BỘ KẾ HOẠCH VÀ ĐẦU TƯ

unicef

# CITIZEN REPORT CARD MANUAL

## A SOCIAL AUDIT TOOL TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF VIET NAM'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

# CONTENTS

# CITIZEN REPORT CARD

Detailed methodo- logical description, including report guidelines and feedback mechanisms

# INTRODUCTION TO CITIZEN REPORT CARDS

The citizen report card (CRC) is one of four social audit tools piloted in Viet Nam as part of an initiative by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). It is designed to demonstrate the potential of the social audit approach in complementing existing mechanisms to plan, implement and monitor Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), with a focus on the SEDP's social dimensions.[1]

**Note of caution**

Please note that this manual was developed as a supplement to PowerPoint presentations on CRC for training delivered to government officials and research institutes in the autumn of 2011. It is not meant to be a comprehensive training guide for trainers; rather, it provides a detailed overview on how to implement CRC.

The purpose of the initiative was to build capacity to use the social audit approach in monitoring progress of social aspects of Viet Nam's SEDP in order to enhance the social performance of the plan, particularly with regard to reducing social and economic disparities and the continued improvement of living standards for Viet Nam's general population, especially vulnerable groups.

However, before providing details on how to implement a Citizen Report Card , here is an overview of the Social Audit Approach and its relevance to Viet Nam.

## The social audit approach proposed for Viet Nam

The social audit approach functions as a management and accountability mechanism that offers a range of methodologies, tools and techniques that are used to assess, understand, report on and improve the social performance of an organisation, a plan or a policy. Key features which systematically characterise the practice of social audits include a focus on stakeholder participation and accountability. The participation of rights holders ('people') and duty bearers ('government' or 'service providers') is critical for the success of a social audit. It facilitates transparency (availability and accessibility of information), knowledge generation (by bringing on board people's opinions, perceptions and experiences) and accountability (for the delivery of quality public services and policies). Strengthened transparency, participation in the decision-making process and duty bearer accountability are major conditions for the improved performance of public policy and are thus not only goods in themselves but a means to an end in improved performance. Social audits are therefore assessments not only of performance, but also of the integrity of the process that leads to the performance, and the impact of such performance.

As a pragmatic management tool in line with principles of good governance, social audits aim not only at revealing the normative 'good' but also at providing essential information and feedback for improved management decision making, allocations and service delivery overall. Social performance can be measured and improved in a number of ways:

- Through analysis of the degree of focus on social issues in plans and policies;

1 As part of the project, in Phase 1 four social audit tools were piloted in Viet Nam: a PETS piloted in Tra Vinh, using Programme 167 on housing subsidies as a case, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and Dien Bien provinces; Citizen Report Cards (CRCs) piloted in HCMC and Dien Bien provinces; and community score cards (CSC) and gender audits piloted in HCMC and Quang Nam provinces. In Phase 2, PETS were piloted in HCMC and Dien Bien.

- Through analysis of the degree to which this translates into action (including the scope and quality of indicators that measure progress in stated priorities);
- Through assessment of the social impact of plans and policies; and
- Through generation of information through participatory methods that can complement existing information.

The social audit approach is particularly relevant in the current policy environment in Viet Nam, where ongoing 'Doi Moi' reforms aimed at creating a socialist-oriented market economy bring both opportunity and challenges for social policy. Policy discussion highlights a need to improve accountability and transparency and the government recognises the importance of enhanced citizen participation in policymaking and implementation. Recent decisions on planning reform in Viet Nam's SEDP for 2011–2015 reflect these priorities.

Among the key findings and lessons learned from Phase 1 of this initiative, it has been observed in a workshop that all of the piloted tools showed substantial potential as an additional means of assessing the social performance of SEDP based on the views of those to whom the programmes are directed as well as the government officials responsible for planning and assessing programme effectiveness.

The positive nature of the experience was confirmed by participants at a recent workshop on opportunities and challenges in the reform of SEDP's planning, monitoring and evaluation. They concluded that social audits are a powerful tool to collect people's feedback and assess service providers' performance, which can be an effective method for measuring the impacts of the SEDP in a more participatory and comprehensive manner. Introducing the social audit approach has been seen as a process to empower the poor and marginalised people in particular (MPI and UNICEF, 2011).

## What is a citizen report card?

The CRC tool involves collecting and using feedback on public services to bring about improvements in service delivery.[2] This manual is divided into eight modules. Each discusses a particular stage in the CRC tool and emphasises both theoretical and practical aspects.

The CRC is a simple but powerful tool to provide public agencies with systematic feedback from users of public services. It can provide citizens and governments with qualitative and quantitative information on current standards and gaps in service delivery at national, regional or local level or be used to compare regions and districts, for example urban versus rural, etc. It can also provide information on gaps in services in terms of the general population or various groups of citizens, for example migrant workers, ethnic minorities, women or children, and opportunities to seek comparisons within these groups, for example poor versus non-poor, etc. By collecting feedback on the quality and adequacy of public services from actual users, CRCs provide good evidence and instigate a proactive agenda for communities, civil society organisations (CSOs) or local governments to engage in dialogue with service providers to improve the delivery

2 This manual has been adapted from a CRC Learning Toolkit developed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore (www.citizenreportcard.com).

of public services. It also measures levels of public awareness on citizens' rights and responsibilities. The results can be used by governments to take into account social, political and 'soft-side' considerations when planning and allocating budgets, thus making the process more transparent and accountable. They can also be used by citizens to air their views, raise awareness of issues regarding service provision and hold governments to account.

## CRCs can be used to address:

- Availability of services;
- Access to services;
- Usage of services;
- Quality and reliability of services;
- Problems encountered by users of services;
- Responsiveness of service providers in addressing these problems;
- Transparency in service provisions, such as disclosure of quality standards and norms;
- Costs incurred in using a service, including hidden costs such as bribes; and
- Suggestions for improvements.

CRCs can also provide an overall satisfaction score based on the totality of critical service-related parameters as well as reasons for (lack of) satisfaction.

CRCs can look at a variety of services and provide a comparative picture of their quality. They can also focus on a specific service and compare this across locations. CRCs can also enable a comparison of perceptions of different demographic groups to identify segments where service provision is significantly weak; through disaggregating the data (e.g. by gender, age, ethnicity, income level etc.), the findings can demonstrate if services favour some groups and leave others out.

The success of CRCs depends in large part on the ability to negotiate change, the degree of participation and the presence (or absence) of a political champion. It also depends on strong media support to disseminate findings (and to bring pressure to bear on service providers). Much effort and time is required to stimulate action both from public officials and from citizens.

The amount of time it takes to conduct a CRC depends on its size and scale. The larger the population sample and the more questions you ask, the longer it will take both to collect and to analyse the data. In addition, the amount of time it takes for information to be disseminated and acted on depends in large part on the success of advocacy strategies employed and the willingness and/or ability of government agencies to respond.

It is necessary to have clear and detailed terms of reference, fieldwork plans and a full description of the research protocol, including all tools and required documentation. It is also imperative to document the process both for replication purposes and to ensure it is implemented rigorously.

**Key steps:**

CRCs include four key steps:

1 Preparatory work (Modules 2, 3, 4 and 5);

2. Data collection (Module 6);

3. Data entry and analysis (Module 7); and

4. Presentation and dissemination of findings (Module 8).

## Feasibility of CRCs: are the conditions conducive to CRCs?

Conducting a good quality survey is not the only part of making CRCs successful. Various factors will determine whether the results are accurate and can be used to influence change. As part of a broader CRC process these need to be taken into account; work also needs to focus on these other elements. Factors to consider include:

- **The political context:** The responsiveness of government agencies, particularly their leadership, is very important. Where senior officials are concerned with the performance of their agencies and with serving ordinary citizens – their customers – as best as is feasible, this is likely to provide a much more fertile ground for action on the basis of CRC findings. However, to the extent that the civil service culture is not customer oriented and is not concerned with achieving high levels of performance, there will be important constraints on what can be achieved, even when the most senior officials are committed to reform. Before conducting a CRC, it needs to be clear that there is political will to listen and respond to its results, at all levels – local, provincial, national, etc. If this is not the case, action needs to be taken to enhance political will.

- **Decentralisation:** It is quite possible that the changes required in services will be different in different geographical areas and/or action for improvement is required at different levels of government. It is important that the authority to make these changes exists at the appropriate level (local, provincial and national). Some decisions may need to be made locally. The extent to which different levels of government communicate and can hold each other to account (e.g. local government holding central government to account for resource allocations; central government holding local government to account for responding to CRC findings) is also key.

- **Citizens' freedom to voice:** The CRC tool is most effective where individuals can comment freely on the government without fear of punishment. Feedback is likely to reflect the true experience of the respondent only if there is no fear of repercussions for citizens participating in the CRC.

- **Presence and activism of CSOs:** CSOs can play a critical role in disseminating findings and stimulating public debate at local level as well as conducting advocacy work to influence service providers. They can also conduct CRCs either independently or on behalf of others (e.g. local authorities).

- **Professional non-governmental organisation (NGO) activity:** Similarly to CSOs, NGOs can play a critical role in disseminating findings (e.g. they may have good access to media) and stimulating public debate at local, provincial and national level. They may have access to government decision makers and can be in a good position to conduct advocacy for policy and practice change. They can also conduct CRCs either independently or on behalf of others (e.g. national government). NGOs and CSOs can work together to disseminate findings and to build a coherent body of advocacy work based on the voices of service users.

- **Research institutes:** In the absence of strong national CSOs and NGOs, research institutes can play a role in disseminating findings. Otherwise, this can be undertaken by the government, as has been the case of Viet Nam, in the interests of transparency.

- **Quality of media:** The media often plays a crucial role in disseminating results and stimulating public debate.

## Identifying a credible organisation to conduct the study

It is essential that a credible organisation (e.g. a research institute or an NGO) is identified to undertake the exercise. The respectability of the organisation that conducts the study can directly affect the perceived credibility of the findings. The organisation needs to be trusted both by the public and by government. It should be non-partisan and ideally independent of government and have a good track record of producing quality and credible work.

# DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE CRC

This module discusses how to define the scope of the CRC. It introduces the process of drafting a statement of purpose and conducting focus group discussions (FGDs) and how to use these to finalise the scope of the CRC.

## Drafting a statement of purpose

If the conditions for conducting a CRC are favourable, the first thing to identify is its scope. It is important this step is clear and carried out well, otherwise there is a risk of collecting information about things that are not relevant or are of no interest to those you are trying to influence through the CRC (i.e. the public and government). Defining the scope of the CRC requires identification of the services and aspects of service delivery which will be examined.

A statement of purpose describes the reason and scope of a CRC.[3] The statement of purpose should start out by answering the following types of questions:

- What service(s) or sectors do you wish to cover?
- Do you want to focus on a single service provider or multiple services?
- Is there a government policy or programme you wish to assess?
- Which population can give you the required information?
- How will the information be used? What is the purpose of the study? Will it reshape current services or programmes; will it be used to consider developing new services or programmes?
- Who will see the results of the study?

The statement of purpose should also list the more specific objectives of the CRC. These describe the specific aspects of service delivery or of a policy to be examined. Specific objectives answer the following types of questions:

- What type of information do we need to gather?
- What aspects of service delivery (availability, access, quality of service, incidence and resolution of problems, interaction with staff, corruption) are important?

The lead institution should draft a preliminary statement of purpose based on the above questions. As part of this process, it should identify the population of interest. Answer the following questions to help to clarify the population and the sub-populations of the CRC.

- What is your population/community of interest?
- Will the CRC survey be carried out in your own city, town or rural community?
- Do you also want to analyse service delivery by zone, ward or some other regional or administrative division?

3 The statement of purpose directly shapes the type of questions that are asked in the questionnaire as well as the analysis and interpretation of collected feedback.

- Are there subgroups in the population that are of particular interest to your study (poor households, children, women, the elderly, etc.)?

The answers to these questions will provide you with a statement of purpose (see the box below for an example).

**Example: A statement of purpose**

**Measuring the quality of educational services in Quang Nam province**

This CRC will evaluate the quality of educational services provided by schools in Quang Nam province. In particular, the following aspects will be covered:

- Availability of, accessibility to and usage of primary schools for the poor and non-poor in Quang Nam; and
- Quality of infrastructure and teaching, behaviour of school staff, costs, transparency provisions and overall satisfaction for both the poor and the non-poor in Quang Nam.

The scope and population of the CRC are identified as:

- Service of interest: school education (public primary schools in Quang Nam); and
- Population: primary school-going children and their parents in Quang Nam (poor and non-poor).

The specific objectives clarify the important aspects of service delivery and identify key sub-groups in the population:

- Service aspects: availability, accessibility, usage, service quality, staff behaviour, costs, disclosure of standards and norms and overall satisfaction; and
- Sub-groups of interest: poor and non-poor; children and parents.

The second essential step is to map how services are delivered to the population of interest. Mapping of service delivery for the CRC population provides useful information to finalise the statement of purpose as well as contributing to later stages of the CRC – from questionnaire design to dissemination and advocacy efforts.

## Example:

- Is the central, regional or local government the main service provider?
- Are services provided by a combination of providers from various levels of the government?
- Has some portion of service delivery been contracted out to a private company?

Once you have a preliminary draft statement of purpose, this needs to be refined to reflect the interests of:

- Service users: It is important that the CRC examines issues that are of importance to the target population; they are more likely to use the results if this is the case.

- Government: Governments will have their own set of priorities. These will usually be articulated in national (economic and social) development plans, in poverty reduction strategy papers, in policies, etc. The experience with the CRC pilot conducted by the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) in 2010 showed that it was difficult for the relevant government authorities to provide the required documentation owing to inadequate document tracking systems. Hence, it is important to be clear on the documents required for the CRC so as not to burden the department participating and to allow sufficient time for government authorities to locate relevant documents.

- Service providers: Providers of services can indicate not only what they have been mandated to provide, but also areas where feedback from clients can improve their services.

It is important to communicate the objectives of the social audit at the institutional level and address needs for human, financial and material resources to implement the social audit process. It is also important to be very clear on the information required from government authorities, such as documents, official letters to be sent, staff and officials to be contacted and made available and venues to hold meetings, etc. It is also important always to manage expectations at the outset of the research: involve different authorities from the beginning and provide them with detailed feedback on recommendations that go beyond the capacity of service providers to resolve on their own.

*QUY NHON, Viet Nam (9 June 2010) Vietnamese citizens receive dental care at the Hai Cang Medical Clinic during a Pacific Partnership 2010 medical community service project. (US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matthew Jackson.) Image courtesy of Flickr, by Official U.S. Navy Imagery*

## Gathering local feedback: FGDs

The CRC approach is based on the premise that feedback on service quality collected from communities with the help of a sample survey provides a reliable basis for communities and local governments to engage in dialogue and partnership action to improve the delivery of public services. A key step in this process entails holding FGDs with different groups of people to gather key issues and themes for designing the larger survey instrument. FGDs are used to provide informed feedback on research questions.

### Steps involved in the FGD process are as follows:

- Preparing for the FGD;
- Conducting the FGD; and
- Combining and assessing the feedback.

### Preparing for the FGD:

The preparatory phase includes identifying what questions to ask, whom to ask these questions, where to conduct the FGDs and who should facilitate the discussions.

### What questions to ask?

The CRC is expected to give credible and objective feedback on the experiences people have when accessing and using public services.

**Remember!**

The objective of the FGD is to find out key issues that affect users of services and not to find solutions.

FGD questions should probe the following general CRC indicators (this is an indicative set for issues in primary education):

**FGD indicators and questions for a CRC on education services**

| CRC indicator | Examples of questions |
|---|---|
| Availability of, access to and usage of primary schools | • Is there a public primary school in the locality? Is it functional throughout the year?<br>• Is access an issue for children coming from certain habitations?<br>• Is access an issue during certain times of the year?<br>• Do children attend classes regularly?<br>• What are the reasons children drop out?<br>• Do all children go to this school or a school further away? If yes, why do parents choose to send their children to a school further away? |
| Quality and reliability of service | • Does the school have the following infrastructure: safe compound walls, drinking water, separate toilets for girls and boys?<br>• How regular are the teachers in attending school?<br>• Do children get textbooks on time? |
| Grievance redress | • When you face problems in water supply to whom do you complain?<br>• What type of response do you get?<br>• Were there any instances during the past 12 months when parents joined together to make a collective complaint on any issue? |
| Costs | • On average, how much do you spend every month on the education of your children? (Take a few random examples; if there are big variations find out why these variations exist.)<br>• During the past six months, were there any instances when you had to pay any contributions to the school? If yes, for what purpose did you make the payment?<br>• Were these contributions compulsory or voluntary?<br>• Were receipts provided for the payments? |
| Transparency of information provided by service provider | • Do you know the timetable for class sessions, exam dates and school closure dates in advance?<br>• Do you get called for parent–teacher meetings? |
| Priorities | • Now that we have talked about a lot of issues concerning education, can you tell us which among the following are of most importance to you?<br>• Better infrastructure;<br>• More interaction with teachers; or<br>• Advance information regarding school sessions, examination dates, etc. |
| Suggestions for improvement | |

## Whom to ask?

Separate FGDs should be carried out if subgroups in the CRC population have vastly different experiences of service delivery: for example, women, children and men could be different demographic groups; poor and non-poor could be different economic groups; and rural and urban could be different spatial groups. The size of the group should ideally be around 8–12. It is highly advisable to seek the views of both women and men.

### 1. The interests of service users

Begin by explaining to participants what a CRC is and what purpose it serves; an example may help here. Explain you would like their support in identifying which services and which aspects of services they think should be included in the CRC. Make it clear this information is entirely confidential and anonymous; there will be no repercussions for participating and honesty would be valued.

*Image courtesy of Flickr, by WhyOhGee.*

The following five questions can be easily modified to suit individual situations:

1. What services are particularly important to you?

2. For the purpose of a CRC, how would you rank them in terms of importance? (It is useful to rank the services in order to focus the remaining questions on the most important: it is very difficult to discuss numerous services in a FGD.)

For each top-ranked service:

3. What are the problem areas related to this service?

4. Are there any recent areas of improvement?

5. What aspects of service delivery are important to you and why are they important?

**2. The interests of service providers**

Once key services have been identified, it is important to understand from the service provider's point of view which issues are of interest to them and which issues they feel could realistically be acted on. Different levels of management and different types of staff should participate in FGDs. For example, for the health service, you might need to ask (local, provincial and/or national) health authorities, management staff, doctors of different disciplines, nurses, cleaners, etc.

**Important:**

In terms of stakeholder involvement, it is important to ensure adequate representation of both men and women so the views of both sexes are reflected in discussions and proposed solutions.

Begin by explaining to participants what a CRC is and what purpose it serves; an example may help here. Explain you would like their support in identifying which aspects of services they think should be included in the CRC. Make it clear this information is entirely confidential and anonymous and the purpose of the FGD is not to lay blame; there will be no repercussions for participating and honesty would be valued. The purpose is to think about areas that could be improved.

The questions below can be easily modified to suit individual situations.

1. What aspects of this service work well? (It can help to start with a positive question to encourage people to speak out.)
2. What are the problem areas related to this service?
3. Are there any recent areas of improvement?
4. What aspects of service delivery do you think still need further improvement?
5. What aspects of service delivery do you think could be realistically improved?

**3. Government priorities**

Look at relevant government documents related to the services identified by service users. What government commitments are there related to these services? What are the norms for service delivery (standard indicators, standard equipment, levels of training required of staff, etc)? Are there any particular areas the government is trying to improve (e.g. standards of care in maternity wards, time taken to see a doctor, cleanliness of hospitals, etc)? These issues could be part of the CRC.

It might be the case that there are services of priority in government documents that citizens do not prioritise. If this is the case, you may wish to include some of these services in the CRC; the government may be more likely to respond to the findings of the CRC if it includes information about services which are on their agenda.

## Who should facilitate?

An individual with good facilitation skills must be identified to guide the discussions. A facilitator should be able to:

- Understand the overall CRC tool and the general purpose of this CRC;
- Relate to and connect with participants; and
- Facilitate a discussion that does not lead to conflicts or get stuck on irrelevant topics.

## Where to conduct the FGD?

FGDs are best conducted within the geographical context in which the community is located.

***Conducting FGDs:***

Some key points to observe are as follows:

- Limit the number of interviewers to about three per group; one person to be the lead facilitator, one person to pose additional questions or pick up any interesting links and a third to act as a scribe and timekeeper. Ideally, FGDs should not be more than two hours;
- Phrase questions and discussions in a language the community is comfortable with;
- State the purpose of the FGD right at the beginning; unrealistic expectations should not be set; and
- If you are using a tape recorder or camera to record proceedings, ask the group's permission beforehand.

***Combining and assessing the feedback:***

## Analysing focus group data

The information collected from a FGD is raw data. The next task is to analyse the content of the discussion. The first step is to transcribe the entire interview (if the proceedings are recorded) or review the key issues arising. This will provide a complete record of the discussion and facilitate analysis of the data. The next step is to analyse the content of the discussion. The aim of this analysis is to look for trends and patterns that reappear either within a single FGD or among various FGDs. The key issues can then be presented in the form of a simple matrix to aid in questionnaire design.

## Finalising scope and objectives

To finalise the statement of purpose, the feedback gathered during FGDs should be synthesised with the interests of the lead institution and government priorities. The final statement of purpose should include the most important feedback from FGD participants. The services included in the CRC should rank high on the participants' list of important services; aspects of service delivery that participants identified should be included.

At this point, you should know which key services and aspects of these will be examined, and which population group(s) will be part of the CRC.

# PREPARING FOR A CRC PROJECT

In undertaking a CRC project, several management decisions require early attention. Sufficient resources, both human and financial, must be brought together. A team with a range of technical and advocacy skills is very important in carrying out the CRC; this may require hiring staff or partnering with new organisations. Depending on the financial resources available, it may be necessary to redirect existing resources or raise additional funds. A realistic timeframe to complete the project should be agreed on.

## Staffing requirements

A range of skills and competencies are required to carry out a CRC, including:

- Knowledge of local public service delivery processes;
- Experience in social science survey methodologies;
- Skills in the management of fieldwork and data;
- Ability to disseminate findings both orally and in written format; and
- Capability to work with a broad stakeholder community (CSOs, media and service providers).

An initial assessment of the available resources will help in identifying knowledge and expertise areas where additional resources should be targeted. Key people involved in carrying out the CRC include the following:

### Technical team within the lead institution:

Within the lead institution, a core technical team is required to manage the design of the survey instrument, the fieldwork, the data entry and analysis and the completion of the written CRC. Someone within the lead institution should be responsible for heading the CRC project. He/she should be familiar with local service delivery, experienced in social science survey methodologies (comfortable overseeing the survey design, sampling, fieldwork, data management and the written report) and able to coordinate and manage relationships among key stakeholders. A minimum of one assistant (two for the busiest periods of work) will prove useful in planning and running FGDs, collecting background information during survey design, supporting data collection and analysis and preparing drafts of the presentations and written reports.

### Other members within the lead institution:

Along with the core technical team, other members of the lead institution will need to assist in administrative tasks: managing budgets; quality management during survey-related work; building networks and creating buy-in among CRC stakeholders, CSOs, government, service providers and other organisations interested in public service provision; preparing targeted dissemination materials; and organising follow-up advocacy and reform activities.

## Partners for the survey:

A large number of people are required to carry out the survey. There are at least three ways to gather together the additional staffing requirement. Depending on the level of financial resources and technical skills available, the lead institution can decide on the appropriate method. Three possibilities are discussed below:

1. Lead institution staff: If there are enough staff in the lead institution's statistics office to conduct the survey, use these specialised internal human resources.

2. Volunteers: Form a group of volunteer investigators who are managed by staff from the lead institution. Although these individuals would require additional training on conducting interviews and probing respondents, the expenses incurred would be small.

3. Professional survey agency: Outsource the fieldwork and data entry to a professional survey agency.

In all of these options, the project leader will remain a central part of the process. He/ she will closely check every step of the field survey to ensure the accuracy and relevance of results.

## Independent professional survey agency:

If the decision is made to hire an independent professional survey agency, care should be taken to select a well-qualified institution. It should have experience in conducting social science surveys, a local presence and in-built quality control measures.

Qualities to look for when hiring a professional survey agency include the following:

- Does the agency have experience conducting social science surveys (as opposed to market surveys)?
- Do the leadership team, researchers and field coordinator have sound knowledge of sampling design?
- Are there organised field processes in place to ensure the quality of data is being checked?
- Does the agency select from a group of skilled investigators who have good probing skills and will be able to connect with the local population?
- Does the agency have a local presence? Are the field investigators local residents?
- Is the agency politically neutral?

## Planning budgets

Costing in the CRC methodology includes both overhead and additional expenses. Key items to cost in the budget include:

1. Survey (field work) related costs . This cost depends on the location of the CRC; local survey agencies may be able to indicate the cost per interview.
2. Salaries (lead institution staff, technical consultants).
3. Travel for the team and enumerators.
4. Copying and printing (material for dissemination and advocacy work).
5. Computing infrastructure and software (depends on how much of the data entry and analysis occurs within the lead institution).
6. Unexpected costs (i.e. the need to increase number of investigators or expand the number of households surveyed; unexpected delays; increased monitoring).
7. Costs associated with the dissemination of results.

## Schedule

The entire CRC process from the initial FDG to the post survey follow-up activities takes six months to one year. To plan for a CRC schedule, consider your target date for the dissemination of findings then work backwards from this date to develop a time plan for each stage of the process. When preparing the CRC schedule, give some thought to possible external timing delays or biases (e.g. elections, extreme weather) and internal timing considerations (e.g. staff leave, funding cycles).

What follows is a general time guideline for a typical CRC; this may be modified, keeping in mind the scope and local schedules.

| 2- 3 Months | 1- 2 Months | 1- 3 Months | 2- 4 Months |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fre-Surey Groundwork** | **Conducting the Survey** | **Post - Survey Analysis & Report Writing** | **Dissemination & Advocacy** |

6 – 12 Months

To assist in planning, a sample CRC operational plan is available to help identify timeframes and staffing requirements for each step in the process.

| Tasks | Timeline (days, weeks, months) | Person responsible |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Defining the scope of the CRC | | |
| 2. FGDs | | |
| 3. Meetings with service providers | | |
| 4. Drafting the questionnaire | | |
| 5. Pre-testing the questionnaire | | |
| 6. Finalising the questionnaire | | |
| 7. Developing the sample design | | |
| 8. Identifying survey agency and training of survey data collectors | | |
| 9. Conduct of survey | | |
| 10. Coding and data entry | | |
| 11. Generation of basic tables | | |
| 12. Data analysis | | |
| 13. Report writing | | |
| 14. Dissemination of findings | | |
| 15. Advocacy and reforms | | |

# DESIGNING THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT (QUESTION-NAIRE)

This module discusses the key components and design of the survey instrument. Designing the survey instrument is carried out in multiple stages. The overall test is to develop a survey instrument that obtains correct feedback on the areas given in the statement of purpose. The people drafting the survey instrument should understand local service delivery issues and the technical components of a schedule and/or questionnaire.

## Preparatory work: review the statement of purpose

The process of writing a survey questionnaire involves translating the statement of purpose into questions. Before designing the survey instrument, you should think about and research the subject of questions.[4]

Some suggestions to start the process include the following:

- Study the statement of purpose for the CRC (identified in Module 2);
- Check whether the areas that need feedback have been listed. Common areas of feedback include access, usage, problem incidence, problem resolution, staff behaviour, service quality, corruption and overall satisfaction;
- Write in order of importance for the CRC those items that require feedback; if questionnaire length is an issue, those items lower down the list can be omitted. Use feedback from the FGDs to help in this process;
- Think about the type of information you want to elicit when designing questions:
    - Qualitative information (e.g. whether drinking water tastes good/ bad); and/or
    - Quantitative information (e.g. distance travelled to water source);
- Check the question(s) you have written: will you be able to collect feedback from this question and present interesting results?

## Meet with service providers

Meetings with service providers will help you to collect more details on service provision.

It is also advisable to involve service providers in the CRC process right from the start: this will increase their buy-in. You should plan meetings with them early in the process, as in the FGDs above. During each meeting, inform agencies on the CRC process and review their first reactions.  Meet with the heads of agencies; if they are not available, public relations officers are a good option.

4 In many instances, to write precise questions and/or answer options, additional information is required. Spending time researching the details of service provision during the early stages of the questionnaire's design is likely to improve the quality of the survey instrument. FGD information can also provide useful details and raise overlooked issues – though not all of this information will convert into questions.

**The survey instrument has five key parts:**

1. Investigator information;
2. Lead-in/introduction;
3. Filters/ qualifiers;
4. Demographics; and
5. Main body.

Provide service providers with information on the CRC process. Service providers usually do not initially see the value of the CRC; providing them with basic information like an overview of the CRC process may help to mitigate their fears.

During the meeting, be sure to collect information useful for designing the questionnaire.

Types of information to be collected are as follows:

1. Subjects of particular interest to service provider: Look for new programmes, new services or features of service delivery on which they would be interested in getting independent feedback.
2. Service delivery details: Find detailed information regarding service delivery that may help in writing questions or giving answer options, for example, 'How often does the water board provide water to the city residents?'
3. Standards and norms: If the service has publicised norms and standards, be sure to capture this, for example the number of days taken to process an application or consulting charges at a hospital.

## Components of the survey instrument

The questions in the questionnaire need to provide information that answers the interests identified in the statement of purpose. The structure and size of the questionnaire need to be defined keeping in mind the trade-off between detail and time. CRC interviews usually take 30 minutes to an hour per household. Make sure to limit the number of questions to fit this time period: a longer interview time will likely frustrate the respondent.

### *Part 1: Investigator information:*

The first section of the questionnaire collects basic information on the interviewer and the interview. Examples of the information gathered in this part include:

- Name of interviewer;
- Date of interview;
- Interview start time; and
- Interview end time.

***Part 2: Lead-in/introduction:***

The introduction uses the start of the interview to deliver key information regarding the survey to the person or people answering the questions (respondent/s). The interviewer introduces himself/herself, explains the purpose of the interview and begins to create a relationship with the respondent/s. At this stage, it also needs to be made clear to the respondent/s that individual respondent feedback will not be disseminated. Only the aggregated information from all respondents will be shared; there is no need for any respondent to fear retribution. In addition, the CRC findings will not be used to target an individual within the service. CRC findings should share a complete picture – both good and bad – of how an agency provides services.

## Example

'Hello, I am Anh from UNICEF. We are currently trying to understand the quality of primary education in Quang Nam. Could I please speak with an adult member of this household?

Your views are very important to us. Anything you say is entirely confidential; your individual feedback will not be disseminated. Only the aggregated information from all respondents will be shared with the public and the government so that services can be improved. The survey will take approximately 45 minutes. Would you be willing to participate in this survey?'

**Remember**

The introduction is the most important part of the survey because it conveys the purpose and nature of the interview.

**What not to do during an introduction!**

In a previous CRC, an investigator introduced himself by saying, 'We are here to find out how bad public services are.' Such an introduction immediately communicates a biased tone to the interview. Let the respondent tell you about their experience with service delivery—not the reverse! The language should be neutral.

Note that if the experiences and views of a particular group are of interest in the CRC (e.g. perceptions of youth or elderly people) then you need to make sure you can talk to this group in particular. If the survey is being carried out at the household level, you need to make sure you speak to the appropriate individual, as is explained further below.

***Part 3: Filter/qualifier:***

Qualifier or filter questions help to decide the respondent's suitability to answer a set of questions and/or the entire survey. The first qualifier decides if the respondent meets the basic conditions to complete the questionnaire. If you are interested in interviewing a specific population, you need to make sure this person fulfils this criterion (e.g. fits within a certain age category, belongs to a particular ethnic group, etc.). A further condition is usually whether the person has used the service(s) of interest in the past 12 months. For example, a CRC on water and sanitation would ask:

‘Have you, or anyone in your family, used government water and sanitation services in the past one year?’

1- Yes [continue with interview]

2- No [terminate interview]

Note that if there are multiple services covered in the CRC survey, it is best to have the person who knows the most about a particular service answer that portion of the survey. For example, in a particular family, the female adult may answer a section on drinking water whereas a male adult may answer the section on public health facilities (or vice versa); a child may answer questions on a section regarding primary education.

***Part 4: Demographics:***

For CRCs, households are a common unit of analysis. Demographic questions gather basic information about the respondent and/or the respondent’s household which is of interest in the CRC. Typical demographic information will include head of household, household income, expenditure patterns, ages, education levels, size of household, gender, ethnicity, etc.

Gather the household information (head of household, household income, address, etc.) at the beginning of the questionnaire. Before asking questions on a particular service, gather additional demographic information on the respondent.

***Part 5: Body of the questionnaire:***

The body of the questionnaire captures the key feedback related to the CRC objectives. Multiple types of questions are included.

Warm-up questions help to activate the respondent’s memory on a certain topic. These questions are very helpful at the beginning of a sequence of probing questions.

### Example

‘Why did you get in touch with the water authority?’

1. To query a payment

2. To report a fault

3. To pay a bill

4. Other (specify_______________)

*Specific questions* capture the respondent’s experience for detailed information sought in the CRC.

### Example

‘How did the staff member you spoke with treat you?’

1_____________2____________3____________4_______________5

Very well                                                                                    Very badly

'In what way did they treat you well/badly?' ________________

'How could this have been improved? How would you like to be treated?' _________________

Common categories of specific questions include ease of access, usage, reliability, quality, staff behaviour, corruption and satisfaction.

## Writing questions:

The CRC questionnaire differs from internal government surveys; feedback should focus on areas of service delivery as experienced by users instead of internal or technical processes. Listed below are some tips to keep in mind when writing questions and answers for the different parts of the questionnaire:

1. Consider if an open or closed question is more suitable;
2. Decide on the most suitable way to evaluate each aspect of service delivery;
3. Where necessary, include timeframes to collect relevant responses;
4. Specify units;
5. Select an appropriate scale;
6. Avoid double-barrelled questions;
7. Clearly word the questions so they are not leading or ambiguous; avoid questions that make an assumption about the respondent;
8. Ensure service users are capable of answering the question;
9. Where relevant, include relevant response choices to reduce opportunities for bias; and
10. Think carefully about the order in which the questions come.

### *1. Closed or open questions*

When framing questions, consider if an open or closed question is more suitable.

In closed questions, answer options are provided to the respondent. These questions are pre-coded in the questionnaire, which makes data collection and data entry easier.

There are many types of closed-ended questions, for example:

- Yes/no;
- Scales (very satisfied, partly satisfied, dissatisfied); and
- Ranges (less than 1 km, 1-5 km, greater than 5 km).

Research is required to ensure relevant answer options are provided for closed questions.

In open questions, the respondent is left to answer the question as he or she wishes. When the scope of answers is uncertain, open questions are very useful. An example is, 'What are the reasons for your dissatisfaction with the service?'

However, open questions have drawbacks. Ambiguous responses may make it difficult to aggregate the responses, making it difficult to compare across users. Another drawback is that open questions must be coded after the data are collected — increasing the time for data entry.

### *2. Suitable evaluation: considering standards*

Give some thought to the most suitable type of question for evaluating each part of service delivery.

Where standards for the service exist,

ask specific questions to check whether these are being met.

Image courtesy of Flickr, by Clear Path International.

## Example

If schools are mandated to carry out monthly tests, include a specific question to test whether this provision is adhered to or not:

'How many times did your child take a monthly test during the past three months?'

1- 3 times

2- 2 times

3- Only once

4- None at all

When standards do not exist (as is the case in many countries), find a suitable way to evaluate the quality of service delivery.

## Example

If you want feedback on the accessibility of schools, what is the best way to evaluate accessibility?

Option 1: 'How much time does it take your child to travel to the school?' Follow-up: check mode of transport. The answer to this question may be difficult to compare across households if different modes of transportation are used.

Remember

The best questions provide you with feedback that can be easily collected and from which you can draw interesting conclusions.

Option 2: 'What is the distance (in km) to the school your child attends?' When the respondent answers this question, he/she needs to have a somewhat accurate sense of distances.

Both options provide useful information, but also create difficulties during the collection of feedback. Try to decide the type of feedback that will be more useful given the purpose of the CRC and the local setting.

### *3. Include timeframes to collect relevant responses*

To avoid collecting outdated information, include a timeframe, when necessary. For example, do you want feedback only from households that have used a service in the past one year?  Or do you want feedback only on satisfaction with staff behaviour if a household has interacted with staff in the past one year? Make sure to specify the timeframe in these types of questions.

## Example

Have you or anyone in your household interacted with the school staff in the past one year??

1- Yes

2- No

***4. Specify units***

If you are asking a distance-related question or any other question where the unit of information (e.g. distance in km, weight in kg, time in minutes, etc.) affects the respondent's answer, make sure it is included in the question.

For open questions, ask investigators to note down the unit of measurement for the answer provided (even when the unit is specified in the question). This provides a double check and allows for conversions when a respondent's answer is in a different unit of measurement.

## Example

'On average, how many minutes do you wait to see the class teacher?' (note to investigator: write down the unit of time for the respondent's answer).

***5. Avoid double-barrelled question, or questions that make an assumption about the respondent.***

## Example (of double-barrelled question)

'If the teaching is of poor quality, what do you do?'

1- Complain to the headmaster

2- Provide help at home

3- Send child for tuition

4- Other (please specify)

This question incorrectly assumes teaching quality is poor. Instead, use a filter question like the one below:

In the past one year, have there been instances when you have felt the quality of education provided to your child has been poor?

1- Yes (ask next question)

2- No (skip next question)

What did you do in these instances?_____________

Designing appropriate scales

There are multiple types of answer scales that are commonly used to collect feedback. The type of answer scale used in a question affects the interpretation and presentation of findings that may follow. Large scales allow for more ranges of opinion whereas simple scales provide findings that are easy to convey.

### Example 1

Q.1 'Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of education provided by the school?'

1- Satisfied (ask next question below)

2- Dissatisfied (skip next question below)

3- Cannot comment (skip next question below)

Q.2 'How satisfied were you?'

1- Partly satisfied

2- Fully satisfied

### Example 2

'How do you rate the reliability of teachers in the school?'

1- Good

2- Average

3- Poor

4- Cannot comment

### Coding and organising the questionnaire

The coding of questions, the internal organisation of sections and the investigator commands are critical components of an easy-to-administer survey instrument. To design such an instrument:

- Make sure each question and answer option is uniquely coded (e.g. do not repeat a question in two different sections of the questionnaire as this can lead to confusion during data entry and analysis);
- Use sections, sub-schedules and grids to organise a lengthy questionnaire; and
- Ensure 'skips', 'go to' instructions and other investigator commands are placed correctly.

## Uniquely coded questions:

- Each question and answer option must be uniquely coded.
- The object of coding is to give each question and answer option a unique number to allow for easy and accurate processing.
- For open questions, during data entry, responses must be analysed, grouped and post-coded.

## Sections, sub-schedules and grids:

Use sections, sub-schedules and grids to organise a lengthy questionnaire. Within a particular service, sections with headings can be used to group types of questions that fall under a similar group. In addition, if there are multiple services to cover in the survey, it is often helpful to have sub-schedules for each service.

If the same type of question is being repeated, a grid format can be used to save space in the questionnaire.

Investigator instructions:

- Ensure 'skips', 'go to' instructions and other investigator commands are correctly placed;
- Ensure clear investigator instructions for accurate and consistent data collection;
- Use clear instructions at the start of the interview and at the beginning of each section to ensure the interview goes smoothly; and
- Use clear internal commands to skip questions or sections based on a respondent's answer to ensure the questionnaire is correctly administered.

## Fine-tuning the questionnaire:

Bias is said to exist whenever some feature of a survey instrument or a particular interview process leads to a response that does not match the respondent's true opinion.

Write the investigator's instructions specifically. Clearly word the questions and arrange them in a logical order; include relevant response choices to reduce opportunities for bias. In addition, CRC interviews usually take 30 minutes to an hour per household: limit the number of questions to fit this time period.

After drafting the questionnaire, please revise it with the following thoughts in mind:

1. Cover all the stated objectives of the CRC;
2. Have the questionnaire the shortest length possible: resist the temptation to 'pad' the questionnaire; only include those questions that will be analysed;

3. Use simple and explicit language;
4. Include clear instructions for investigators; use 'skip' commands where necessary;
5. Clarify the flow or order of questions;
6. Check how many open questions you have; too many will make data entry and analysis difficult;
7. Ensure service users are capable of answering the type of questions being asked; and
8. Avoid double-barrelled questions or questions that make an assumption about the respondent.

**Who should be asking the questions?**

One practical challenge often reported is that in many communities prior permission is required from the local leader before the enumerator can contact the respondent. It is only natural in these cases that the local leader accompanies the enumerator to the house of the respondent and introduces the purpose of the survey. However, it is very important to note that in no circumstance should the local leader be allowed to ask the questions or be present when the respondent answers the questions. Questions are to be asked only by trained enumerators as the power of a CRC lies in the anonymity of responses. If this challenge is anticipated, it is necessary to brief local leaders about the purpose and methodology of CRCs and seek their support to carry out data collection without violating any of the protocols.

## DEVELOPING A SAMPLING PLAN AND PREPARING FOR THE FIELD SURVEY

Knowledge of sampling techniques and experience in conducting surveys is very important when implementing a CRC. If the lead institution does not have necessary in-house skills on this, it must seek external help from a skilled social scientist.

### Sampling design

#### *Why do we need a sample survey?*

**How to draft a preliminary sampling design:**

- Define the population;
- Select the unit of analysis;
- Identify subgroups in the population (or the desired level of analysis);
- Select the sample size;
- Determine the sampling frame; and
- Select the proper sampling method.

A fundamental goal of research is to say something or find some information about a wider group. In order to achieve this, one method is to examine each and every individual in that group, collect the necessary information and then consolidate the findings. This method is called complete enumeration or census. The group is referred as the population. Another way of extracting information is to select a subset from the wider population and collect the information from that subset. This method is called sampling and the selected subset is known as the sample. The need for a sampling survey is to reduce time, money and labour spent on the survey. Following a complete enumeration procedure becomes too expensive and time consuming: the sampling survey therefore is one of the crucial requirements of any research process.

### How can a subset of the population provide us with the same information without examining all the members?

Statistical theory allows us to select the subset (sample) in such a way that the patterns observed in this smaller group – the sample – will hold in the larger group – the population. Statistical theory enables us to say, with a specific degree of confidence or guarantee, how likely the patterns observed in a sample are to reflect those in a population. We can prefix this degree of guarantee at a very high level and work out the sample. Hence, a subset of the population will also provide almost the same information without examining all the members.

**Step 1: Defining the population**

The population is the group being studied: while defining the scope of the CRC, the population for the CRC is identified.

Example

For a CRC on maternity homes, the population would be women who have recently delivered a baby or who are pregnant.

**Step 2: Selecting the unit of analysis**

Depending on the purpose of the study, the unit of analysis may be:

- Households;
- Individuals; and
- Organisations/groups.

For most CRC studies, households are the unit of analysis. Most public services (drinking water, electricity, sanitation, etc.) are delivered at the household level. In the case of households, decide who within the household can provide feedback (usually any adult member of the family).

**Step 3: Identifying subgroups in the population**

The usefulness of CRC findings depends to some extent on recording the experiences of important subgroups in the population (e.g. rural and urban). These subgroups were initially identified in the example statement of purpose. To create a sufficient sample size, the subgroups must be clearly identified and kept in mind during the sampling design.

**Step 4: Selecting the sample size**

Deciding on the number of households to include in the survey depends on the level of statistical precision you require for the findings. Any survey can give only approximate results; to calculate the best sample size for your CRC, choose the desired level of confidence or degree of accuracy required for your results. Most surveys desire a confidence level of between 90% and 95%.

- There is no simple rule regarding sample size that can be applied to all surveys; however, there are some points to bear in mind:
    - Up to a certain point, increasing the sample size improves the quality of your findings.
    - Beyond a certain sample size, increasing the number of respondents will not improve the accuracy of the findings to a great extent.
    - Use of the probability proportionate to size (PPS) method ensures the sample is self-weighting. For example, if authorised slums account for 25% of the total slum population, authorised slum households should make up 25% of the sample size for slum households.
- Based on global experiences with CRCs, a sample size of 300–350 households is ideal for each service.
- Consult an experienced social scientist to calculate an ideal sample size for your survey.

**Step 5: Determine the sampling frame**

The sampling frame is created to help to identify all members of the population in order that they have a chance of being included in the sample. For most CRCs, the sample frame is a listing of all households in the geographical area that include the population of interest.

The sampling frame can be determined using one of the following methods:

- Use the data from a recent census;
- Conduct a listing exercise (if census data are not available): the geographic areas to be sampled can be identified and field investigators can study the areas to develop a list; and
- If developing a list is too difficult, plan for random selection of households on arrival in a location; this option requires additional training of the survey staff.

**Step 6: Select a proper sampling method – probability sampling**

- Probability sampling ensures each unit of analysis in the population has an equal chance of being selected.
- The advantage of probability sampling is that sampling error can be calculated; sampling error is the degree to which a sample might differ from the population.
- Common probability sampling methods include random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling.

*Random sampling*

A sample from the population is randomly selected and each unit of analysis in the population has an equal and known chance of being selected. To select the sample, each unit of analysis is assigned a number; the numbers are randomly selected using:

- A table of random numbers;
- A computer random number generator; or
- Some other device.

This method is easy to carry out and explain to others, although representation from important subgroups may be missing.

*Systematic sampling*

After calculating the required sample size, every nth unit of analysis is selected from the population list. As long as the list does not contain a hidden order, this sampling method has a similar sampling error to random sampling. The advantage of this method is its simplicity.

*Stratified sampling*

This method is used when the population of interest has subgroups or strata that have a low occurrence, or require separate analysis. Examples of strata are slum/non-slum households, males/females, households living above/below the poverty line, etc. The relevant strata and their proportion in the population must be identified. Within each stratum, the sample is drawn using random sampling.

## Developing a sampling strategy: an example from the pilot CRC exercise in Viet Nam

### What was the objective here?

The challenge was to identify a sample size which would give reliable estimates at the provincial level on citizen feedback on the selected public services – primary education, primary health and rural roads – for the four pilot provinces – Bac Kan, Vinh Phuc, Tra Vinh and Quang Nam.

### What is the minimum sample size required at the provincial level?

One can safely assume a sample size of 300 households at the provincial level to give a reliable estimate (assuming enough responses are received for all three services being probed).

### How should one go about spreading this sample of 300 within the province?

In each province, SLGP is active in six communes (three in each of the two selected districts). A decision was made to choose two communes of the six using PPS. PPS suggests each cluster has an equal opportunity of being selected in the sample, depending on its size.

**Step 1: Creating a list of clusters with cumulative population size**

For each province, all six pilot communes were listed randomly with their populations indicated in the column next to them, followed by the number of households; the cumulative population is calculated in the final column. An example from Bac Kan province is below:

| Bac Kan province | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Commune | Population | Households | Cu. households |
| Van Tung | 2,964 | 741 | 741 |
| Trung Hoa | 1,310 | 327 | 1,068 |
| Thuan Mang | 1,986 | 497 | 1,565 |
| Tan son | 1,500 | 375 | 1,940 |
| Thanh Mai | 2,598 | 650 | 2,590 |
| Cho Moi | 3,267 | 817 | 3,407 |

**Step 2: Selecting a systematic sample from a random start using a sampling interval**

First, a sampling interval was determined, that is, a standard distance by which elements are selected in the sample. We know the total number of households is 3,407 and the number of clusters we need is two (two communes out of the six). Thus, the sampling interval we want is 1,704 = total cumulative population size/ (divided) by number of clusters.

***Step 2.1: Choosing a random number between one and the sampling interval (i.e. 1,704)***

There are several methods to generate a random number: using a random number table, using online sources, from spreadsheets like Excel, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), etc. In our example above, we obtained a random number 1,117.

***Step 2.2: Choosing the cluster in which the random number falls***

Looking to the cumulative frequencies, we identified in which commune the random number fell. In the example, it is the third commune – Thuan Mang. We now have the first cluster or commune identified. After identifying the first commune, we add the interval (1,704) to the random number (1,117), which is 2,821, to identify the second commune. Now we look at the cumulative frequencies and see where this number (2,821) falls. We find that in this specific example it falls against the sixth commune – Cho Moi. Now we have the two clusters needed for Bac Kan province.

Using the same logic and technique, communes in the other three provinces were identified. The results are shown below:

| **Quang Nam province** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Commune** | **Population** | **Households** | **Cu. households** |
| An Son | 8,397 | 2,100 | 2,100 |
| An Xuan | 9,889 | 2,472 | 4,572 |
| Tam Ngoc | 5,809 | 1,452 | 6,024 |
| Tien Ky | 7,458 | 1,865 | 7,889 |
| Tien Tho | 6,764 | 1,691 | 9,580 |
| Tien Phong | 4,341 | 1,086 | 10,666 |
| | Interval | 5,333 | |
| | Random number | 2,720 | |

| Tra Vinh province | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Communes** | **Population** | **Households** | **Cu. households** |
| Ward 5 | 6,367 | 1,592 | 1,592 |
| Ward 6 | 8,796 | 2,199 | 3,791 |
| Long Duc | 15,995 | 3,999 | 7,790 |
| Tieu Can town | 114,918 | 28,730 | 36,520 |
| Tap Ngai | 12,076 | 3,019 | 39,539 |
| Cau Quan | 12,642 | 3,161 | 42,700 |
| | Interval | 21,350 | |
| | Random number | 16,813 | |

| Vinh Phuc province | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Commune** | **Population** | **Households** | **Cu. households** |
| Thanh Lang | 13,473 | 3,368 | 3,368 |
| Huong Son | 5,530 | 1,383 | 4,751 |
| Gia Khanh | 10,303 | 2,576 | 7,327 |
| Hop Chau | 7,284 | 1,821 | 9,148 |
| Yen Duong | 5,450 | 1,363 | 10,511 |
| Bo Ly | 5,629 | 1,407 | 11,918 |
| | Interval | 5,959 | |
| | Random number | 4,529 | |

Our final sampling frame for this CRC exercise will be as follows:

| Province | Selected communes | No. of households | Sample households |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bac Kan | Trung Hoa | 327 | 100 |
| | Cho Moi | 817 | 100 |
| | Total sample for Bac Kan | 200 | |
| Quang Nam | An Xuan | 2,472 | 100 |
| | Tien Tho | 1,691 | 100 |
| | Total sample for Quang Nam | 200 | |
| Tra Vinh | Long Duc | 7,790 | 100 |
| | Tap Ngai | 3,019 | 100 |
| | Total sample for Tra Vinh | 200 | |
| Vinh Phuc | Hung Son | 1,383 | 100 |
| | Yen Duong | 1,363 | 100 |
| | Total sample for Vinh Phuc | 200 | |

### Total sample for the study: 800 households

### How does one select the 100 households within each of the identified communes?

There are two ways to go about this. The most scientific way is to do a listing exercise. In this method, a door-to-door listing of all the households in the commune is carried out. The listing schedule may seek data on the household address, services used in the past one year (health and primary education), economic status and ethnicity. From this list, the 100 households needed are identified randomly while ensuring representation of minorities.

To demonstrate how to ensure representation of minorities, two methods can be employed; let us use Hung Son commune in Vinh Phuc province as an example.

The first method begins with listing all 1,383 households; from this list, we will know how many households used health and education services during the past 12 months. Let us suppose this number is 500; 100 addresses from this list of 500 can be generated for our actual CRC survey. If we know the ethnic breakdown of the population within the commune, we should see that we keep the same proportion in our sample of 100.

The second method is to divide each commune into four geographical parts: north, south, east and west, then randomly select 25 households from each part.

## Staffing for fieldwork

Regardless of who carries out the survey, there is a need to mobilise field staff. Before beginning fieldwork, some initial fieldwork decisions can be made. Devote time to deciding the number and organisation of field staff.

### Number of field staff:

Staff resources required for carrying out a survey link directly to:

- Sample size;
- Time taken to complete a single questionnaire; and
- Available time to complete all the fieldwork.

The team size is calculated by dividing the sample size by number of available days then by productivity per investigator (i.e. the average number of questionnaires that can be completed by one investigator in one day).

### Example

If a CRC has a sample size of 2,000, a 20-day timeline for data collection and a questionnaire that allows each investigator to complete 5 interviews per day, then 20 investigators are required (2000/20/5=20).

In a strict timeframe, more investigators can be hired to survey multiple areas within the locality at the same time.

### Organisation of field staff:

The number and skills of staff will vary according to the size and scope of the CRC but in general the key field staff include a field coordinator, field supervisors and interviewers.

The field coordinator:

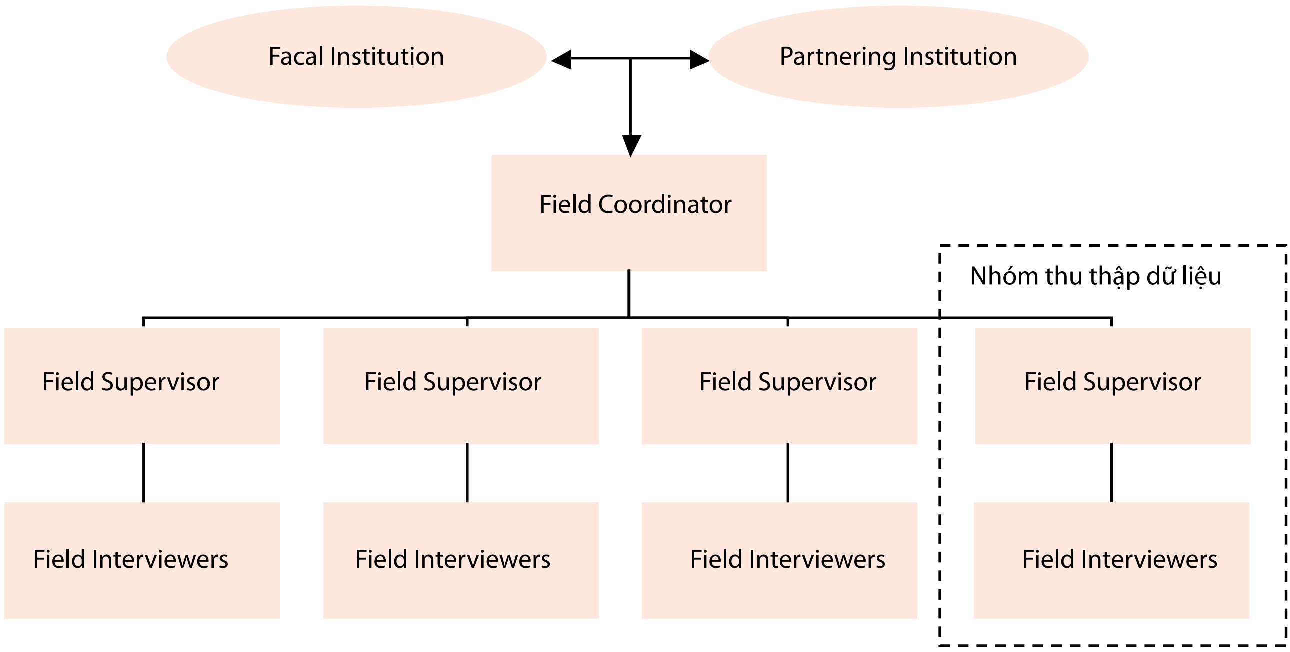
- Manages all aspects of the survey;
- Has strong managerial skills;
- Understands the entire fieldwork process; and
- Regularly reports to the staff of the lead institution.

The supervisor:

- Leads a team of four to five interviewers and accompanies them on their initial interviews;
- Performs necessary quality checks during the fieldwork process; and
- Keeps in regular contact with the field coordinator.

The interviewers conduct the survey. An individual field unit or groups of field units can be distributed as necessary throughout the survey area, depending on the sampling design (see below).

**The data collection team: an example**




## Translating the questionnaire

Before finalising the questionnaire, translate the survey instrument into the local language.

- Depending on the language(s) spoken by the CRC population, the original survey instrument may need to be translated into a secondary language.
- To ensure the meaning of each question is captured accurately in the translation, the translated questionnaire should be retranslated into the primary language (by someone other than the initial translator).
- The retranslated questionnaire should be compared with the original questionnaire to ensure the quality of the translation.

## Finalising the questionnaire: pilot survey

Pre-testing the questionnaire in the form of a pilot survey is an important quality check.  Piloting reveals problems related to:

- Respondents' ability to understand the questions (the wording of questions and answers);
- Flow and internal arrangement of questions;
- Length of the questionnaire; and
- Weaknesses in the investigator instructions (e.g. missing skip commands, unclear grids/formatting).

The time spent on piloting and revising the questionnaire can significantly improve the quality of the survey instrument. The pilot exercise should include 10–15 interviews within the area where the actual survey is to be carried out.

### Pilot team:

An ideal pilot team consists of two or three individuals:

- One person to conduct the questionnaire; and
- The other two individuals to observe the interview and note down observations.

### Pilot exercise:

A simple 'problem/ no problem' rating can be used to assess the quality of each question. Points to keep in mind include:

- Can the respondent easily understand the question?
- Can the respondent answer the question with the response options provided? Or should more answer options be provided?
- Are there open questions that should be changed to closed questions (or vice versa)?
- Are more questions required to collect the desired information?
- Are there questions that can be deleted? Are there questions that are insensitive or unnecessary (fail to provide useful information for analysis)?

### Post-pilot debrief:

- Following the pilot, feedback should be collected from the interviewers on the questionnaire.
- Each question should be reviewed to determine whether it should be revised, relocated or removed.
- More questions should be added if required; include only those questions that will provide data important to the analysis and interpretation of findings.

## Example

In 2010, a team of researchers from CIEM conducted a CRC of health services at health stations in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and Dien Bien province. When the team piloted the questionnaire, it found that the majority of respondents indicated 'average' when asked to assess the quality of health care services. 'Average' in that particular context could mean that the quality of services provided was the same as in the previous period, either still good or still bad or neither good nor bad. The low education of local residents also prevented them from understanding the meaning of questions and made it difficult for them to assess the quality of health care services. In these circumstances, it is important to have qualified and well-trained interviewers who can gently probe with further questions to help specify the answers of respondents while staying neutral.

*A woman gets ferried by rowboat across the river near Chau Doc. Image courtesy of Flickr, by mckaysavage.*

# CARRYING OUT THE FIELD SURVEY

With a piloted questionnaire and a preliminary sample design in hand, the next step is to plan for the conduct of the actual survey. This requires good management and coordination of the field processes. The following key stages are essential to carry out a good quality field survey operation:

- Training of investigators;
- Implementation of sampling design; and
- Quality checks during interviews.

## Training of survey data collectors

Prior to the launch of a field survey, it is essential to carry out a training event for the enumerators, however experienced they are. Spread over three to four days, the key stages of the training include:

- An introductory briefing;
- Mock interviews and selection of enumerators; and
- Training of selected data collectors.

## Introductory briefing:

It is crucial that investigators understand the larger purpose of the survey and become familiar with every question in the survey instrument. The following topics are covered in the briefing section:

- An overview of the CRC tool;
- The purpose of this specific CRC and the investigators' role in the project; and
- The details of the survey instrument.

A conceptual understanding of the CRC tool is important. Investigators should understand the purpose of the lead institution and the larger goal to help improve public service delivery. In addition, the purpose of this CRC and the important role of the investigator should be explained. Discussing the purpose will provide investigators with important background information to help them to carry out interviews accurately.

Someone familiar with the questionnaire should lead the group through the detailed review of each question. He/she should ensure investigators are comfortable with the flow and content of questions. Time should be given to explain any doubts regarding the survey instrument.

## Mock interviews:

After the introductory briefing, each potential interviewer is asked to complete a mock interview – this involves pairing participants and asking them to interview each other. Mock interviews serve two purposes. They identify good enumerators and further familiarise the enumerators with the details and flow of the questionnaire. Depending on the investigator's performance during the mock interview, he/she is given a rating. A sample rating format is illustrated below:

| Enumerating format no. | Name | Unders - tanding concepts (0–5) | Commu- nication skills (0–5) | Attenti- veness (0–5) | Ability to explain questions (0–5) | Total score (0–20) | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | |

The top-rated investigators are selected to take part in the CRC survey.

Interviewers should be selected based on their experience in the sector and in conducting surveys and facilitating qualitative FGDs (including with children, where appropriate). Where CRCs are going to be institutionalised and repeated, training interviewers from the targeted area is key. Inviting staff from partner organisations can also help to ensure the sustainability and viability of the tool. In addition to training staff on the CRC tool, staff should be brought up to speed on the sector, that is, key issues in health, education, etc ., as well as information on relevant programmes and government/NGO donor interventions in the sector in the area.

## Training of selected investigators:

More detailed training occurs with selected investigators, who should understand the different actions that can bias data collection. An overview of the sampling design should be shared with the investigators; the agreed process for household selection should be clearly communicated to supervisors and investigators. Some points to be highlighted during this session are as follows:

**Remember**

If during the course of the survey additional enumerators are inducted, they should also be evaluated and then trained accordingly.

- Reminding the investigators that inaccurate data will be collected if:
    - The questionnaire is not accurately administered;
    - The respondent's answers are not correctly recorded; and
    - The sampling design is not being carried out;

- Discussing the process of building a relationship with respondents, mentioning a complete investigation of respondents may be necessary to obtain feedback on a question;
- Explaining how the investigator can use his/her knowledge of the questionnaire to provide respondents with explanations or examples if they have difficulty understanding a question; and
- Stressing that carrying out the sampling design properly is necessary to ensure the collected sample is representative of the population.

As the implementation of CRCs is still relatively new in Viet Nam, holding a training session on the tool is recommended. The objective of this training is to provide participants with information on basic concepts: What is a CRC? Why conduct CRC surveys? Who is best suited to conducting CRC surveys? The training also introduces the five key steps for conducting a CRC survey: 1) preparatory work; 2) data collection; 3) data entry; 4) data analysis; and 5) presentation and dissemination of results/findings.

Specialised workshops are needed to train staff in social audit tools and surveying methods to increase capacity in probing, dealing with average ratings, etc. Regarding training, it is important to avoid mixing the training of interviewers with the testing of questionnaires.

Inter- and intra-interviewer reliability checks should be carried out before data collection begins. For intra-interviewer reliability, different interviewers should conduct the survey with the same person (with a time gap in between, e.g. of a week) to check the same answers are given and are not demonstrating bias by the interviewer. Intra-interviewer reliability can be examined by asking the same interviewer to conduct the survey on the same person (with a time gap in between, e.g. of a week) to see whether they elicit the same answers.

After the formal training, the field units (one supervisor and four to six investigators) should be formed and given time to discuss the daily fieldwork procedures.

## Carrying out the survey:

With a selected and trained team of field staff and a preliminary sampling design in hand, the surveying process can begin. To carry out the full CRC survey:

- The field units should be taken to the correct location.
- The supervisor should know the number of households to interview in a location.
- The households to be interviewed should be either pre-selected using a sound sampling method or, if specified in the sampling design, systematic sampling with a random start should be carried out :
    - When a listing of households is available:
        - The households to be interviewed are usually pre-selected.
        - The field supervisor ensures the investigators follow the sampling design.

  - A standard procedure is followed when a questionnaire cannot be administered to a household (i.e. the investigator is told to continue to the very next house as a replacement, and then to continue with the original sampling pattern).

- When a listing exercise is not possible:
  - The first activity on arrival at a location is to study the area and decide on a plan to select households.

For example, if it is decided that there are 250 houses in the sampling area and 10 houses are to be sampled, as per PPS, systematic sampling can be carried out to interview every 25th house from a random starting point (e.g. the post office or polling booth or elementary school).

## Rotation and boosters:

### Rotation of services

When several services are covered in a CRC, avoid making the interview too long; devise a method to rotate the services such that households do not respond to every service.

- It is best to rotate only those services that are commonly used (e.g. drinking water).
- Rotation of less frequently used services (e.g. police) may lead to inadequate sample sizes for these services.

### Booster surveys

The field coordinator should regularly check on the number of respondents for each service and other pre-specified subgroups of interest (e.g. different categories of people, geographical representation) to ensure the target sample size is being reached. When a service lacks the minimum number of respondents, booster surveys are required:

- Booster surveys involve the intentional (non-random) sampling of households to reach a minimum sample size.
- Depending on the service, it is necessary to decide on an appropriate method to identify respondents for the booster surveys.
- Going to the offices of service providers and approaching customers is one way to complete booster interviews.
- Sometimes, a respondent will not feel comfortable providing feedback on a service at/or near the office of the service provider. In this case, ask the respondent if it is possible to interview him/her at home.

## Quality checks:

During the interviews, each team supervisor and the field coordinator should perform quality checks to ensure reliable and accurate data collection. Ideally, the data entry operator should enter collected data at the same time, offering an additional chance to check for quality. There are four major types of quality checks:

- Accompanied interviews;
- Spot checks;
- Back checks; and
- Final scrutiny of schedules.

### Accompanied interviews

To ensure the survey process is unbiased and carried out properly, the supervisor should accompany each enumerator and observe several interviews in progress. A good rule of thumb is to have at least 10% of the interviews observed through accompaniment.

### Spot checks

Surprise visits during an interview that is in progress, or spot checks by the field coordinator, also serve as a good quality control measure.

### Back checks

- The field coordinator should randomly select 30% of the completed questionnaires and perform back checks.
- These involve selecting a few key questions and confirming the respondent's response for these questions.
- The purpose is to ensure the information marked in the schedule reflects the true opinion of the respondent; this can be done through a house visit or phone call.
- Usually, between 25% and 30% of interviews are back checked.

### Final scrutiny of schedules

Field supervisors should check questionnaires before leaving an area and at the end of each day. On leaving the field, they should be checked for a second time by a trained scrutiny team.

### Scrutiny in the field

- Once an interview has been completed, further scrutiny is required to ensure the information marked in the questionnaires is correct.
- The field supervisor should carefully check through every completed questionnaire to ensure they are filled in accurately. This should occur

daily before leaving a field area.

- If gaps are found or answers appear inconsistent, the supervisor should ask the investigator to go back to the household and correct the mistake.

### End-of-day scrutiny

After the questionnaires have been checked for quality in the field, a trained team should complete 100% scrutiny of the questionnaires. The same group of individuals should complete this second level of scrutiny for every questionnaire to ensure uniformity and accuracy of the process. They should pay particular attention to make sure that:

- All required questions are answered;
- ‘Skips’ and other investigator instructions are followed; and
- Responses make sense and are not internally inconsistent with each other.

### Simultaneous data entry:

Simultaneous data entry during the survey period creates a final opportunity to notice unreasonable answers or missed questions, in time to correct an error.

Questionnaires collected one day can be entered the next day:

- If mistakes are found during data entry, ask for an explanation from the investigator.
- If required, send the investigator back to the household to correct the error.

# DATA ENTRY, ANALYSIS AND WRITING THE REPORT

Starting the data entry process soon after the survey begins creates an opportunity to identify irregularities and to correct them while the fieldwork remains in progress. The data entry, analysis and interpretation process transforms the raw primary information collected from users into the official CRC findings.

## Data entry

Data can be entered and analysed using one of a variety of data management software available. A basic spreadsheet program like Microsoft Excel can generate cross-tabulations and basic linear regression models. The results from commonly available programs often provide enough statistical understanding for the CRC findings.

The answers and responses collected through the questionnaire have to be entered into a database.

**Remember**

- The pre-coded questions can be entered directly.
- For open questions, similar answers should be grouped into categories and coded manually.

Computer programs dealing specifically with statistical analysis are also available. Although these packages are more expensive, they are often easier to use when managing large sets of data.[5] Examples are SPSS and

Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

## Accuracy check:

The data entered into the central database should be checked for accuracy. This step is very important whether data entry takes place in-house or is outsourced:

- Randomly select a set of questionnaires and crosscheck the written responses with those entered in the database; and
- Run frequencies and means on specific questions to confirm the accuracy of entered data.

Once the data are entered and crosschecked they are ready for analysis. Depending on the sample size and length of the questionnaire, the data entry stage can take two to four weeks.

## Generating the findings

With the creation of a database of citizen responses, it is time to generate the findings:

- Analyse the data collected:

5 Before investing in one, compare the capability of the software package with the level of analysis required.

    - Produce the basic analysis tables;
    - Create relevant cross-tabs to make further conclusions; and
    - Perform any additional levels of analysis;
- Interpret the findings.

## Categories of CRC findings:

There are several categories of findings that are common across CRCs. They include:

- Estimates on aspects of service delivery:
    - The average number of hours water is supplied; and/or
    - The average number of times a service provider is contacted to fix a problem.
- Comparisons across services:
    - Comparing the overall level of satisfaction across service providers (e.g. water, electricity, health, sanitation) in a city; and/or
    - Comparing the incidence of corruption across service providers in a locality.
- Comparisons across localities:
    - Evaluating the percentage of residents who have door-to-door garbage clearance in the east zone of a city in comparison with the west zone; and/or
    - Comparing the incidence of flooding between two types of slums (i.e. authorised and unauthorised) in a city.
- Comparisons over time:
    - Tracking the change in satisfaction with the quality of drinking water in a town over a five year period using data from two CRCs — one at the beginning of the five-year period and one at the end.

## Basic analysis tables:

The basic analysis tables consist of collected responses for each question for the population or for subgroups of interest (e.g. by zone, gender, slum type, etc.).

## Methods to analyse data:

**Tips for data analysis**

- Have one person complete the basic analysis: It is best if one person is given the job of analysing data to keep continuity and accuracy of the process. In case there is doubt regarding the type of tables to generate, it is useful to review the original objectives of the CRC.
- Use booster data correctly: If booster data were collected for a service, only a subset of the initial survey questions is applicable; making conclusions about usage or the incidence of problems will produce incorrect findings. Since the collection of booster data was not part of the random sampling, these data should not be used to make conclusions on proportions in the population.
- Have an adequate 'n' (sample size): Make sure you have a sufficient number of responses for each question. Don't waste time carrying out an analysis strategy unless there is a sufficient number of responses.
- Check to see if weighting is required: Before generating the basic data tables, it is useful to run basic demographic tables; if the generated tables are in line with the population or sub-population(s) of interest, then proceed with further analysis.
- If the demographic data of the sample varies from the demographics of the population, then some weighting will be required.

Simple techniques are used to analyse data:

- Averages (e.g. average amount paid as a bribe);
- Data ranges (e.g. income); and
- Frequencies (e.g. percentage of users who are satisfied with a service).

Data can also be analysed using more technical analytical tools. The techniques used should match the objectives of the CRC – some of that have been tried include averages, weighted averages, frequencies, projections (cost) and econometric models to measure relationships between satisfaction and factors influencing satisfaction.

## Cross-tabulations:

After producing the initial tables, it is useful to spend time making cross-tabulations for areas of special interest.

Cross-tabulations examine the relationship between two or more variables in order to better understand a phenomenon. They are easy to produce using any basic database package and they create a powerful tool for further analysis of citizen feedback.

## Example

| Typical Cross tab output | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Hab a problem piped water | No problem piped water | Total |
| Satisfied with overall quality of service | 16.7% (41) | 92.7% (306) | 60.3% (347) |
| Dissatisfied with overall quality of service | 83.3% (204) | 7.3% (24) | 39.7% (228) |
| Total | 100% (245) | 100% (330) | 100% (575) |

The numbers in parenthesis are the numbers of respondents. This simple cross-tab shows satisfaction is closely related to the existence of a problem for users of piped water.

## Interpretation

Interpretation requires the ability to translate aggregated data into interesting and relevant measures of service delivery. It is the process of translating the findings into diagnostic statements. Interpreting the data tables can be undertaken by any number of people who have a good understanding of the purpose of the CRC:

- Consider both the audience and the purpose of the CRC to help direct the interpretation process; and
- In some instances, make recommendations, or suggestions for improvement, based on the interpretation of findings.

## Example

In one CRC study, it was found that, among poor households who send their children to public school, 71% were completely satisfied with the quality of education.

This is an objective statement of findings based on a direct question in the survey. At the interpretation stage, this percentage is further examined. Is 71% high, medium or low? A conclusion is made: a high percentage of parents from economically weaker sections that send their children to public schools were completely satisfied with the quality of education (71%).

## The report

As part of the interpretation process, a report or extensive summary of the findings should be written. The major output from the interpretation stage is the main CRC report. The process of interpreting data and writing the main report is critical to collect important findings from the aggregated data. The report should summarise the information garnered through the data analysis and should directly reflect the objectives of the CRC (i.e. provide answers to and analysis of the questions of interest). The findings should aim to be constructively critical. It can be helpful to share the preliminary findings with the service provider concerned so they have an opportunity to respond to some of the criticisms and so genuine grievances on their part, such as staffing or budgetary constraints, can be included in the report and can influence the tone of recommendations.

Sections of the CRC main report

An effective CRC report is well organised, clearly written and concise. It should include:

- Executive summary;
- Survey objectives;
- Methodology;
- Major findings; and
- Conclusions and policy recommendations

Findings should be presented in a neutral and unbiased manner. For example:

- **Present information in a holistic manner:** It is important to highlight good and bad areas of performance (especially if your local partner is a government body, there may be a desire to suppress negative findings). A complete picture of both successes and failures should be shared.
- **Allow for shades of grey:** Qualitative explanations of the figures presented, ranges of answers provided and so on make it possible to present feedback in different shades of grey – instead of a simple good/bad or yes/no.
- **Convey findings in a value neutral manner:** Let the findings speak for themselves instead of using descriptive adjectives and value-laden or biased language.

During this stage, a decision is made regarding which findings should be highlighted and emphasised. As will be discussed in Module 8, relevant information can be extracted from the main report and organised into different formats for the various target audiences (e.g. service providers, CSOs and residents welfare groups). When thinking about what to include in the CRC, bear in mind who might use this information and how.

## The executive summary

The executive summary starts the report.

- It presents a brief version of the purpose, methodology and major findings of the CRC.

- It should contain a list of recommended actions suggested by the findings.
- It is usually one or two pages in length.

This section should be able to stand alone and serve as a summary document for media, citizens and other interested parties.

## Survey objectives

This section conveys the reason for doing the survey and how the findings are expected to inform follow-up planning, decisions or actions by various actors. The statement of purpose for the CRC provides a good starting point for this section.

## Methodology

This section explains the following questions:

- How was the information gathered?
- When was the information collected?
- What was the response rate?
- What is the confidence level of the findings?
- What is the margin of error?

The objective of this section is to present a complete, accurate and honest description of the research methods employed.

## Major findings

This section summarises the results and presents them in order of importance and interest to the audience.

- Tables should be used to summarise the key findings.
- The most interesting results should be highlighted with appropriate graphics.
- The findings should include areas of good and poor performance.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

This section answers the question 'So what?' and discusses the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings.

- The conclusions drawn should be based on the facts obtained and moderated by an understanding of the limits of survey research.
- This section can suggest how changes in processes, the introduction of training or new procedures could improve service delivery.

Limit the desire to give recommendations beyond what the findings suggest. Remember that service providers have considerable expertise and knowledge about services; they may be better suited to make extrapolations based on the findings.

## DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS

The dissemination of findings is key to the success of the CRC tool. The usefulness of the CRC is limited if findings are not shared and used to help make improvements in public service delivery. The scope of dissemination relates directly to the objectives of the CRC. The target audience should be informed of the findings within a timeframe meaningful for follow-up action. Setting aside a few hours to develop a dissemination strategy will help to ensure findings reach the intended audience and beneficiaries. Three basic tasks are considered:

- Identifying target audience(s);
- Deciding the best method(s) to reach them; and
- Focusing on project management considerations.

### Identifying a target audience

#### *Public service providers/concerned ministries:*

Findings are shared with each service provider covered in the CRC. Experience suggests a face-to-face meeting with service providers creates an opportunity to obtain direct feedback on the findings and generates buy-in to the overall process (useful for follow-up activities). Sector-specific reports are relevant here. The emphasis in these meetings is not one of fault finding or finger pointing but one of underlining key diagnostic pointers which will help the agency/department/ministry to come out with specific reform measures.

#### *CSOs:*

Findings are shared with CSOs, particularly those working in areas related to public service delivery, to create an informed network of local organisations. These organisations are good partners to work with during advocacy and follow-up activities.

#### *The media:*

During and after the main release of the CRC, the media is targeted to further disseminate the findings. Over the long term, the media is seen as a means to increase general coverage and understanding of public service provision. Usually, an attempt is made to push for more regular coverage of service delivery to create additional pressure on providers. One effective strategy from experience is to have a leading newspaper cover the findings with a detailed write-up on one sector at a time. If this is carried out on a weekly basis, the CRC will be in the media light for four to five weeks in a row.

#### *General population:*

The public should be aware of the findings: an informed general public generates demand for reform. One tried and tested concept is the ‘open house’. Open houses are public events, usually organised in town halls, where agency heads are invited to respond to the CRC findings and answer questions from the public. The distinctive contribution of these open forums is their power to engage service providers in active public dialogue as opposed to the closed personal meetings with officials that were previously customary among agencies. In one case, some service providers began to take a cue from this and organised their own forums whereby civil society groups were invited to dialogue on the problems faced. The electricity board, the water and sanitation board and even the police have worked with such forums: interactions between organised civic groups and service providers have grown significantly in the past decade.

***Government:***

State-level governing bodies, commissions or other higher-level bodies can be important allies in improving public services. These government entities have a direct or indirect influence over financing and decision making related to service delivery at the local level. At the same time, sharing relevant findings with regional or local-level authorities may be extremely useful in making on-the-ground improvements in service provision. In many city report card studies, separate presentations are made to zonal officials to highlight particular problems in their zones.

***Donors/supporters:***

Much of the financial resources to support an effort like a CRC are privately donated. The individuals and organisations that support the CRC effort – both financially and intellectually – are usually very interested in a formal presentation of the findings.

## Methods of dissemination

***Pre-launch presentations:***

Hold a meeting with the leadership of the sectors selected for the study to give providers an opportunity to discuss the findings before their public release. Experience suggests sharing the findings through individualised presentations customised to each service provider generates useful feedback. Following the presentation, service providers can clarify parts of the findings and provide explanations to interpret results more accurately. In addition, the leadership may decide independently to disseminate CRC findings within the organisation and use the information for internal decision making. Providing a customised written document of the findings often helps to facilitate an internal dissemination and use/implementation of CRC findings.

**Identifying a target audience**

The key question to consider here is, 'With whom should we share the findings to satisfy the objectives of this CRC study?'

The following could be the key audiences:

- Public service providers;
- CSOs (regional, national and international);
- The media: print, radio and TV (regional and national);
- The general population;
- Government (at higher and regional levels); and
- Donors/supporters.

***Media conference:***

The media is very important to the wide-scale dissemination of findings. The first step towards working with the media is to hold a formal press conference to release CRC findings. Regional and local newspapers, along with the major newspapers, TV and radio stations, are invited to help increase the reach of dissemination. Do not encourage giving any particular paper an exclusive 'scoop' – all should be informed at the same time. Formal presentations should be kept short;

the methodology explained briefly with a major emphasis on highlighting the key findings and discussing relevant policy pointers.

*Image courtesy of Flickr, by NS Newsflash.*

### *Press note:*

The press note is usually a brief document, ideally not more than one to three pages, and highlights the following points:

- Who was surveyed, when they were surveyed, the method of contact and the size of the sample;
- Services and aspects of service delivery covered;
- Key findings;
- Problem areas of particular importance;
- Suggestions for improvements; and
- Basic information about the organisation that carried out the CRC.

### *Post-launch presentations:*

Following the major release of findings, presentations are often made to interested groups such as planning commissions, oversight bodies, regulatory agencies, etc.

### *Creative opportunities:*

Creative techniques can enhance traditional dissemination methods. Theatre, artwork, songs, puppet shows, film and other creative methods can often capture the attention of a broad cross-section of the population. For example, a group in Bangladesh used street theatre to communicate their major findings from a report study to the public.

### *Staff considerations*

At this stage in the CRC tool, a team with public relations skills is very useful. Ideally, individuals who have an existing relationship with the local media should organise the press conference. Personal invitations have a much better chance of securing attendance results.

Presentations to service providers, press and other stakeholders are best made by senior staff who have been involved in the CRC design and have a good understanding of the methodology. Presenters should have strong communication skills and be able to connect the findings to the interests of the audience. Often, a team of two is necessary to ensure the presenters have the required experience and knowledge.

Before dissemination, staff with good data interpretation, presentation design and written skills must be available to put together the presentations and associated written documents. Depending on the number of public services covered in the CRC, this step could take the time of one to two staff members for at least one to two weeks.

### *Communication interventions at each stage of the CRC:*

| Stage of CRC | Communication activity | Objectives | Target audience/ stakeholders |
|---|---|---|---|
| Planning a CRC | Workshops | Sensitising stakeholders who are part of the CRC implementing team to create a shared understanding of CRC concepts and applications. | Service providers, survey groups and expert panels. |
| Pre-launch phase | Workshops | Sharing and vetting findings. | Service providers, survey groups and expert panels. |
| Dissemination | Press conferences, press releases | Disseminating findings. | General public. |
| Post-launch presentations | Targeted presentations | Exploring policy advocacy and wider implications of findings with specialised groups. | CSO networks, professional bodies, etc. |

### *Presentation and dissemination of findings:*

When thinking about targeting the dissemination of findings, bear in mind how different groups might use them. Some examples include:

**Tips for effective dissemination of information**

- **Present information in a holistic and unbiased manner:** It is important to highlight the good and bad areas of performance.
- **Allow for shades of grey:** Descriptions, such as waiting time and proportion of users who are completely satisfied, make it possible to present feedback in different shades of grey – instead of a simple good/bad or yes/no. Remember the CRC captures the subjective experience of users in an objective manner.
- **Convey findings in a value-neutral manner:** Let the findings speak for themselves instead of using descriptive adjectives or biased language.
- **Selectively compare across services:** Although there are major differences between services, a comparison across providers on comparable features puts pressure on poor performers. This comparison creates peer pressure and competition.
- **Use a question–answer format to present findings:** Past experience has shown using a question–answer format during presentations is an easy way for the audience to digest information.

**Service providers:**

- Redesign service delivery processes;
- Respond to the unique needs of various segments of the population;
- Design back-end improvements (computerisation, training of staff, etc.);
- Support the creation of local venues and opportunities for increased consultation and participation from citizens; and
- Ask for additional resources to change policies or improve implementation.

## Higher-level authorities:

- Put pressure on service providers;
- Design incentives to reward well-performing service providers;
- Performance-based budgeting;
- Linking public opinion with public spending;
- Monitor the use of public funds and compliance with existing standards; and
- Reallocate resources to remedy shortcomings in service provision.

## NGOs/CSOs:

- Provide policy advice to policymakers;
- Push for relevant improvements in services;
- Shape the evaluation processes for projects and programmes supported by development agencies;
- Prioritise capacity-building support that may be required locally; and
- Benchmark the quality of service provision before and after a new policy or scheme is introduced.

MPI and UNICEF (2011) 'Reforming the Socio-Economic Development Plan's Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation – Opportunities and Challenges'. Summary of Workshop Proceedings, 2-3 November.

Public Affairs Centre and Asian Development Bank, Citizen Report Card:

http://www.citizenreportcard.com/.

World Bank, Citizen Report Cards, Asia Case Studies: http://www.worldbank.org/socialaccountability_sourcebook/Regional%20database/crcas.htm.

World Bank (2009) 'Citizen Report Card Surveys – A Note on the Concept and Methodology'. Social Development and Civic Engagement Note 91. Washington, DC: World Bank.

## RESOURCES/ BIBLIOG-RAPHY

**THÔNG TIN LIÊN HỆ**

**BỘ KẾ HOẠCH VÀ ĐẦU TƯ**
6B Hoàng Diệu, Ba Đình, Hà Nội
**Tel:** (84-4) 38455298; 08044404
**Fax:** (84-4) 3823445
**Web:** www.mpi.gov.vn

**UNICEF VIỆT NAM**
81A Trần Quốc Toản, Hà Nội, Việt Nam
**Tel:** (+84.4) 3.942.5706 - 11 / **Fax:** (+84.4) 3.942.5705
**Email:** hanoi.registry@unicef.org
**Follow us:** www.unicef.org/vietnam
www.facebook.com/unicefvietnam
www.youtube.com/unicefvietnam
www.flickr.com/photos/unicefvietnam