sample clusters, all orders issued by P&D Dept., Government of Balochistan, MICS Secretariat and other related agencies. Moreover, meetings were held with the concerned UNICEF staff at Quetta office, core team of MICS and Chief Economist in the P&D Department.

In the light of documentation review and meetings with the concerned staff the monitors assisted the MICS Secretariat in improving on-going field operations and in planning and designing of future MICS events. Major inputs at this stage were as follows:

- a) The questionnaire prepared by BOS was thoroughly reviewed by the monitors and improvements were suggested.
- b) The monitors compared the list of indicators to be derived from the data being collected by using the survey tool. It was found that there were several indicators for which survey tool did not have adequate data. The Core Team accordingly made required adjustments in the questionnaire as well as in the indicators.
- c) While the MICS Secretariat was planning for field operations, the monitors coordinated with the core team and extended all possible assistance to make the field plans perfect and functional.

4.2. Supportive Monitoring of Field Operations

BLCC deputed 6 teams, (One male and one female each) for supportive monitoring and spot-checking of the field operations. The monitors visited all the BOS teams working in the field for at least once and performed following tasks:

- a) Spot checking of the field operations;
- b) How the enumerators introduce themselves to the sample Households;

- a) What was the surroundings when the interviews were held;
- b) Whether sensitive questions were put in privacy;
- c) Whether the enumerators completed all the relevant modules;
- d) Time spent in one interview;
- e) Whether sample households were selected as per listings;
- f) A sample of filled-in-questionnaires was checked at regional office and mistakes were pointed out/discussed with the teams.

Following was the major input of the field monitors:

- a) Field teams had confusions on some of the issues, which the monitors discussed with them and clarified;
- b) The monitors found minor inconsistencies in the filled-in-questionnaires, which were pointed out to the field teams;
- c) In some of the places teams were found not using salt testing kits. It was in case of negative answer from the household regarding the use of iodized salt. The monitors, however, advised the teams that the salt must be tested using the kit even if there is negative answer;
- d) The field teams generally expressed enthusiasm for the survey. However, in some of the cases this enthusiasm was turning into haste, which was pointed out, and the need for maintaining the balance was emphasized.

4.3. Short Surprise Visits to the Field

After supportive monitoring of MICS field teams, the BLCC monitors paid an additional (surprise) visit to the field. The purpose was to provide technical support to the MICS field teams and to show extended presence in the field so that MICS teams remain alert and active.

4.4. Monitoring Data Entry and Cleaning Process

The BLCC monitored data editing, entry and cleaning process. The input was provided by the monitors at the stages of:

- a) Questionnaire editing by M/S Eycon;
- b) Development of the users friendly and intelligent data entry software;
- c) Data management during entry and data cleaning;
- d) Manual spot checking of a small sample of entered data;
- e) Developing logical and range checks (more than 200 for MICS) for data cleaning;
- f) Assessing quality of data set to ensure that it is reasonably clean and reliable for analysis to estimate the indicators.

4.5. Back Checking of Questionnaires

The monitors were supposed to back-check data by taking 10% of the MICS sample and revisiting the selected respondents. This stage was implemented through following steps:

- a) Development of a checklist comprising variables, values of which do not significantly change due to change of respondents and lapse of time;

- b) Taking 10% of the MICS sample randomly as a sub-sample for back-checking;
- c) Deployment of 6 field teams for the task. Each team comprising one female and one male;
- d) Transferring data from the MICS questionnaires on the checklists;
- e) Re-interviewing the respondents in the sub-sample;
- f) Comparison of recorded data with the survey information to see gap between the two data sets. The evaluation criterion was that lesser the gap between the two data sets more will the MICS data be reliable.

The collected data was analyzed on computer and found that data in overwhelming majority of the sample cases was comparable. As a result, MICS data was evaluated as reasonably reliable and accurate.

4.6. Other Supportive Actions

The monitors participated in a number of meetings and provided technical support for data analysis methodology. Moreover, MICS draft report was reviewed and suggestions made to improve the quality of presentations and to remove the inconsistencies/mistakes in the drafts.

5. Conclusion

The MICS research team and monitors worked in complete harmony and at no stage any misunderstanding took place. The monitors' role was supportive from the day one due to which the research team and field staff did not develop negative suspicions against the monitors. Due to better understanding between the teams the quality of data improved, and the project fully reaped the benefits of third party independent supportive monitoring.

The acceptable level of error in the data (field plus entry errors) was set at one percent. After applying more than 200 logical and range tests and having recourse to original questionnaires it was established that total level of error in the data was 1.5% consisting of 1.1% response error, 0.1% editing and 0.4% data entry errors. Out of this error level 0.5% editing and entry errors were corrected during data cleaning. Keeping this in view the monitors are satisfied that the MICS data is reasonably clean, accurate and reliable for estimation of selected socio-economic indicators for this study.