IBBS Toolbox

Formative assessment

The Toolbox provides an operations manual for the formative assessment process, including procedures for conducting key informant interviews, focus groups, mapping exercises and community walkthroughs, including interview instruments. The formative assessment can help decide whether to use RDS or TLS for the survey.

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Overview

This operations manual is designed to guide project staff during the formative assessment phase of an IBBS. Formative assessment includes multiple methods

- Focus groups (FG)
- Key informant interviews (KII)
- Mapping
- Field observation
- Size estimation using census and enumeration methods

Findings from the formative assessment will guide the content and conduct of the larger behavioral survey phase of IBBS.

How to use this manual

This manual can be adapted for use with other key populations.

The manual describes

- Objectives of formative assessment
- Formative assessment methods and instructions for implementation
- Roles and responsibilities of staff and study communication
- Fieldwork guidelines
- Data management

Review the manual during staff trainings to ensure understanding of roles and responsibilities. In addition, it is helpful for each staff member to carry a copy of the operations manual with them while in the field.

GSI provides technical assistance (TA) in implementing IBBS. Please visit our website and contact us for trainings and TA.

Background

The Ministry of Health and partners intend to develop and implement innovative and sustainable HIV epidemiologic surveillance methodologies to monitor the burden of HIV among key populations at higher risk for HIV infection and the prevalence of behavioral risk factors.

The overall approach of this project is based on standardized methods for integrated biological and behavioral surveillance (IBBS) surveys used around the world with adaptations to the local context. There are two phases to the IBBS.

1. Phase I will be a rapid formative assessment, from which data will be gathered to inform the next phase.
2. Phase II will determine survey logistics and implement the behavioral questionnaire and HIV counseling and testing.

Multiple methods to estimate the size of the key populations will also be included as components of the survey.

The objectives of the overall IBBS effort are

- Generate reliable estimates of HIV prevalence, related behavioral, social and environmental factors that affect HIV transmission among key populations
- Describe the factors that contribute to the access and use of health services
- Triangulate an estimate of the number of the key populations

The IBBS will provide risk behavior information to appropriately advocate for resources, develop targeted prevention, care and treatment interventions, develop effective policy programs to meet the health needs of the key populations, provide an understanding of the scope of the HIV epidemic through size estimation, and appropriately allocate sufficient resources.

Objectives of formative assessment

1. **To provide practical information related to the set up of an IBBS [*FEASIBILITY*]**
   - Survey office location & hours (accessibility, safety, etc.)
   - Language (primary, secondary)
   - Strategies and willingness to recruit specific populations (e.g.: age ranges, socio-economic status, outside of capital city, etc.)
   - Terminology (agreement of non-offensive/ acceptable universal terminology)
   - Acceptable length of time for IBBS interview
   - Willingness to participate in RDS or TLS
   - Acceptability of HIV testing

- Identification of potential seeds, in case RDS is chosen as sampling methodology
- Population size estimates

2. **To deepen knowledge and achieve consensus on population characteristics of key populations [*POPULATION*]**
   - Perceived population size
   - Characteristics of key population(s) locally, including subpopulations
   - Knowledge of gatekeepers & stakeholders in subpopulations
   - Description of where key populations (including subpopulations) live, congregate, meet each other, etc.
   - Sexual/social networks
   - Identification and use of service providers
3. **To deepen knowledge surrounding survey materials [*MATERIALS*]**
   - Acceptability of survey administration (netbooks, laptops, paper instruments)
   - Review of coupon (design, language)
   - Incentive structure
   - Initial recommendation on content for referral packets

Formative assessment methods

The project will be conducted using multiple methodologies to elicit detailed descriptions of the context and meaning of risk behaviors from the experience and perspective of persons knowledgeable of the key populations as well as members of the key populations. Methods include a review of secondary data, census, enumeration, mapping, observation, individual key informant in-depth interviews (KIIs) and focus groups (FGs).

- **Focus groups with key population** [*LIST number of focus groups per population per site*]
  An FG is a semi-structured group interview with a small group of individuals that is facilitated by a member of the survey staff. FGs are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern on the cultural groups or subgroups represented.
- **Individual in-depth key informant interviews with population members/stakeholders** [*LIST number of interviews per population per site]*
  KIIs are semi-structured and based on a guide that lists questions and suggested probes. KIIs with key informants are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Key informants can help the field staff interpret themes that have been identified through other methods.
- **Community mapping (Field teams along with KIIs, FGs participants)** [*LIST number of mapping exercises per population per site*]
  Mapping identifies all places that are important to local key population members and describes characteristics of these places and the populations that are found there. Simple maps will be generated during FG participatory mapping exercise and verified through systematic walks though the community.
- **Observation (Drawing on existing data and local expert knowledge of the area)**
  Observation is composed of systematic and periodic observations of activities, behaviors, events or interactions that take place in a particular place at a particular time.
- **Size estimation: Census or enumeration based on mapping and observation**
  The project will use census or enumeration to estimate the number of key population members in the survey sites. In both census and enumeration, venues where key population members congregate and meet sex partners are identified by individuals familiar with the local key population context.
  - Censuses are efforts to count all members of the key population at all venues. This method assumes that key population members can be reached at identified venues and then counted.
  - Enumeration is similar to census, but instead of counting every individual at every site, a number of sites are chosen from a sample frame or list of venues and only the individuals within those chosen venues are counted. These counts are then scaled up

according to the size and structure of the sample frame.

Project timeline

Formative assessment is anticipated to take up to [*INSERT time frame*]. During the fieldwork, the hours vary depending on the scheduling of interviews and focus groups, considering that some participants will only be available at night or weekends. For these reasons, we anticipate that part of the work of field teams will be at night or on weekends.

Key populations

Sampling for formative assessment is purposive and is conducted until saturation is reached (i.e. ideally, when information acquired is consistent and no new information is uncovered with further efforts). Persons selected to participate in formative assessment activities will include key population community members, gatekeepers and stakeholders, as well as experts about the key population. These include, but are not limited to service providers, community activists and organizers, or people who frequently come into contact with these populations as it relates to the behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection (e.g. taxi drivers for FSW). In particular, key population members who meet the definitions below will be approached to take part in formative assessment activities.

[*LIST all key populations and definitions*]

- Gender
- Age
- Are knowledgeable about key population
- [*INSERT eligibility criteria for key population member*] (i.e., MSM is defined as a biological male who has had anal sex with another biologically male person, regardless of gender or sexual identity in the past 12 months)
- Are able to provide verbal informed consent (e.g. are not under the influence of alcohol or other drugs)

Recruitment

[*DESCRIBE plan to recruit FG and KII participants*] Include the following in the recruitment plan

- Develop a list of key population community contacts
- Include a diverse group of key population members for interviews. Diversity could include age, education, areas of residenceetc.
- Stakeholders could also include proprietors of commercial establishments that cater to key populations
- Identify safe spaces to conduct FGs/KIIs
- Identify who is responsible for recruitment and in what time frame

Implementation instructions

Focus groups

FG participants should be comprised of a diverse group of the key population members. Some FGs may be limited to a particular sub-group of the key population.

Methods and materials for FG

Focus groups

- Are usually held with 6-10 participants. In many cases, more people will need to be recruited because there is a high no-show rate.
- May be limited to a particular sub-group (age, SES, language etc.) This should be decided in discussion with the team leader and project coordinator.
- Should be held in a private, local setting (e.g. local office space, apartment, clinic setting) as arranged by survey staff. Participants should be given information in advance regarding location and time of FG.
- Last between 90-120 minutes

To ensure confidentiality, participants should be asked to come up with a pseudonym that they will use during the focus group and write it on a nametag that all participants and facilitators can easily see. Participants' name should NOT be written in notes. Note taker should compile written summaries of the proceedings the **same day** as the FG.

Preparing for FGs

- Read and be acquainted with the FG guide before conducting the FG
- Make sure that you have all of the needed materials including instruments, consent forms, equipment and consumables
- Check to make sure the audio recorder is working
- Arrive at site early to prepare
- Ask participants to arrive a little early so that the screening form and informed consent process can be conducted individually before the FG

What to bring to FG

- ❑ FG interview instrument in correct language (2 copies)
- ❑ FG consent form (2 copies per participant)
- ❑ FG ground rules
- ❑ Pens and extra paper
- ❑ Interview notes form
- ❑ Digital recorder (verify working prior to FG)
- ❑ Extra batteries
- ❑ Large flip-chart paper and markers (for community mapping)
- ❑ City/area map (for community mapping)
- ❑ Observation forms
- ❑ Camera (for photographing community maps and potential RDS sites)
- ❑ Copies of coupon (to solicit feedback)
- ❑ Copy of netbook visual (to solicit feedback)
- ❑ Incentives for participants
- ❑ Incentives log sheet
- ❑ Refreshments for participants
- ❑ IEC materials
- ❑ Condoms and Lubricant
- ❑ Signs to direct FG participants to the correct room (if necessary)
- ❑ Bag for transporting materials
- ❑ Watch/time recorder
- ❑ Survey badge/ID

Conducting the FG

- Greet participants as they arrive. Screen and enroll participants in FG.
- If more than the maximum number of people (usually 10) show up for a FG, the extra people will need to be told that the group is full. Field team should provide and document transportation allowance and refreshments, thank them for coming, and let them go home.
- Review information sheet for informed consent script with participants as a group. Next, meet with each participant individually to ask if they have any questions and obtain verbal consent. Facilitator signs the consent form with their unique ID.
- Review the focus group ground rules

- Request permission to audio record the focus group. If participants consent, begin recording and note relevant details before starting the discussion. If **ALL** participants do not consent, do **NOT** record the discussion.
- Assign one team member to facilitate the discussion, and the other to take notes. Feel free to switch roles if necessary.
- Conduct the focus group using the FG guide
- The moderator should get the discussion started and guide the participants back to the topic as needed; it is not necessary to follow the order of the FG guide
- Conduct community mapping exercise; take notes and photograph map
- Thank the participants for their time and valuable feedback and offer participants refreshments. Offer the participants IEC materials, condoms and lube.
- Dispense incentives. Have participants sign or initial logbook for receipt of incentives.

Ground rules for FG

- Respect and value that everyone is different and will think differently about things
- Listen to each other
- Let only one person speaks at a time
- When you are talking, raise your hand or make a gesture to let others know who is speaking
- Do not interrupt a speaker
- If you do not understand what someone is saying, please ask them to repeat it or explain it in another way
- You do not have to share any personal information about yourself
- Be polite and do not be rude to others. If you disagree with something, focus on the thing that is being discussed and not the person involved.
- Turn your phones off. No texting or phone calls during the FG.
- Make every effort to stay for the entire meeting
- If you have any concerns about the ground rules not being respected, please speak up
- Remember that everything discussed in the FG is confidential. After the FG, do not mention any participant's name in any discussion. The FG deals with personal matters and we want to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all.

Mapping exercise

Explain to participants the objectives and process of community mapping and provide some time to clarify any questions. Participants must be active in the mapping. The facilitator/moderator will help clarify information from the participants and develop the map.

Use poster board or flip-chart paper to draw the map. Someone who can write clearly and draw delineated lines should draw the map.

- Draw a rough outline of your town/ neighborhood/area
- Draw the cardinal points (compass), where North, South, East and West are correctly indicated
- Draw an X on the map where the group is meeting. You can write something like "we are here". This allows participants to orient themselves and give a more or less accurate location of sites to identify/put on the map.
- Use different colored pens or pencils to color code different types of sites or activities. For example, health facilities can be marked in green, and bars can be marked in orange.

Once the map is set up, ask participants to point out areas where there are activities, where key population members socialize, where they reside, etc. They will have already discussed these locations during the focus group. Go back to your notes if participants run out of ideas.

- Draw a boundary around locations mentioned. Use different color pens and symbols for each. For example, you can use a glass to represent bars, a basket for marketplaces, etc.
    - Restaurants, bars, markets, gardens
    - Facilities where population members seek access to health care
    - A possible location to set up the full survey
- Ask about characteristics of these places and write them in words or using symbols.

For example, you might draw a stop sign for dangerous areas, etc.

- Closed, open, easy or difficult to access
- Dangerous or safe
- Other

- In a corner of the paper, create a legend with colors and symbols for sites and activities and what each represents

When you feel like the map is finished, thank participants for their time and valuable feedback and offer refreshments. Provide IEC materials, condoms and lube. Dispense incentives. Have participants sign or initial logbook for receipt of incentives. Photograph the map with the digital camera and attach to the report of the FG.

Field verification

Once the mapping exercise and FG is complete, ask 2 or 3 participants to volunteer to assist with field verification of the map. For verification, staff and participants should visit each of the areas drawn on the map to confirm that what is written on the map is accurate.

- Verification can be done on foot or by car, whichever is safer or preferred by focus group participants
- During verification, observe the reactions from participants (verbal and body language) and take notes on the observation form. Are participants scared, do they have more details on the sites observed, did they think of other possible key informants?
- After verification, improve your map and notes based on observations during the verification: you may need to add additional sites that participants mentioned during verification

Do not forget to thank all participants who accompany you on the verification: remember they can refer other participants to the formative assessment, and may help identify key informants we may need in this survey or for future studies.

At the end of the mapping/observation exercise and FG you should have the following completed/ ready to expand upon

- ❑ Eligibility forms
- ❑ Consent forms
- ❑ Interviewer notes
- ❑ Recording
- ❑ Community map
- ❑ Photo of community map
- ❑ Photos of any potential RDS sites
- ❑ Field observation notes
- ❑ Completed taxi/juice log

Key informant/stakeholder interviews

KIIs include individuals who are immersed in the community who are capable of offering objective accounts of behaviors, beliefs and experiences of the key population communities. We attempt to interview a broad spectrum of the key population, including hard-to-reach pockets.

[*INSERT key population group and list eligibility requirements below*]

- Gender
- Age
- Are knowledgeable about key population
- Insert eligibility criteria for key population member (i.e., MSM is defined as a biological male who has had anal sex with another biologically male person, regardless of gender or sexual identity in the past 12 months)
- Are able to provide verbal informed consent (meaning, can talk in a mutually understood language and are not under the influence of alcohol or other drugs)

Methods and materials for KII

KIIs

- Should be conducted with at least 10-15 participants for each key population
- Should last no more than 60 minutes
- May be conducted with one or two facilitators. Some KI may not feel comfortable having two facilitators present during the interview. Community outreach workers should communicate this to facilitators and in these circumstances only one facilitator will conduct the interview.

Preparing for the interview

- Read and be acquainted with the KII guide before conducting the interview
- Make sure that you have all of the needed materials including instruments, consent forms, equipment and refreshments
- Check to make sure the audio recorder is working
- Arrive early to prepare for the interview

What to bring

- ❑ KII interview instrument (2 copies)
- ❑ KII consent form (2 copies)
- ❑ Pens and extra paper
- ❑ Digital recorder (verify working prior to KII)
- ❑ Extra batteries
- ❑ Interview notes form
- ❑ Watch/time recorder
- ❑ Copies of coupon (to solicit feedback)
- ❑ Copy of netbook visual (to solicit feedback)/ RDS
- ❑ IEC materials
- ❑ Condoms and lubricant
- ❑ Incentives for participants and Incentive log sheet (if appropriate)
- ❑ Refreshments

Conducting the KII

- Arrive early at scheduled location. Some key informants may be interviewed in their office or business site. Others may require the staff to find a private location in which to conduct the interview.
- Greet key informant and introduce the survey
- Screen and enroll the key informant
- Review informed consent form with participant. Obtain verbal consent. Facilitator signs the consent form with their unique ID.
- Request permission to audio record the interview. If participant consents, begin recording and note relevant details before starting the interview. If participant does not consent, do **NOT** record the interview.
- Proceed with one team member conducting the interview and the other taking field notes. Feel free to switch roles if necessary.
- Thank the participant for their time and valuable feedback
- Offer participant refreshments, IEC and condoms and lubricant (if appropriate)
- Dispense incentives (if appropriate). Have participant initial logbook for receipt of incentives.
- Immediately write up notes from interview

At the end of the in-depth key informant interview you should have the following completed/ready to expand upon

- ❑ Eligibility form
- ❑ Consent form
- ❑ Interviewer notes
- ❑ Recording
- ❑ Completed incentive log

Size estimation methods - census and enumeration

Drawing on the mapping and observations carried out during the formative phase, a comprehensive list of venues or hotspots where key population members meet and interact with clients will be compiled for each site. Further mapping may be needed to identify all the hotspots in the survey site and document the days and times key population members frequent each venue/ hotspot. From this information survey staff will prepare a final list of hotspots with the address, time and day key population members frequent them.

What to bring

- ❑ Direct data count collection form
- ❑ Field observation form
- ❑ Clicker to tally
- ❑ Community map
- ❑ TLS venue enumeration form
- ❑ Geographic mapping/size estimation form
- ❑ FSW site characteristic form
- ❑ Camera

Conducting census or enumeration

Based on the number of venues, the survey team will decide to implement either a census or enumeration method.

  - **Census** - If the number of venues per key population is less than 30 each, all hotspots/ venues will be included and a direct count of each key population member will be taken.
  - **Enumeration** - If more than 30 key population member venues are identified, a random sample of venues will be selected and the key population members in these venues will be counted.

- Field team members will include community guides and stakeholders to assist with identifying members of the key population
- Two field team members will visit each venue or a sample of venues and count and document the number of persons they directly see and can identify as member of the key population. In addition, team members ask

stakeholders knowledgeable about the site how many members of the key population are at the site and document the lower and upper estimates of number of key population members reported.

- For both census and enumeration, field team members will spend 1-2 hours in a hotspot/venue at peak hours. Peak hours are days and times in the week when the greatest number of key population members frequent the location.
- Field team members will visit each venue/hotspot only once
- To account for the possibility of duplicate counting of individuals who frequent multiple hotspots, direct counts will be conducted within a short time frame to minimize mobility between venues. In addition, KI indicate the degree of mobility between sites.
- Counts will be reviewed by the field team manager daily

At the end of the size-estimation exercise you should have the following completed/ready to expand upon

- ❑ Field observation notes
- ❑ Direct data count form
- ❑ Mapping/enumeration form
- ❑ Site characteristic form

Staff

Staff roles and responsibilities

Project coordinator

- Coordinate overall logistics for formative assessment activity
- Supervise team leaders, facilitators and outreach staff
- Ensure survey is being conducted according to protocol and ethical approval
- Evaluate the quality and completeness of the data and make recommendations for improvement
- Meet with the field teams regularly to debrief, review the expanded field notes, discuss impressions and common and divergent themes among focus group participants and across groups or individual interviews, as well as identify emerging concepts
- Using the summary from the expanded field notes, keep track of emerging concepts and findings and maintain a summary table. The expanded field notes, debriefing sessions, summary reports and summary table will constitute an ongoing and iterative process of analysis that begins with the first interview and continues until all the data are collected.
- Make contact with community stakeholders to introduce the survey and get referrals for potential FA participants
- Communicate any adverse events encountered in the field to survey Investigators for reporting to IRBs
- Maintain all electronic files in a password protected computer
- Maintain all hard copy documentation in a secure, locked cabinet
- Ensure that all electronic formative assessment documentation is received as scheduled from the field
- Ensure that all hardcopy formative assessment documentation is returned at the end of formative assessment data collection
- Develop log of all survey equipment and ensure equipment is returned at the end of the formative assessment

- Keep a log of all data received from each site
- Track field team time and attendance

FIELD TEAMS

Team leaders

- Conduct daily debriefs with facilitators to review data collection procedures, data quality, challenges and data interpretation
- Produce summary reports from the daily debriefing sessions
- Provide technical assistance in order to conduct technically sound formative assessment activities
- Trouble shoot technical issues that may occur in the field
- Ensure survey is being conducted according to protocol and ethical approval
- Supervise field team members and manage field team expenses/allowances
- Ensure that field staff arrive on time for all FGs/KIIs and behave professionally
- Manage and reconcile petty cash for incentives and refreshments during the interviews; keep logs of incentives/refreshment dispersal and receipts for purchase of refreshments
- Ensure all needed survey materials are available and replenish supplies
- Contact individuals for recruitment into FGs/KIIs and work with facilitators to schedule FGs/KIIs
- Keep log of who has been contacted and scheduled for FGs/KIIs
- Observe FGs/KIIs and provide feedback to facilitators to improve data collection and address any issues encountered by staff
- Serve as facilitator for FGs/KIIs as needed
- Store survey equipment (laptops, audio recorders, flash drives etc.) and hard copies of survey documentation (consent forms, field notes, summary reports) in a secure, locked cabinet at the end of each day
- Download audio files from recorders onto laptops, zip file
- Backup all electronic data onto flash drives daily
- Track time and attendance of every person at each site daily

Facilitators

- Check in with the team leader to determine daily schedule for FGs/KIIs
- Report to all FGs/KIIs on time and follow data collection procedures
- Gather all materials and equipment needed for each day
- Act as moderator/interviewer or note taker for each FG/KII. Teams can alternate roles.
- Distribute participant incentives/refreshments and document dispersal to participants
- Immediately after each interview, review, expand and refine notes from the session
- Use field notes to complete summary report forms for submission during daily debriefings
- Report back to team leader and return materials and equipment
- Participate in daily debriefs to review data collection procedures, data quality, challenges and data interpretation
- Record and submit hours worked

Outreach workers (optional)

The outreach workers will work in collaboration with gatekeepers and stakeholders who are working directly with key populations to notify them about the formative assessment and recruit potential participants. In addition, they will be trained to conduct ethnographic mapping activities and observations.

- Conduct outreach with community and street-based organizations to help identify and recruit participants
- Call potential participants, screen them for eligibility and recruit them for the formative assessment using the recruitment script
- Schedule appointments with all eligible participants and give their contact details to the project coordinator
- Keep a record of all calls made/received and ensure that participant contact details are stored safely
- Participate in community mapping activities and community observation exercises

- Hold meetings with key population members and stakeholders to raise awareness about the formative assessment and encourage them to participate
- Prepare weekly reports on the activities undertaken throughout each week and submit to project coordinators either orally or in writing

Staff behavior

- Professional conduct is required
  - Refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages and drug use during and 12 hours before shift
  - Do not initiate or engage in lewd conversations or behaviors
  - Adhere to strict confidentiality and ethical principles
  - Do not initiate or engage in sexual behaviors or relationships with participants while conducting the formative assessment
  - Do not give participants your personal phone number, e-mail or Facebook information during the data collection process. All calls to the participants should be made using the project phone.
- Field staff must seek to establish an environment of trust and good relationship, both with colleagues and with the participants of the survey
- Facilitators must obtain informed consent from potential participants before starting the interview (FG/KII). Participants should have the opportunity to refuse participation based on an understanding of what is being asked to do and his refusal should not have implied or actual negative consequences.
- Participants help the field team by participating in the formative assessment. They never should feel stigmatized and discriminated against. Staff should never use derogatory terms to describe other employees or participants.
- It is our responsibility to ensure the protection of participants against the damages that may result of participating in the formative assessment. This means we must make efforts to maintain its confidentiality, privacy and anonymity at all times (for example, <u>do not use names or write personal information</u> that could be found by others to convey information).
- Facilitators should encourage participants of FG to respect the confidentiality and privacy of other participants
- Field teams must ensure that only staff has access to formative assessment information and any information that could identify participants.
- All field personnel will sign a confidentiality agreement, to ensure confidentiality of any identifiable information about participants in the formative assessment.
- Facilitators should indicate they are not health care providers or counselors, at the end of interviews they can refer any participants to appropriate health care services
- Staff should not respond to any media questions about the formative assessment. All press inquiries should be directed to the project coordinator. The project coordinator must be notified immediately if approached or contacted by the press.

Fieldwork guidelines

Data collection activities in community settings can be challenging. Interviewers can use the following guidelines to deal with some situations that may arise during fieldwork.

- Carry project identification, approval letter or ID card with you at all times
- Plan ahead
- Be alert
- Use common sense
- Have at the very least 3 staff together at each field site, especially at night

Ineligible participants

If a participant proves ineligible during screening thank them for their time and explain politely that they cannot participate **without giving specific details on the recruitment criteria**. In cases where the participant was scheduled by a member of the survey team, they should be given transport money.

Asking off-topic questions

If questions are not related to the content or procedures of the IBBS data collection process, they should not be discussed during the interview. After the interview, participants can be provided with appropriate referral information on where they can receive help. Remember, we are not healthcare professionals and should not act as such.

If a participant asks questions about your personal life, politely answer that you understand that he or she might be curious about you, but that the point of the interview is to garner appropriate IBBS information from them and not to share information about your life.

Intoxicated or violent participants

If a participant is intoxicated they are not eligible to participate in the survey. If you realize a participant is intoxicated during the interview, you may end it immediately. When a participant is angry or aggressive try to listen and acknowledge their concerns while remaining calm. Allow for extra space between you and a violent individual. If you can't handle a situation, call for help from nearby colleagues. It can be helpful to establish a code word or phrase with your colleagues to signal that there is a problem situation and you need assistance.

Flirting or sexual advances from participants

If a participant makes advances at you, politely remind them that it is against your code of conduct to establish social ties with participants. You are there as a professional to complete the interview. Do not give participants any personal details. If the participant continues making advances or you feel uncomfortable, terminate the interview. You can schedule the interview for another time or have a colleague complete the interview.

Asking for money

Do not give money to participants other than the stipulated incentive. If a participant asks for money, food, etc., turn them down politely.

Sad, emotional, tearful participants

Always empathize with participants and allow them time to recuperate if they become emotional or tearful. You may offer water or tissues if available. However, try not to be emotional and do not offer participants advice. If the participant feels better you can continue the interview. If the participant continues to be emotional, you may need to terminate the interview and re-schedule for another date.

Participant is suspicious of the interviewer

Always let participants know that what they say in the interview/discussion is completely confidential and will not be used against them. Interviewers should try to establish good rapport with participants in order to gain their trust. However, if a participant remains apprehensive you can remind them that it is their choice to participate and they may choose to not participate at any time. Staff should cultivate and maintain ties with gatekeepers during the course of the formative assessment as this can help with gaining trust from the community.

Robbery or assault

If you are the victim of a robbery, hand over whatever is required to protect yourself from physical harm. Your personal safety is the most important thing; neither data nor money is more important than your health or life. Seek emergency medical attention immediately. Report the incident to the police and to the project coordinator as soon as possible

Safety and reporting adverse events

Safety

- Carry project identification/approval letter with you at all times.
- Facilitators should inform team leaders about the location of all FG/KII.
- Be aware of surroundings.
- Approach people in a welcoming manner but be cautious if you have any concerns.
- Interviewers should end the interview if they feel threatened at any point.
- Consider having a code word or phrase to call for assistance from a co-worker.
- Have an emergency action plan.

Adverse events

Facilitators should report any incidents to the team leader immediately. The team leader will determine, in consultation with the project coordinator and others project investigators, whether it should be considered a reportable event, meaning that a formal report needs to be submitted to the project-associated institutional review boards (IRBs) that monitor ethical procedures.

An adverse event is an unanticipated problem involving risk to subjects or staff that ultimately results in harm to the subject or others. Adverse events could include

- A field team member talks with anyone but survey staff about what they have learned about a particular respondent (breach of confidentiality)
- One of the survey respondents is threatened or abused because s/he has participated
- Loss of records that contain identifiable information
- A field staff member is a victim of robbery, assault, sexual assault or involved in a transportation accident while on duty

Data management and communication

All focus groups, in-depth interviews and stakeholder interviews will be assigned a unique ID number. Only the ID number will appear on materials submitted by staff to other team members.

Any personally identifying information used to facilitate contact will be recorded on a sheet separate from the interview data and will be kept in a locked file separate from the interview transcripts.

Photography

- During the mapping exercises you will take photos of the maps that were drawn. Team leaders will use the naming convention described below to save the photos to the laptops on a daily basis.
- In addition to photographing the map, community members may identify sites that could act as a good location for an RDS site. If a potential RDS site is identified, please take a photo so we can revisit the site at a later date if it is feasible.
- **DO NOT** take photos of any participant or person. Photography is only to be used for the two circumstances listed above.

Audio file/summary report naming convention

Field notes, summary reports and audio files should be named with the following naming convention. All field notes, summary reports and audio files from a particular FG, KII and stakeholder interview should be represented by the same code.

City/Area name

<dash>

Key population

<dash>

First letter of FA method: **FG** or **KII** or **STA** or **MAP**

Sequential number of FG or KII, etc.

<dash>

Date

City X-FSW-FG1-01NOV2012
City X-MSM-KII7-07NOV2012
City Y-FSW-STA4-10NOV2012
City Y-FSW-MAP1-27SEPT2012

In the first example, '**City X-FSW-FG1-01NOV2012**' represents the first FG conducted in City X by the FSW group, which was held on 1st of November 2012.

The second example **'City X-MSM-KII7-07NOV2012'** represents the 7th in-depth interview by the MSM group in City X, which was conducted on 07 of November 2012.

The third example, **'City Y-FSW-STA4-10NOV2012'** represents the 4th stakeholder interview by the FSW group in City Y, which was conducted on the 10th of November 2012.

The fourth example, '**City Y-FSW-MAP1-27SEPT2012**' represents the 1st mapping exercise by the FSW group in City Y, which was conducted on the 27th of September (if there is more than 1 photo, just numerically add the number to the end, e.g. 27SEPT2012-0, 1, 2, 3, etc.)

Audio files

- The team leader should transfer the audio files from the digital audio recorders to a secure, password-protected laptop using a USB
- Label audio files appropriately and save as .mp3 files
- Spot-check the recordings to ensure that they were recorded properly

Field notes

- Always take field notes during discussions
- Notes should include questions and responses, observations of body language and field staff's thoughts/commentary on the interaction
- Do not add interviewer's thoughts/ commentaries until after the FG/KII, in case a participant would like to see the notes
- Expand notes as soon as possible after data collection to avoid forgetting critical elements
- Listen to the audio file after the interview to add to your notes
- When reviewing the summary notes, strip all personal identifiers. Replace identifying information with a categorical description and the word "omitted." For example, "name of [family member, friend, partner/spouse, co-worker, doctor] omitted."
- Deliver hard copies of field notes and community maps to team leader at the end of each day. Deliver notebooks with field notes and community maps to project coordinator at end of formative assessment.

FG/KII summary reports

- Use field notes from the daily debriefing sessions to complete the summary reports using the summary report template
- Use laptops to type up summary reports; save the file using the naming convention above
- If any important information from a FG/KII is not included elsewhere in the summary report, use the additional information section at the end
- Ensure that no names or other personally identifying information are included in the summary reports
- Give completed summary report forms to the team leader every day that data is collected
- Team leader should review summary report forms with facilitators for completeness and data quality
- Send summary reports to the IBBS project coordinator, who will be responsible for keeping track of emerging concepts and findings and maintaining a summary table

Data logs

- Following completion of each FG/In-depth interview/stakeholder interview/mapping/size estimation, complete data logs verifying all information was collected
- Team leader will complete the log and collect the data

Survey communication

The formative assessment requires timely contact between the field offices, the project coordinator and the investigators. The following protocol should be followed

- Team leaders hold daily debriefings with facilitators to discuss participant recruitment, review data collection procedures, data quality, challenges and data interpretation – expand further on field notes
- Team leaders communicate with the project coordinator on a regular basis regarding recruitment and progress with data collection
- Project coordinator reviews and compiles field notes and summary report forms
- All questions regarding logistics should be directed to project coordinator.\
- All questions regarding data collection techniques (i.e. interviewing, focus groups, observations, mapping and enumeration) or challenges with participants should be directed first to a team leader. If no team leader is present, questions should be directed to the project coordinator, who will be responsible for communicating with field staff.