On the Frontlines
Operationalizing Good Practice in TIP Data Collection

2019
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About the guidelines

Combatting trafficking in persons (TIP) requires evidence-based knowledge - to effectively target prevention efforts, design appropriate protection interventions or pursue effective prosecutions. This requires methodologically rigorous, reliable and ethical data collection as well as objective and insightful analysis and use of that data. It also requires guarding against weak or faulty data, which has the potential to cause disproportionate harm, including to trafficking victims, when used to design or support ill-conceived and ungrounded public policy and programmatic interventions on TIP.

In 2019, NEXUS Institute released a publication on good practice in TIP data collection, entitled: The Science (and Art) of Understanding Trafficking in Persons: Good Practice in TIP Data Collection. This publication identified and explored criteria for good practice in TIP data collection, including: data quality; relevance and usefulness; accessibility; timeliness; cost appropriateness; and attention to legal and ethical issues. NEXUS then applied these criteria to TIP data collection and research practices. The publication outlines five stages of TIP data collection – 1) design and planning; 2) data collection; 3) storage, maintenance and management; 4) analysis; and 5) use, presentation and dissemination – and explores issues that may arise at these stages, as well as good practice examples at each particular stage.

These guidelines, based on the overall study, are a practical and operational resource and reference for those engaged in TIP data collection. They offer lessons and tools to help professionals conduct TIP data collection in a constructive and ethical way and in line with their existing work and mandates. They are based on the experiences and expertise of more than 120 TIP researchers, data collection staff and TIP experts as well as more than 400 trafficking victims. They are intended as a concrete and practical contribution to efforts to improve TIP data collection globally. These guidelines are intended for TIP professionals – from governments, international organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – who wish to undertake data collection as part of their anti-trafficking efforts and to learn from past and current TIP data collection efforts.

These guidelines are part of a series developed in the framework of NEXUS Institute’s project Good Practice in Global Data Collection on Trafficking in Persons: The Science (And Art) of Understanding TIP. Other papers and resources from the project include: The Science (and Art) of Understanding Trafficking in Persons: Good Practice in TIP Data Collection; Legal and Ethical Issues in Data Collection on Trafficking in Persons; and Good Practice in TIP Data Collection: Recommendations for Donors and Funders. The project was generously funded by the United States Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP).

Please see Annex #1 for a summary of the methodology used for the full publication.
What is TIP data collection?

TIP data collection is the overarching process of gathering and assigning meaning to data on various aspects of trafficking in persons, including its scope and nature and also anti-trafficking responses. This involves not only data collection itself but the processing and management of the data as well its analysis, use, presentation and dissemination. TIP data\(^2\) is qualitative or quantitative information on trafficking in persons. Pieces of data are essentially individual pieces of information. Data is collected, managed and stored and then analyzed, after which it is used (for example, presented in written form or visualized using graphs, images or other analysis tools).

When TIP data collection is conducted properly and ethically it allows data collectors and analysts to: effectively analyze and use data and findings; contribute understanding and knowledge to the TIP field; and inform effective policies and programs to address human trafficking. By contrast, improperly or unethically collected data may result in:

- an inability to answer data collection questions accurately;
- distorted or inaccurate findings and misleading conclusions;
- an inability to repeat or validate the process of data collection;
- harm to data collection participants;
- the potential to compromise interventions designed with the data;
- insufficient data to meet the research objectives.

TIP data collection may be undertaken by governments, IOs, NGOs, businesses and private sector actors. It may be global in scope and collated in a large and technically complex database. It may also relate to very specific and targeted data collected by a single organization or person to answer a very specific question. In some cases, it may constitute a discrete research project. In other cases, it may be the collection of administrative and research data as

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\(^2\) United Nations (2000) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, UN Doc A/45/49, Article 3. Exploitation includes “at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”. In the case of children, “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in [the definition of trafficking in persons]”.

\(^3\) These guidelines treat the word “data” as an uncountable or collective noun rather than a plural, its Latin origin notwithstanding. By extension, we refer to “a piece of data” rather than “a datum” where called for.
part of TIP-specific data collection efforts (for example, by the offices of National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms). In still other cases, it may be administrative data collected as part of a project or an institution’s on-going operational work, either specific to TIP or more generally, such as social services or law enforcement. It also includes the collection of data to monitor or evaluate anti-trafficking interventions.

For these guidelines we focus on two distinct categories of TIP data: 1) **Data collected for administrative purposes** and 2) **Data collected for research purposes**.

*Diagram #1. Different types of TIP data collection*

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**Data collected for administrative purposes**
This refers to information collected primarily for administrative purposes. It is collected by government departments as well as NGOs and IOs for the purposes of registration, transaction and record keeping in the context of operational work with trafficking victims, usually during service delivery (for example, healthcare, social work, or legal assistance). This includes, for example, case files about trafficking victims being assisted by an NGO or government office. Administrative data also includes that which comes from operational work in the legal process (for example, investigative files, court files and outcomes, data collected about perpetrators of crime and their cases within the criminal justice system). Sources of administrative data include the agencies, authorities and services that engage with victims or perpetrators of trafficking and violence (for example, police, prosecutors, judiciary, immigration officials, health services, social services and specialized service providers, both government and NGO). Some administrative data is specifically about TIP (for example, case files about trafficking victims being assisted by a dedicated NGO or from criminal justice records about TIP cases). In other cases, TIP administrative data is embedded within wider systems of data collection (for example, TIP cases within a broader criminal justice database, TIP cases among vulnerable persons assisted by state social services, or TIP as one form of human rights violations).

**Data collected for research purposes**
This refers to deliberate and discrete data collection on a specific issue in order to answer a specific question or address a specific hypothesis. Research data may be collected by researchers, governments, NGOs, IOs and private sector actors and may be collected by a range of methods (for example, through interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, or surveys) whether in person or remotely (for example, by telephone or online). Research data
may include primary and/or secondary data. Some research is TIP-specific, while other research considers TIP within wider issues of migration, labor issues, vulnerable groups and so on.

These two types of data collection have different intentions and, by extension, also different approaches and procedures. Whereas the former is collected in the context of operational work (for example, service delivery to victims or the criminal justice process), the latter is collected specifically for research purposes. Administrative data may be used for research purposes. However, because administrative data is collected as part of operational work, its primary purpose is practical and operational. This means that, in practice, administrative data is not always collected in a sufficiently rigorous way as to be helpful or appropriate for some research and data collection efforts. Generally speaking, when collecting and analyzing administrative data for research purposes, the same stringent standards should apply as when collecting research data. Questions, therefore, need to be asked about when administrative data can be used for research (and for what types of research) and what limitations need to be understood from the outset.

**TIP-related data collection – the 3Ps**
The fight against trafficking in persons is generally framed around what is referred to as the “three P paradigm” – referring to prevention of the act of trafficking, protection of victims of trafficking (VoTs) and prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking.

*Diagram #2. The three P paradigm*

- **Protection** refers broadly to the various stages and steps involved in protecting a victim of human trafficking, including identification, assistance and reintegration.
- **Prosecution** refers to the overarching legal response to human trafficking including, but not limited to, criminal justice prosecution of traffickers.
- **Prevention** refers to efforts to prevent trafficking in persons from occurring, commonly via awareness campaigns, but also including cross-cutting endeavors such as amending and enforcing legislation, working to reduce vulnerabilities to trafficking and strengthening partnerships between anti-trafficking actors.

TIP data collection may be on any aspect of these pivotal components of anti-trafficking responses. For this project we focus on **protection** and **prosecution**, to make the scope...
manageable. Nonetheless the Three Ps are closely related and not necessarily separate areas in practice, including in terms of data collection. Protection data is also often prevention data, particularly in terms of preventing re-trafficking and understanding general protection needs. Information about the demographics of trafficking victims being assisted can provide useful information about possible vulnerabilities and risk factors among assisted trafficking victims, which can be used to design and target prevention efforts. Similarly, better understanding prosecutions in terms of how they may serve as a deterrent for traffickers and in disrupting trafficking operations overlaps with prevention efforts.

**Protection-related TIP data** is data related to trafficking victims and their trafficking experiences, as well as their protection needs and experiences (for example, in terms of identification, assistance, return and reintegration). It also refers to information about the operation and effectiveness of protection policies and programs for trafficking victims, including their impact in the lives of trafficked persons, their families and communities. Protection-related data helps policymakers and practitioners from governments and civil society increase their understanding of trafficking victims and human trafficking generally, as well as to be more effective in their protection efforts.

**Some examples of protection-related TIP data:**

- Number of identified and/or assisted victims
- Information about trafficking victims and their experiences of trafficking exploitation
- Information about different forms of human trafficking
- Information about different economic sectors where workers experience trafficking exploitation
- Trafficking victims’ assistance needs (for example, medical care, psychological assistance, livelihood support, education, family mediation)
- Information about the care and services that trafficked persons do or do not receive and the quality of that assistance
- Trafficking victims’ experiences of identification and non-identification
- Trafficking victims’ experiences of assistance and non-assistance
- Information about government’s role in providing assistance, including gaps
- Information about the provision of appropriate accommodation (versus, for example, the detention of trafficking victims)
- Information about trafficking victims’ lives after trafficking and over time
- Data about victims’ families and communities (for example, the impact of trafficking on families, experiences of family and community reintegration)
- How the identification system functions in-country as well as cross-border
- How victim protection systems function in-country, as well cross-border
- The operation and effectiveness of national and transnational referral mechanisms

**Prosecution-related TIP data** refers to data that supports the efforts of policymakers and practitioners to prosecute relevant crimes or to assess the impact of the criminal justice response to TIP. This might include information about human traffickers at all levels, including their backgrounds, behaviors and motivations, or about the scope and nature of human trafficking operations, including strategies and business models of traffickers and others involved in various stages and dimensions of trafficking operations. It might also include details about how criminal justice and legal procedures function in practice to arrest and prosecute human traffickers and to support and protect victims and witnesses, including through
compensation schemes. Prosecution-related TIP data can also consist of review and analysis of investigative and evidentiary data. While prosecution traditionally refers to the criminal justice response, we approach this more broadly, including various legal responses and forms of access to justice, such as civil remedies, labor dispute channels, or civil litigation. Prosecution-related data aims to help policymakers and practitioners from governments and civil society to increase their understanding of traffickers and human trafficking operations generally as well as to be more effective in their prosecution efforts and legal responses.

Examples of prosecution-related data:

- Information about suspected and convicted perpetrators of trafficking, including profiles, behaviors, motivations
- Information from trafficked persons about their experiences of trafficking and their experiences in the legal process
- Data on the nature of trafficking operations
- Numbers of complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions
- Information on processes of investigation, prosecution and convictions, both successful and unsuccessful
- Data on the sentencing of trafficking offenders
- Investigation of criminal enterprises involved in trafficking operations
- Data from labor inspections and labor inspectors about labor violations
- Data from financial institutions pertaining to trafficking crimes
- Information about traffickers and trafficking operations over time
- How the criminal justice system functions in-country, as well as across borders
- The operation and effectiveness of national and transnational law enforcement efforts
- Information about forms of protection provided by governments to victims involved in the legal process
- Data about the provision of compensation and restitution to victims
Criteria of good practice in TIP data collection

Good practice in TIP data collection is a process, technique, or methodology that meets some or all of the criteria identified in this project. There is no one model that entirely constitutes good practice. Each individual model of TIP data collection has its strengths and limitations. Nonetheless, we have identified features or characteristics at various stages of data collection that, when implemented, contribute to good practice.

The good practice criteria developed for this project are based on interviews with TIP researchers, TIP experts, TIP data collection staff, National Rapporteurs, interviews with trafficking victims and a review of relevant literature on TIP research and data collection as well as research/data collection more generally. In large part, these criteria align with literature on data collection and research more generally.

Diagram #3. Criteria of good practice in TIP data collection

Data quality

Data quality refers to whether data is able to serve its purpose in a given context. While there are many ways to conceptualize data quality, common measures are reliability, validity, accuracy and precision.

✔️ Reliability refers to the repeatability of research findings and their accessibility to other researchers (that is, whether another researcher under the same circumstances would make the same observation leading to the same conclusions).
**Validity** refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data and findings in research, in other words, the extent to which they possess the quality of being sound or true as far as can be judged.

**Accuracy** refers to the degree to which data correctly estimates or describes the quantities or characteristics it was designed to measure.

**Precision** is the depth of knowledge encoded by the data. Precision comes in many forms, such as the degree of disaggregation of statistics. For example, a summary report has low precision, while a detailed spreadsheet has high precision.

**Relevance and usefulness**
Data collection should be relevant and useful in enhancing our understanding of TIP (contributing to knowledge production) or for the specific purpose of the research (for example, building the evidence base around interventions responding to TIP). Contributing to knowledge production in the field may in and of itself be relevant and useful even without an immediate practical application. Relevance and usefulness are determined by the value of the specific TIP data collection effort (that is, the degree to which the data addresses the purposes for which it is sought by end users, including multiple user groups). Measuring relevance and usefulness, therefore, requires the identification of user groups and their sometimes-differing needs, including preparing research products in ways that enhance the probability of use, influence and impact. This also includes attention to the range of possible multiple end users, including how these end users may change over time.

**Accessibility**
Results and findings from TIP data collection should be accessible to those who are interested to learn more about the issue and those who need this information in their efforts to combat human trafficking. Making data collection accessible involves being clear about the target audience or audiences, assessing what may constitute barriers to accessing the findings and working to overcome those barriers. Accessibility is also about making results and findings accessible to those who have participated in and contributed to the data collection (for example, trafficking victims, practitioners and policymakers).

Accessibility may be constrained by a range of factors including, but not limited to:

- dissemination strategies (for example, when results are not widely disseminated, when dissemination platforms are not accessible to or do not align with consumption patterns of the target audience, when there are no hard copy versions available to those without access to or the means of reading electronic versions, or when organizations or institutions do not share results because the findings undermine their interventions);
- presentation style (for example, when the findings are presented in a way that is not comprehensible, appealing or accessible to the target audience);
- presentation formats (for example, long reports written for policymakers with limited reading time, or electronic copies for those without access to computers or the internet);
• costs (for example, when research is only for purchase and not open access, or when organizations and institutions do not have the funds to access research and findings, including the cost of paper and printer cartridges);
• language (for example, when research is not published in national languages, when research in a multi-lingual country is only published in the main language, or when relevant data is not translated to relevant languages).

Timeliness

Timeliness relates to the time required for the relevant TIP data or results to be available in order to be of use to user groups. Data should be available with enough frequency and should be sufficiently current to inform decision-making, practice and the knowledge base at appropriate levels. Timeliness of data is important if the data is to be useful for understanding the nature of the issue studied, making decisions in on-going policy discussions, designing or modifying programs or drafting relevant legislation.

When research and findings are based on data collected a long time ago, the context may have changed considerably and the analyses may have become irrelevant to the present situation and challenges. Concerns about timeliness may also be about the publication and dissemination process itself (that is, books and journal articles which involve often lengthy publication processes or the publication procedures within some organizations and institutions). This does not mean, however, that research and data collection should be rushed. Data collection projects done too quickly or with an unrealistic timeline may produce poor data and, by extension, limited understanding of the issue and/or weak interventions.

What constitutes “timely” depends on the particular data collection effort as well as the parameters of how data collection is done and the context in which it is conducted. Data collection needs to be timely in proportion to the nature and scope of what is being done. For example, what is considered timely will necessarily differ when conducting a small scale, internal review of investigative police files as compared to a longitudinal study of victims’ experiences in the criminal justice process. What is timely will also be different when studying TIP in a fast moving or evolving situation or depending on the topic being studied.

Cost appropriateness

This refers to whether the human and financial costs of the TIP data collection effort are appropriate. Or, as one TIP researcher put it, one needs to assess: “Is it doable, for the time and resources available?” Resources are central to one’s ability to collect and disseminate high quality findings that can contribute to the evidence base on human trafficking and/or inform interventions. Inadequate funds may mean that the project fails, leading to no results and wasted resources. Worse still is when under-resourcing leads to incorrect or misleading findings, which can distort and misinform the evidence base and, by extension, the resulting interventions. Cost appropriateness is also about the responsible management and implementation of data collection when resources are sufficient. Some data collection is heavily funded, but, if poorly managed, can still fail to be cost effective or cost appropriate. Determining cost appropriateness then involves considering the investment of resources relative to the benefits in terms of the data and findings gained. This requires considering all costs, including those borne by data sources and data providers. Other related considerations might include:
• Could the data collection initiative be designed another way so that costs better align with benefits?
• Is the data collection effort being conducted with adequate resources and/or in an adequate time frame?
• What resources will be wasted if the data collection process is under-resourced and cannot be correctly implemented?

Another consideration is sustainability (that is, whether a data collection initiative, once resourced, can be maintained over a long period). Some data collection is done with a purposefully short time frame, in which case sustainability is less of a concern. More commonly, TIP data collection, particularly administrative data collection, is intended to be an ongoing activity and, thus, cost appropriateness must not only be measured within a project cycle but also in the long-term. Large databases or longitudinal research projects that are only well-funded and well-staffed in the initial stages will generally struggle to find funds in the longer-term.

Legal and ethical issues
Good practice means adhering to legal and ethical requirements of data collection. Data collection should be in accordance with all relevant legislation including data protection, privacy and other related laws, across multiple jurisdictions when relevant. And because legal protections may be uneven depending upon the applicable country and jurisdiction, the highest level of legal protections should be identified and followed. And while data collection should start from the legal framework, it is also about ethical considerations and requirements, which may, in many instances, have a higher threshold. The ethical and legal frameworks relevant to TIP data collection differ by country context and project and may also be informed by a raft of other factors, including the type of data being collected, who is collecting data, where data collection takes place, who is funding data collection, whether data collection involves a group requiring special consideration, whether there are emerging issues affecting the existing ethical and/or legal framework and so on. There are many legal and ethical complexities at play in how researchers and anti-trafficking professionals undertake TIP data collection. Assessing and addressing laws and ethics in TIP data collection is relevant for all five stages of the data collection process.

Applying good practice criteria. External factors and considerations
Thoughtful and informed application of the above-mentioned criteria provides a useful starting point to guide anyone aiming for good practice in TIP data collection. These criteria, while discrete, should be considered together. For example, high quality data may be limited in its usefulness to those who want and need the information if it is not available in a timely fashion. Good practice is multi-faceted and multi-layered.

Moreover, different criteria will be of varying relevance for different organizations or institutions, the specific field of work and topic as well as the different situations and contexts in which data collection takes place. What is assessed to be good practice by one organization or institution, working on one aspect of TIP in one country or setting, will not necessarily be considered good practice by another working with different parameters. Equally, what is possible and advisable will be informed by the context in which data collection is to take place. As such, while the above criteria offer useful guidance, attention also needs to be paid to the wider context and dynamics of any given data collection process.
There are a number of external factors and considerations that may come into play when making decisions around good practice in TIP data collection, including: different fields of work; different purposes of data collection; the perspective of data collection participants; and different situations and contexts. These external factors and considerations are discussed in turn below.

**External factors and considerations**
- Different fields of work
- Different purposes and goals of data collection
- The perspective of data collection participants
- Different situations and contexts

**Diagram #3. External factors and considerations when making decisions around good practice**

**Different fields of work**
An assessment of good practice in the field of TIP data collection is informed by differing worldviews and fields of work. For example, good practice for a researcher or National Rapporteur conducting empirical research will differ from that of a social worker gathering data as part of their case management work or a police officer who is documenting cases as part of investigation work. While the researcher may be concerned that the data collection contributes to scholarly knowledge and theoretical development, the social worker might be more concerned with how this data will inform their daily work and planning of future activities. These differences in intended use, in turn, mean that the data collection will likely be approached differently. The social worker may prioritize timeliness and relevance over other aspects of data quality when responding to an urgent practical need in the field, for instance, why victims or witnesses withdraw from criminal justice proceedings, or why victims fail to be identified. By contrast, for the researcher, data quality will likely be the higher priority.

**Different purposes and goals of data collection**
How good practice criteria apply will also be informed by the specific purpose and goal of data collection, which may vary widely. There are both synergies and challenges in terms of
producing socially relevant and scientifically meritorious research. For example, there are
differences between data collection for academic publishing and knowledge production and
that which is intended to inform and underpin a specific TIP intervention or policy. Some TIP
data collection needs to be done quickly and inexpensively, to respond to an urgent issue or
answer a pressing question. While it may not have gathered the highest quality data, it can
nonetheless provide information needed to respond to an issue or design an intervention in a
timely fashion and, as such, be useful and relevant. Similarly, TIP data collection by National
Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms will need to meet the national need for harmonized
TIP data (usefulness and relevance) while aligning this requirement with available time and
resources of different government departments (data providers) with which the office
cooperates. By contrast, data collection for an academic study will need to be diligent and
rigorous, collecting high quality data and responding to issues that are of high scholarly
interest. But this research may also have limited practical application in the immediate and be
both costly and time-consuming. Good practice criteria, then, must be weighed and balanced
in relation to the specific purpose and goal of the individual data collection effort.

The perspective of data collection participants

Depending on the nature of the data collection effort, many individuals, organizations and
institutions will be involved as data sources or data providers and have views on what
constitutes good practice in TIP data collection. In the case of National Rapporteurs or
equivalent mechanisms, data providers include a wide range of government departments and
civil society organizations in the country. For data collection about the criminal justice
process, data sources and data providers may include individuals and institutions involved at
the various stages of the legal process, including law enforcement, prosecutors, lawyers and
judges, as well as trafficking victims and those supporting them and even traffickers. All of
these various stakeholders may have different assessments of what constitutes good practice in
a data collection effort and how they value and weigh criteria to assess good practice.

Assessing when data collection constitutes good practice will depend on which stakeholders
are making this assessment and in response to what factors. For instance, timeliness may be
particularly important criteria for a police officer who requires data to understand changes in
trafficker behaviors and, thus, tailor investigative work. This timeliness may be valued above
criteria like data quality or cost appropriateness. Similarly, some data collection questions that
could contribute to a better understanding of trafficking for law enforcement and, thus, better
responses – such as research with traffickers – may not be ethical or perhaps even legal for
data collection projects.

Moreover, different assessments of good practice will also emerge within any one group. There
may be substantial variations of interests and perceptions of what is and is not beneficial or a
priority within a group. For example, the viewpoints and perspectives of trafficking victims as a
group and as a whole are not necessarily represented by a given selection of its members. This
equally applies to other possible data sources and data providers who cannot necessarily be
taken to represent their cohorts more broadly.

Further, not all stakeholders are well positioned to apply each criterion in assessing what
constitutes good practice in data collection, nor is it necessarily their role to do so. Assessing
data quality, for example, is a specialized expertise which many practitioners and
policymakers are not well positioned to gauge. Therefore, the variation between the
perspectives of different stakeholders needs to be weighed with this also in mind.
Different situations and contexts

Good practice is often context specific. There is no one-size-fits-all good practice in TIP data collection or indeed in anti-trafficking interventions more broadly. One method might be appropriate for a given circumstance, while the same method, in another set of circumstances, may be ineffective or even harmful.

Different contexts and situations influence if, when and how good practice can be applied in terms of data collection. In some settings, this means that some criteria, such as data quality or cost appropriateness, may need to be given different weight. Some contexts will not necessarily support good practice in at least some types of TIP data collection for different reasons. In some countries, the political system complicates the flow of information in ways that make data collection costly, difficult to execute in a timely fashion and of uneven quality. Another feature is what might be considered cost appropriate in lower resource countries, where the implementation of a more complex database (for example, centralized and accessible online) would be very costly and where the legal framework is not sufficiently robust to ensure the legal, ethical and safe flow of data.

In some settings, available infrastructure and human resources may not be able to support what might elsewhere be considered good practice. In other contexts, good practice assessments need to be undertaken with recognition of the political climate. In some contexts, there is enormous potential for the abuse and misuse of TIP data. Decisions need to be made about the collection of information about trafficking victims (including how much and what type of information) in situations where this information must legally be submitted to the state authorities, could be subpoenaed or where there may be (formal or informal) pressure to share this information with organizations or institutions. For example, it may not be advisable to collect data about trafficking victims in settings where organizations and institutions face political pressures to share this data with state authorities, who may prosecute victims for irregular migration or force them to testify against their recruiters or traffickers. For example, in one country, NGOs reported being required by police and prosecutors to provide them with information about assisted victims so that they could contact victims and pursue prosecutions.

In some countries, the space for independent research and data collection is highly constrained or controlled. Some governments may block or dispute the publication of TIP research or data collection findings when they are deemed by the state to be contrary to their interests. Some governments may not permit any data collection to take place or may only consent to the data being collected in the first place because of non-sharing or non-publication agreements.

Considerations of good practice play out in markedly different ways in various political and social contexts. For instance, tensions emerge when researchers are able to collect high quality TIP data but are not able to make it accessible to those who need it to enhance their work. When data about trafficking victims must be legally disclosed to authorities without a victim’s consent, tensions emerge between what is legal and what is ethical, including in relation to the principle of “do no harm”. In some such settings, good practice in TIP data collection may be to not collect TIP data.
Good practice in TIP data collection. Lessons from the five stages of data collection

**TIP data collection** is composed of five constituent parts, as outlined below. These guidelines present key steps and components for each stage of data collection, including specific issues to be considered.

Diagram #X. Five stages of TIP data collection

- **Stage #1. Design & Planning**
  - The preparatory stage in which the TIP data collection is planned and designed.

- **Stage #2. Data Collection**
  - The way in which information (data) is gathered and all of the processes that link up with this operational task.

- **Stage #3. Data Storage, Maintenance, Management**
  - How data is stored (retained, handled); maintained (entered, processed, cleaned, validated, checked over time); and managed (controlled, protected, delivered and enhanced).

- **Stage #4. Data Analysis**
  - The search for understanding and meaning through patterns, trends, ideas, themes and even contradictions. Examining, transforming and presenting data to discover useful information, suggest conclusions and/or support decision-making.

- **Stage #5. Use, Presentation, Dissemination**
  - The way data or research findings are used, presented and disseminated to various interested persons and/or organizations and institutions.
Stage #1. Design and Planning

This is the preparatory stage of TIP data collection in which the process is planned and designed. Stage #1 – design and planning – is the development of a data collection effort as a whole, while the more practical and operational aspects of data collection are captured in Stage #2. Regardless of the parameters of the specific TIP data collection activity, it is important to clearly define the issue or questions to be addressed and carefully select the research approach and method. This will assist in maintaining a clear focus during the design of data collection (and, later on, in the implementation phase) and in being efficient and effective in moving forward with data collection.

It is also important to consider potential limitations and constraints in the design and planning phase, which are explored to some extent in each of the steps below. At the same time, some limitations and constraints are difficult to fully anticipate or predict prior to starting data collection and may only come into focus over the course of implementation. These will need to be tackled as part of TIP data collection itself (Stage #2) and in subsequent stages (Stage #3, #4 and #5).

Many aspects of the design and planning stage are integral to later stages of data collection; many of the steps below should be reviewed and revisited as the project is implemented over time. This is especially the case for on-going data collection mechanisms, such as data collection by National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, the collection of victim case management data, data collection in the criminal justice system and so on.

For larger (and more costly) TIP data collection efforts, pilot projects should be considered to inform the final design and planning. Pilots are also useful for both large and small projects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of possible barriers that may, in a worst-case scenario, jeopardize the data collection effort as a whole or translate into the collection of poor data, which can lead to ill-informed interventions or a poor understanding of the topic under study. Piloting a data collection project means working through Stage #1 (design and planning) and implementing a limited or scaled-down version of Stage #2 (data collection) before assessing any strengths, weaknesses and potential need for changes that might require returning to Stage #1, to make adjustments. This might involve, for example, a case management database that is tested by one NGO before being rolled out to other NGOs in the country. Or it might be a pilot database for police investigations tested in one district before being scaled to other districts in the country.
Checklist
Steps and Considerations in Design and Planning

Define data collection topic, purpose and scope
- Frame the topic, issue(s) or question(s) of the data collection
- Clarify the purpose of the data collection
- Consider the scope of the data collection
- Clarify expectations related to data collection

Formulate data collection questions
- Formulate data collection questions linked to topic
- Ensure definitional clarity and precision
- Operationalize definitions and terminology

Review existing literature and research
- Find existing literature and research
- Systematically review and assess relevant literature

Select a data collection approach and method
- Assess different data collection approaches and methods
- Choose a data collection approach and method
- Ensure skills in the relevant approach and method when selecting researchers
- Determine how the approach and method are influenced by the specific context
- Consider participation and involvement of stakeholders and end users in data collection

Identify data sources and data providers
- Assess possible data sources
- Determine access to data sources
- Assess the appropriateness of data sources
- Identify biases and limitations in data sources

Develop or apply legal and ethical guidelines and protocols
- Apply the principle of “do no harm”
- Ensure voluntary and informed consent
- Guard anonymity and confidentiality
- Consider the safety and well-being of research participants and data collectors
- Apply child protection principles including the “best interests of the child”
- Implement procedures for review and adaptation

Prepare a work plan for data collection
Define data collection topic, purpose and scope

Defining the topic, scope and purpose of the data collection effort is a fundamental priority in the design and planning stage. Setting realistic goals as well as the purpose of the data collection informs and guides implementation and dissemination. Returning to the original topic, purpose and scope throughout the data collection process also safeguards against activities going off course during what, in some cases, might be on-going projects over a long period of time and potentially involving many different staff as well as institutions or organizations. This involves the following steps and considerations:

- Frame the topic, issue(s) or question(s) of the data collection
- Clarify the purpose of the data collection
- Consider the scope of the data collection
- Clarify expectations related to data collection

Frame the topic, issues(s) or question(s) of the data collection

Framing the topic for data collection is fundamental and each of the steps below aims for an increasingly precise vision of how the topic will be studied and the data collected. This is a question of what will be studied (that is, what is the topic?). The topic may emerge, for instance, from an area of general interest; a specific need to manage aspects of anti-trafficking policy and interventions; an identified problem; an identified knowledge gap; or an emergent form of human trafficking. Regardless of the topic, issues(s) or question(s) selected, this step in design and planning must be sufficiently specific to guide the data collection process.

Examples of protection-related topics might be:
- trafficking victims’ assistance needs;
- procedures for the identification of victims;
- longer-term outcomes of assistance;
- the functioning of a national referral mechanism or assistance framework;
- the number of victims identified, assisted and receiving temporary residence permits.

Examples of prosecution-related topics might be:
- barriers in police investigation;
- numbers of investigated cases;
- numbers of convicted trafficking cases;
- profiles of traffickers;
- victims’ experiences as victim/witnesses in the criminal justice process;
- an assessment of the functioning of the criminal justice process.
Checklist. Frame the topic, issues(s) or question(s) of the data collection

- Identify a relevant topic, issue(s) or question(s).
- Ensure the topic, issue(s) or question(s) are sufficiently specific to guide the data collection process.
- Consider topics that address: an issue of interest, a specific need, an identified problem, a knowledge gap, an emergent issue or a form of TIP.

Clarify the purpose of the data collection

This refers to why the topic will be studied (that is, what is the purpose?) Clarify the purpose of the data collection, including assessing the need for a specific study or data collection effort (for example, to understand an issue or to address policy or programmatic needs on the ground). Ask yourself/your team:

- Who needs this data?
- Does it enhance the knowledge base on human trafficking?
- How does it help us understand TIP?
- How does it help to address TIP?
- What information does it provide to inform policy and practice?
- Does it enhance the knowledge base on human trafficking?
- Does it avoid duplicating efforts or wasting resources?

For some TIP data collection efforts, there may be different layers of purpose. For instance, a primary goal may be to inform the on-going anti-trafficking work of your organization or institution and a secondary goal may be to contribute to knowledge about specific aspects of human trafficking in your country, to be used by other stakeholders for policymaking, programming and advocacy.

Assess the potential pressure involved in some forms of TIP data collection (for instance, when interviewing trafficking victims or collecting data from professionals with already heavy workloads). The purpose of the data collection should be sufficiently robust to offset the “costs” to those involved as data sources and data providers.

Checklist. Clarify the purpose of data collection

- Assess the need for the specific type of data collection being proposed.
- Assess what purpose data collection serves (the why).
- Consider how the data collection will build the knowledge base or inform policy and practice.
- Ensure that the purpose for which data collected is relevant and useful.
- Assess what already exists and avoid duplication of on-going or past efforts.
Consider the scope of data collection

The choice of topic and research questions must align with the scope of the work, which is ultimately determined by resources available (human and financial resources as well as time). These factors determine what is and is not possible. Consider:

- How broad and comprehensive will the data collection be?
- Do the budget and resources correspond to the scope and purpose of data collection?
- Is the proposed scope of data collection possible within the available time frame?
- When setting up TIP databases, is the approach sustainable?

Be realistic about what topic and scope the data collection will give answers to and to make sure that sufficient resources are available for more complex data collection efforts as well as those with greater scope. It is better to produce high quality data with a limited scope than to have a wide scope but low quality data. Bad data can be misleading and, in the worst case, encourage inappropriate or even harmful policy and practice interventions. When data is collected with and from many different agencies and institutions it is also important to consider the time, workload, resources and interests of cooperating data providers.

Carefully defining the scope of data collection from the beginning ensures that, among other things, data collection is consistent with available resources, including human, financial, time and other capacity considerations. A careful definition of scope will also serve as a reality check on the questions that a project’s data will and will not be able to answer. Pay attention to threshold issues to avoid a disconnect between a project’s ambitions and any practical limitations and expectations.

Checklist. Consider the scope of data collection

- Determine the scope of data collection.
- Ensure the scope of data collection aligns with available time and resources (both human and financial).
- Take into account the resources, available time, and workload of organizations and institutions cooperating on data collection.
- Be realistic about what questions the data can (and cannot) answer.
- Focus on high quality data with a limited scope over wider scope with low quality data.

Clarify expectations related to data collection

Expectations may differ between funders, researchers, project partners, data sources, data providers and other stakeholders. Clarify expectations of funders, stakeholders and partners to address any unrealistic expectations about what a specific data collection effort can offer, including the time it may take to complete the task, the resources required, the opportunities for coordination and data sharing, the outputs and outcomes that will result and so on.
Anticipate when and how expectations with funders and among stakeholders may differ and resolve any differences at the outset. Discuss reasonable (and unreasonable) expectations and goals for data collection. Consider the following common sources of mismatched expectations:

- what is (and is not) possible to achieve within a given project, budget and time frame;
- the most appropriate method and approach to answer a specific topic;
- legal and ethical issues;
- unrealistic expectations around what a specific data collection effort can reveal;
- limited understanding of the limitations and biases of different methods and data sources;
- data ownership and sharing.

Do not move forward with data collection when expectations and requirements do not align with the criteria of good practice in data collection.

Checklist. Clarify expectations related to data collection

- Clarify with funders what can be achieved with available funds and time.
- Clarify expectations with stakeholders before data collection to avoid misunderstandings later on.
- Engage a third party to inform technical decisions between the funder and research team, if needed.
- Do not move forward with data collection when funder requirements do not align with good practice.
- Clarify expectations and relationships with other stakeholders about scope and outcomes.
- Consider and address data ownership, data sharing and data use from the outset.
- Delineate roles, rights and responsibilities of different individuals and organizations vis-à-vis data ownership and sharing.
- Consult and adhere to legal requirements and ethical standards around data ownership and sharing.

Formulate data collection questions

Formulate robust data collection questions that are rigorously connected to the topic being examined and of a manageable scope. Questions should be clear and precise, with terms and definitions that can be operationalized in practice. Formulating clear and researchable data collection questions requires the following steps:

- Formulate data collection questions linked to topic
- Ensure definitional clarity and precision
- Operationalize definitions and terminology
Formulate data collection questions linked to topic

This step involves formulating the data collection questions or objectives which follow on from the overall data collection topic and issues identified and articulated in the previous step. Clarify what specific features of the topic will be studied (the what) and why (why a data collection question is relevant and useful), including the link between the what and the why of data collection in formulating the data collection questions.

Assess if the data collection question is “researchable” (that is, what it is possible to collect data about and what data sources are available to answer specific questions). To formulate the data collection questions, consider what questions are researchable with what kinds of data. Identify and respect the limitations of certain forms of data collection and data sources. Whether a question is researchable may also, at times, be an ethical issue (that is, whether the data needed to answer the research questions is ethical to collect). Consider what data is necessary to be able to answer the data collection question and weigh this against any potential for harm as well as any legal and administrative restrictions on the collection some types of data. Ensure that any research question is a genuine question, not a question intended to produce a pre-determined answer.

Checklist. Formulate data collection questions linked to topic

- Be clear about what questions the data collection is answering.
- Consider why these questions are being asked; why is this a relevant and useful research question?
- Assess how best to answer data collection questions.
- Assess if the questions are researchable.
- Consider what data is necessary to answer data collection questions.
- Determine if the data needed to answer data collection questions is legal and ethical to collect.
- Weigh up the value of a data collection question against its potential for harm.

Ensure definitional clarity and precision

Framing research questions must start with a clear understanding of the concepts to be studied, including definitions to be used, both legal and operational. This involves defining the concept(s) and associated terms to be examined in a clear and precise way for data sources, data providers, data collectors, funders and eventually end users. Definitional clarity is important in ensuring that all stakeholders define, interpret and operationalize terms in the same way. Have a clear definition of terms at the outset (for example, by developing a glossary or metadata files). Failure to clearly define terms also limits options for harmonization of datasets and findings across various TIP research and data collection efforts.

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5 Metadata is the data providing information about one or more aspects of the data itself; it is used to summarize basic information about data which can make tracking and working with specific data easier.
Consider terms that may have different meanings in different contexts, including due to different institutional dynamics or administrative categories. Pay attention also to language and translation. Good practice means being aware of the sometimes-minute differences in the way words are used or interpreted in data collection. Many technical terms associated with TIP are not easily understood and do not necessarily translate easily into other languages.

Proper conceptualization of research questions, including definitional clarity and precision, should be accompanied by adequate training and on-going supervision of all staff directly and indirectly involved in the data collection effort to ensure data integrity, as well as by requisite guidance on implementation through manuals, codebooks, metadata files and handbooks.

**Checklist. Ensure definitional clarity and precision**

- Begin with clear and precise definitions of the concepts to be studied.
- Consider and address competing or conflicting terminology.
- Understand how definitions may differ depending on context and field of work.
- Be aware of the sometimes minute differences in the way words are used or interpreted.
- Train all staff on definitions to ensure data integrity

**Operationalize definitions and terminology**

Operationalize definitions by breaking legal definitions down into parts or translating them into real and practical language to properly convey questions to research participants. Variations in the way that the same terms are used by different data collectors undermine data quality and the usefulness of findings. Operationalizing terminology is, at times, an issue of how to translate the term and its meaning into another language and cultural context. This will require identifying issues up front.

To operationalize definitions, be clear and precise. While some care must go into formulating questions in such a way that they are not offensive or create undue resistance, they must still reflect the true purpose of data collection to ensure informed consent. It would not be ethical to obscure, even unintentionally, the purpose of data collection in ways that may compromise informed consent.

**Checklist. Operationalize definitions and terminology**

- Break definitions down into parts to translate them into practical language.
- Contextualize definitions and properly convey what is meant to research participants.
- Consider how to operationalize terms and definitions across languages and cultures.
- Use terminology that is clear and precise, but not offensive or confusing.
- Be careful and sensitive in definitional formulations but do not obscure the purpose of data collection or compromise informed consent.
Review existing literature and research

All TIP data collection – whether research or administrative – needs to link with prior research and be situated in the existing knowledge base. Consider the following questions in reviewing the literature:

- What research and data already exists about the topic?
- What does this research tell us about the data collection topic and questions?
- How will this data collection contribute to an enhanced understanding of human trafficking or the anti-trafficking response?
- Does this activity fill a knowledge gap or overlap with any existing research?
- Are there previous examples of similar data collection that can inform a choice of approach and method?
- Are there lessons that can be learned about limitations in previous and similar data collection?

Asking these questions at the outset of data collection also helps to avoid duplication of efforts (repeating the same research studies or data collection projects) and, in so doing, wasted resources. This step involves:

- Find existing literature and research
- Systematically review and assess relevant literature

Find existing literature and research

Consider and leverage a wide range of potential sources and media including libraries and resource centers as well as materials available online (on the internet, online libraries, organization’s websites and so on). Use library-based and internet search engines to identify relevant research and literature.

Consider both formal literature (for example, books and journals) as well as grey literature (resources that are produced outside of traditional commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels). When possible and appropriate, consult persons working on the issue (researchers, practitioners and policymakers) for suggestions on literature on a specific topic. However, the burden of work for the literature review rests with the data collector and requests for literature should put the least demand possible on others. Moreover, recommendations about research and literature should supplement, not replace, systematic and independent library-based and online searches.

Language can pose a barrier in accessing research and resources. Consider and, ideally, also incorporate, to the greatest extent possible, the existing relevant knowledge base that is not in English (or in the primary language in which the research is conducted). Search in as many languages as possible and make use of online translation tools when of sufficient quality and reliability. Allocate time and funding for the translation of relevant literature, to the extent possible.
The above points notwithstanding, existing literature and research on some data collection topics may be limited or even nonexistent. This, then, may require leaning on literature from other related or intersecting fields of work, as well as in terms of research methods and approaches that may have been used on similar topics or may be useful in relation to the proposed data collection topic and questions.

Checklist. Find existing literature and research

- Identify what literature exists on your data collection topic.
- Ask TIP professionals for recommendations for research and literature.
- Conduct online searches – on the internet and through library search engines.
- Visit libraries and resource centers to find research.
- Consult grey literature as well as academic research.
- Conduct media searches to identify research and data that may be publicized in media outlets.
- Search for literature in as many languages as possible.
- Allocate time and funds for the translation of relevant literature as much as possible.

Systematically review and assess relevant literature

The literature review should be appropriate for the data collection topic, scope and purpose as well as the proposed approach and method. Approach the literature systematically, sifting through the vast and growing body of research and materials on TIP to arrive at those that are relevant for the overall topic and specific research questions. Assess the quality of each study, including the approach and methodology. Synthesize relevant TIP literature and research to develop an overview of relevant research and draw connections between different research findings. Identify similarities and differences in the research findings.

Be critical and selective in a literature review, particularly in terms of whether research claims are reasonably supported by data or arguments presented. Some human trafficking literature may be ideological in nature rather than empirically based, taking a position on various issues (for instance, prostitution, immigration, human rights, smuggling and so on). Be aware of studies and data collection approaches that have been less successful, to be able to learn from these challenges. Spend sufficient time and resources on conducting a thorough literature review.

Checklist. Systematically review and assess relevant literature

- Approach the literature systematically, linked to topic, scope and purpose.
- Assess the research collected in terms of methodology and the quality of the study; include only robust data collection efforts.
- Be alert to ideological positions and orientations in the research.
- Avoid duplicating past or on-going data collection efforts.
- Allocate adequate time and resources to conduct the literature review.
Select a data collection approach and method

The data collection approach and methods must be appropriate to answer the data collection questions and realistic relative to available resources and the time frame for the data collection. This involves the following steps:

- Assess different data collection approaches and methods
- Choose a data collection approach and method
- Ensure skills in the relevant approach and method when selecting researchers
- Determine how the approach and method are influenced by the specific context
- Consider participation and involvement of stakeholders and end users in data collection

Assess different data collection approaches and methods (quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches and methods)

Data collection approach and method are terms that refer, respectively, to the means and the manner of the data collection and later, of its analysis. It is useful to distinguish between approach as the overarching framework or strategy for data collection (that can include different methods) and method as the specific technique or procedure used to collect the data within that approach. A data collection approach is, thus, an umbrella term for different methods that have, in common, a particular orientation. A common distinction is between qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches and methods. Data collection may be conducted within a qualitative approach, but methods within this approach may range from semi-structured interviews with the target population to ethnographic fieldwork in communities, policy document and text analysis and so on. Similarly, quantitative approaches may include various methods such as surveys or analysis of register data.

Diagram #1. Data collection approaches and methods

[Diagram showing qualitative, mixed methods, and quantitative approaches with examples of methods like interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, focus-group discussions, surveys, analysis of register data, and so on.]
There are distinctions between **qualitative** and **quantitative approaches** in terms of aim (that is, deeper versus broader data) and each is appropriate for different purposes. Identifying the approach and method most appropriate for the specific topic, purpose and research questions, including a combination of approaches and methods, when appropriate.

**Table #1. Overview of approaches and methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative approach and methods</th>
<th>Qualitative approach and methods</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative data collection is generally characterized as deductive, aimed at proving, disproving or lending credence to existing theories. It often aims to measure and assess different variables and to test relationships between variables in order to reveal patterns, correlations or causal relationships. Quantitative data collection commonly refers to <strong>observations</strong> and <strong>measurements</strong> that can be made objectively and repeated by other researchers and data collectors. It is used to find out <strong>how much</strong>, <strong>how many</strong>, <strong>how often</strong> and <strong>to what extent</strong>. Quantitative methods typically aim to have generalizable findings and obtain representative data, by drawing samples from a larger population. Quantitative methods require particular technical competencies appropriate to each specific technique. This ranges from relatively simple collation of how cases distribute along a specific set of variables to advanced survey techniques for so-called hidden and elusive populations. Adequate resources must be available (human and financial) relative to the specific study and timeline.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative data collection gathers non-numerical data with the aim of developing themes and of exploring and understanding phenomena. It is generally appropriate when the primary purpose is to explore, describe, or explain the social world. Qualitative data collection is often characterized by inductive approaches to knowledge building aimed at generating meaning. Researchers commonly use this approach to: explore; robustly investigate and learn about social phenomenon; unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations, events, or artifacts; or build a depth of understanding about some dimension of social life. The values underpinning qualitative research include the importance of people’s subjective experiences and meaning-making processes and acquiring a depth of understanding (that is, detailed information generally from a small sample). The goal of qualitative data collection is to be able to provide information that is in-depth and detailed. Qualitative approaches can be used to reach even very clandestine populations and examine sensitive topics. Qualitative studies are particularly important in terms of understanding the nature of some less-studied or less understood aspects of human trafficking.</td>
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[A hidden and elusive population (sometimes also referred to as “hard-to-reach” or “marginalized”) is a population that is difficult for researchers to access due to their social or physical location, vulnerability, or otherwise hidden nature.](#)
Mixed methods refer to the combination of qualitative and quantitative research and offers the benefits of both approaches, including the possibility to triangulate findings. Mixed methods will involve at least one qualitative and at least one quantitative research question that will be linked in different ways and to varying extents depending on the specific data collection effort. Qualitative questions may be formulated to explain or contextualize what was learned from quantitative research questions. Quantitative questions may be formulated in response to what was learned in answering qualitative research questions. In deciding whether to use a mixed methods approach, it is important to ask if and why it is useful to engage in both qualitative and quantitative data collection and how this contributes to the study. It is also important to consider how the two datasets will inform and relate to one another.

Whether using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, consider the triangulation of methods. Using different methods to collect data (rather than only one) provides data from multiple perspectives, which, in turn, reduces the biases associated with any one particular method. In some cases, triangulation may be about using methods that are both qualitative and quantitative whereas, in other cases, this may mean using multiple methods within one approach, either qualitative or quantitative. Triangulation of methods is also important for data analysis. Consider the appropriateness of the data for the questions asked and conclusions that are drawn, paying attention to limitations and weaknesses in the use of methods during analysis. In terms of choosing an approach and method – which is the focus of this step – the most important issue is that the approach and method chosen are suited to answering the research topic and questions.

**Checklist. Assess different data collection approaches and methods**

- Review the different data collection approaches and methods.
- Determine whether data collection should be quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods.
- Identify what approach and method can best answer the questions.

**Choose a data collection approach and method**

Determining the appropriate data collection approach and method is primarily driven by the nature of the data collection, existing literature and accessibility to data sources. Qualitative and quantitative approaches have different implications and require different skill sets, as do primary data collection directly from individuals and the use of secondary data (for example, registry data, case files and so on). The selected approach and method must be “implementable” for the specific data collection effort. And, in practice, some approaches or methods may simply not be possible (for example, because of the topic, the context, the population being surveyed and so on). Find the appropriate approach and method to explore the topic on which data is needed. Not all approaches or methodologies are universally good practice. Different approaches and methods may be a good practice for some forms of trafficking, some types of victims, on some topics or in some locations. The selection of specific data collection tools or instruments will then naturally follow on from the choice of approach and method.
Weigh the strengths and limitations of longitudinal and cross-sectional data collection. Longitudinal studies collect data from the same sample over a period of time while a cross-sectional study is data collection with one sample at a single point in time. Whether to undertake cross-sectional or longitudinal data collection (as well as how to approach participation in the process) ties back to the original topic and related research questions.

**Checklist. Choose a data collection approach and method**

- Be clear about the questions that data collection is attempting to answer.
- Identify the best approach for the specific topic and questions, whether qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods.
- Consider longitudinal data collection and/or participatory data collection if appropriate for answering the data collection questions.
- Identify the best method within the selected approach to answer the data collection questions.

**Ensure skills in the relevant approach and method when selecting researchers**

Qualified personnel, with adequate supervision, are needed to design and guide data collection. Identify staff with the requisite skills and expertise in the specific approach and method to conduct the data collection appropriately and with rigor. This will require in-house staff receiving training and technical assistance or accessing the necessary expertise from outside of the organization or institution. This should be considered from the outset of the project, including in terms of the necessary time and resources. Align the data collection approach and method with either the existing skills of data collectors or with the time and resources available to train and supervise data collectors in the relevant approach and method. All data collectors also need to be supervised in implementation.

**Checklist. Ensure skills in the relevant approach and method when selecting researchers**

- Ensure staff has needed skills to conduct data collection appropriately and with rigor.
- Leverage partnerships with researchers and organizations who have requisite skills and expertise.
- Ensure time and resources are available to train and supervise staff in the approach and method.

**Determine how the approach and method are influenced by the specific context**

Select the best research approach or method in relation to what is acceptable and feasible in a specific context and relative to a specific topic. What is meaningful and possible in one location may not be meaningful and possible somewhere else. Different approaches and methods, and by extension the data collection tools and techniques, may be differently valued.
in different cultures and contexts. In some socio-political settings, a particular method (and, by implication, a specific tool or instrument) may not be suitable. In addition, the context within which data collection is implemented may change over time, requiring adjustments in approach and method. It may not be possible to repeat a particular approach or method in the same site over time, due to changed circumstances.

Checklist. Determine how the approach and method are influenced by the specific context

- Weigh up what is acceptable and feasible in a specific context and relative to the specific topic.
- Consider whether the context has changed in a way that will affect the use of a particular approach and method.

Consider participation and involvement of stakeholders and end users in data collection

Consider if and how a participatory approach is appropriate for the data collection effort. While participation is most commonly discussed in terms of participation of trafficking victims, it also about wider stakeholder involvement. Assess the various stakeholders and end users, including multiple user groups, and if, when and how to engage with them in the various stages of data collection. Consider the level of participation that is most suitable for the specific project. Clear communication is needed from the outset with research participants, stakeholders and end user groups engaged in data collection about their real involvement and influence.

Advantages of participatory research include:

- can ensure that the perspectives of the individuals about whom the data collection effort is focused are integral to the data collection project overall;
- can be empowering and encouraging for research participants;
- can introduce new perspectives into the research process and analysis;
- can afford better access to information and data sources;
- can help to ensure that methods, tools and procedures are appropriate for and sensitive to the target group;
- can bring a new lens, framing or understanding to an issue;
- can facilitate acceptance of research study objectives and findings;
- helps researchers to get pragmatic feedback on their research design;
- can broaden the dissemination and uptake of findings;
- can increase the likelihood that researchers will study useful questions;
- contributes to confidence in the data collection and its results, thereby increasingly the likelihood that the results will be used and translated into practice and policy.

However, participatory methods are not necessarily appropriate for all respondent groups, in all political contexts or for all TIP data collection topics, issues and questions. There are ethical and practical considerations including informed consent and voluntary participation, as well as choice as to the roles and involvement of different respondents at different stages of data collection. End user and stakeholder involvement should not necessarily be a requirement for
research and data collection. Decisions should depend on the specific research question(s) to be answered and the data collection approach and method to be used.

**Checklist. Consider participation and involvement of stakeholders and end users in data collection**

- Identify possible end users (for example, trafficking victims and anti-trafficking professionals).
- Consider if and how a participatory approach is appropriate for the specific data collection effort.
- Identify in what ways and at what stages participation may be appropriate.
- Be open to the new perspectives and issues that participatory approaches may offer.
- Consider and assess the balance between end user participation and methodological rigor and precision.
- Ensure that participation is ethically and sensitively undertaken.
- Ensure that participation is meaningful and involves a shift in power relations among those involved.

**Identify data sources and data providers**

Identify appropriate data sources linked to the data collection approach and method. **Data sources** may consist of individuals (for example, trafficking victims, traffickers or perpetrators, service providers, or criminal justice representatives) as well as written materials, register data, literature or any other datasets. Some data sources are also **data providers** (that is, individuals, organizations or institutions who provide data to the data collection effort).

*Diagram #2. Some of examples of TIP data sources and data providers*

Identifying data sources requires the consideration of key questions including:
• What information do we need to answer the data collection questions?
• Where can we get this information?
• Who or what are suitable data sources for this project?

Identifying data sources includes the following steps:

- Assess possible data sources
- Determine access to data sources
- Assess the appropriateness of data sources
- Identify biases and limitations in data sources

Assess possible data sources
Data sources must be appropriate to answer data collection questions. Consider whether primary data is needed or whether secondary data exists and can be used.7

- **Primary data** is data collected directly by the researcher or data collectors (for example, when a research is carried out, through interviews, participant observation, life histories, case studies, questionnaires, surveys, ethnographic research and so on). Primary data has the advantage of close control as well as the opportunity to gather data on the specific issues being examined. The disadvantage is that primary data collection can be very costly and time-consuming to produce, depending also on the specific approach and method.

- **Secondary data** is data that has already been collected and can be used for analysis (for example, previous research, official statistics, archival materials such as diaries and letters, government reports, victim case files, court document, police files and so on). Secondary data has the advantage of being readily available and cost effective. The disadvantage is that it may not be suitable to answer all data collection questions as it cannot be tailored to the study in question. It is also important to be aware of how secondary data was originally collected as this informs data quality, whether there are any limitations/biases and whether it was collected ethically.

Primary and secondary data are differentially useful and will have particular relevance for specific data collection topics and questions. They may also be complementary and can be used to support one another in a data collection effort. Some data collection questions can only be answered with primary data. This might include, in the case of primary data collection with victims, information about their personal backgrounds, motivations for migration, experiences of trafficking exploitation, experiences and assessments of victim assistance, challenges in reintegration after trafficking and so on. Some data collection questions may be answered with secondary data. For example, criminal justices case files and court documents

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7 The distinction between primary and secondary data depends on the relationship between the person or research team who collected a dataset and the person who is analyzing it. It is primary data if it was collected for a specific project and secondary data if it was collected for another project. Primary data is when a research team conducts a research project and collects data designed to answer specific research questions. Secondary data is existing data is used by a researcher to answer the research topic and questions developed for the project. The same dataset be primary and secondary data (for example, when a researcher analyses data that they have collected for one project and when another researcher or analyst analyzes that same data in the context of another project).
are key in analyzing the effectiveness of investigations, prosecutions and court cases and financial records and transactions can be key in understanding the operation of trafficking networks.

**Checklist. Assess possible data sources**

- Identify different data sources relevant for the specific data collection topic and questions.
- Assess whether primary or secondary data is best suited for the data collection question.

**Determine access to data sources**

The nature of human trafficking itself necessarily limits access to different data sources. Determine whether it is possible to access the data sources needed to answer the data collection questions. If need be, the questions and ambitions of the data collection effort must be adjusted to fit the data sources that can be reasonably, legally and ethically accessed. The choice and availability of data sources are directly and intricately linked back to topic, scope, purpose, research questions, approach and methods.

While a range of data sources may answer a data collection question, these may not always be safely, ethically or practically accessible. Consider what data sources can answer the research question and assess accessibility to these data sources. If need be, adjusting the selection of data sources. Access to data sources should be considered during design and planning but may also require further consideration and adjustment in Stage #2. It also requires considering what resources (financial and human) are needed to access relevant data sources.

**Checklist. Determine access to data sources**

- Identify what data sources are possible to access.
- Consider access to data sources from a legal and ethical perspective.
- Adjust data collection questions and approaches to the accessibility of data sources.
- Consider required resources in terms of access to data sources.
- Identify barriers in accessing different data sources.
- Explore how to overcome barriers to access, when legal and ethical to do so.

**Assess the appropriateness of data sources**

Consider whether a particular data source is appropriate to answer a specific data collection question. Not every data source can answer every question. For instance, while victims are a vital data source of information about their assistance needs and experiences, other data sources (like service providers) are needed to fully understand how the assistance framework operates. Trafficking victims may not be a suitable data source when researching traffickers, depending on the specific questions to be studied and the nature of a victim’s exposure to traffickers and trafficking operations. While trafficked persons can relate their own trafficking
experiences, they are unlikely to have full or systematic information about their traffickers and trafficking operations.

Consider also the appropriateness of direct and indirect data sources. Not all primary data about trafficking victims and the protection response is derived from primary data sources (for example, trafficking victims). A **primary data source** (or **direct data source**) refers to someone who has direct experience of the issue or event being studied whereas a **secondary data source** (or **indirect data source**) is someone with secondary knowledge of the issue or event. For example, a trafficking victim who shares their experience of being trafficked is a primary data source (or a direct data source) of events that happened in their life. A service provider who retells the story of that trafficking victim’s experience is a secondary data source (or indirect data source) in relation to the victim’s experience, but a primary data source about the services provided to that particular individual. In this example, the data gathered about that victim’s experiences through the lens of another person will also include that service provider’s interpretation and recollection and their access to facts and details might also be limited. In the same way, police files about traffickers are secondary data sources on traffickers’ lives and experiences but they are primary data sources on the operation of the investigative process. For some data collection questions, secondary data sources may be preferred, particularly when it may not be necessary or advisable to engage with trafficking victims. Some questions though will require primary data sources.

Assess the appropriateness of using primary and secondary data sources in relation to different data collection topics, purposes and questions. Consider:

- When is it appropriate to collect details about trafficking from, for example, a social worker (secondary or indirect data source) rather than a trafficking victim (primary or direct data source)?
- What aspects of the trafficking experience are available to the social worker?
- Is the information gathered factual or marked by some degree of interpretation?
- What are the possible differences between data collected from various secondary data sources about a trafficking victim and their experience (for example, from a social worker as compared to a police officer)?

Identify as many possible appropriate data sources that can help to answer the data collection question(s) and inform the overall topic being studied. Multiple sources will reduce the bias introduced by any one data source.

**Checklist. Assess the appropriateness of data sources**

- Assess what data sources are (and are not) appropriate to answer the specific question or data collection topic.
- Identify as many appropriate data sources as possible that can help to answer the specific question or data collection topic.

**Identify biases and limitations in data sources**

One of the most persistent threats to a full understanding of the TIP phenomenon is a failure to identify biases and limitations of data sources. Each data source has its own strengths and limitations in terms of what it can and cannot answer. Difficulties accessing certain data
sources, both primary and secondary data sources, may lead to **selection bias**. This, in turn, may produce systematic biases in data collection and with regard to what analysis is then possible. This has resulted in many instances of TIP data collection over the years being used to generalize findings beyond what the data sources can support. An example is a reliance on data about identified and assisted victims to understand the experiences of all trafficking victims. That so much data collection is conducted with trafficking victims receiving assistance means that their experiences form a large (and arguably disproportionate) part of the knowledge base on trafficking victims.

The profiles of unidentified and unassisted victims are likely to be systematically different from the better documented cases of trafficking, which are erroneously seen as more typical. Data on traffickers also focuses on individuals whose status as perpetrators is confirmed, over-representing these more obvious, confirmed cases, which may be systematically and substantially different from the wider population of traffickers.

Another bias is introduced by **gatekeepers**, such as service providers who facilitate access to victims as research participants. Gatekeepers may represent a range of professional fields and perspectives and, in some cases, also ideological positions or institutional agendas. They may have different views about: the usefulness of TIP data collection to their work; the potential risks and strain that data collection may pose to victim/respondents; the added burden and stress that this may introduce to their work; concerns about the organization/institution being criticized or negatively portrayed; previously bad experiences of research or with researchers; and so on. These factors inform if and how gatekeepers participate in and cooperate with research and data collection.

**Overrepresentation** may lead to errant conclusions. This occurs when some individuals have a greater probability than others of being included in a sample or when disproportionate attention is paid to some types of human trafficking or some types of trafficking victims. For example, the anti-trafficking response (and, by extension, data collection) has traditionally been focused on women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation, skewing the impression of who most victims are and what types of human trafficking are most common. Lack of representativeness has contributed to substantial differences in, for example, the availability of assistance among different groups of victims of various forms of trafficking exploitation and differences in their identification.

**Undercounting** occurs in the criminal justice system when trafficking cases and traffickers are charged and counted under other crimes, either because trafficking is not recognized or because the higher threshold and burden of proof for TIP is such that the case is charged as a lesser or other crime. It is also worth considering to what extent criminal justice data is focused on high profile traffickers who are targeted because of their prominence, “worst cases” because they are taken more seriously by law enforcement (due to their severity in terms of scale, brutality, impunity and so on) or lower level criminals (who are easier to identify and act against). Quotas or targets for trafficking-related arrests or prosecutions may influence the types of cases being pursued, such as a focus on “easier” cases. Others not typically perceived to be trafficking perpetrators may have their role in the process overlooked.

While it is not possible to avoid bias and limitations in any data collection, data collectors can be deliberate in identifying these issues in the selection of data sources, the analysis and

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8 A gatekeeper is a person who is able to facilitate or arbitrate access to a respondent, influence the data collection setting and, by extension, impact the knowledge that can be produced by a data collection process.
validation of the data, interactions with gatekeepers and in being transparent about these limitations and biases in how data is analyzed and presented

Checklist. Identify biases and limitations in data sources

- Identify the bias and limitations of each data source.
- Be transparent about the limitations and biases of all data sources in how data is analyzed and presented.
- Consider the role of gatekeepers in creating bias or limitations.
- Be clear about the impact of limitations on findings in how data is presented.

Develop legal and ethical guidelines and protocols

TIP data collection is governed by both legal and ethical frameworks. These vary depending on who is collecting data, what data is being collected, where it is being collected, for what purpose and so on. Identify legal and ethical requirements relative to the proposed data collection effort and talk through the possible legal and ethical issues that may arise specific to a data collection process, within organizations and institutions as well as with partner organizations, data providers and funders. This should occur alongside formally articulated procedures and protocols to ensure legal and ethical adherence.

The following sections offer guidance in developing legal and ethical guidelines and protocols during design and planning. However, it is not possible to anticipate all scenarios and outcomes in advance. Ethical and legal issues will arise at each stage of the data collection process. Some will be minor and some will be more significant. Regardless, it will be necessary to respond to these issues at all stages of data collection Legal and ethical procedures should be designed to encourage on-going dialogue, reflection and adjustment over the course of data collection and you/your team should be prepared to update and revise all formal procedures and protocols on an on-going basis and in response to issues that arise.

Developing legal and ethical guidelines and protocols includes the following steps:

- **Apply the principle of “do no harm”**
- **Ensure voluntary and informed consent**
- **Guard anonymity and confidentiality**
- **Consider the safety and well-being of research participants and data collectors**
- **Apply child protection principles including the “best interests of the child”**
- **Implement procedures for review and adaptation**

**Apply the principle of “do no harm”**

Good practice means, at a minimum, that data collection does not put anyone in a worse situation, in the short- or long-term. Carefully analyze potential impact and risk including the
potential for harm for data subjects, data sources, data providers. The principle of “do no harm” is particularly urgent when conducting data collection with trafficking victims and in collecting personal and sensitive information. Harm may also arise in data collection with stakeholders, such as anti-trafficking practitioners. Design procedures to mitigate harm. Assess when the obligation to “do no harm” may mean not collecting data.

**Checklist. Apply the principle of “do no harm”**

- Consider the potential for harm in the data collection process.
- Assess the likelihood of harm to data sources and safeguard against any negative impacts.
- Implement procedures that mitigate harm, wherever possible.
- Take into account that obligation to “do no harm” may mean not collecting data.

**Ensure voluntary and informed consent**

Voluntary and informed consent refers to the process by which research participants voluntarily agree to take part in data collection, verbally or in written form. Providing informed consent requires that the participant has a clear understanding of what participation entails, including the potential risks and benefits, before making a decision to participate without coercion. This might include, at a minimum, providing the following information:

- the purpose of the data collection, including the specific data collection topic;
- the types of information to be collected;
- who is involved in data collection and will have access to data (that is how data will be handled, used and stored);
- potential risks and benefits of participation in TIP data collection;
- how confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained in terms of raw data as well as in the presentation of research results;
- how, where and with whom the information will be used, shared and presented, including how anonymity will be assured;
- the option to end participation at any time and without negative consequences for the individual (for example, in terms of victims’ access to services, reimbursement or compensation);
- contact information for the person and institution responsible for the data collection in case of any questions or follow-up issues.

Ensure that there are no elements of coercion in the recruitment of respondents. Anticipate how data collection may compromise consent. For some individuals, significant time and attention will need to be invested to ensure that they understand the nature of data collection, its purpose and the implications of their participation, so that they are empowered either to consent or not to participate, if they so choose. This also applies to the participation of organizations or institutions in a data collection effort, either as data sources or data providers. Anticipate and plan around the time and procedures needed to obtain informed consent.

Consider the issue of compensation of respondents. There are no clear rules in how this should be done; decisions about compensation are complex and highly contested among researchers generally. Decisions need to be considered and analyzed relative to each data collection effort.
and research participant. Considerations center around how compensation (that is, payment of respondents) can create a pressure to participate in ways that may compromise informed consent. Lack of compensation can act as a disincentive to potential respondents.

While the issue of informed consent needs to be anticipated as part of design and planning, it will need to be considered and reconsidered over time (which is discussed more in Stage #2).

**Checklist. Ensure voluntary and informed consent**

- Provide full details of the data collection process and options to withdraw.
- Ensure participants understand what participation entails, including risks and benefits.
- Establish protocols for voluntary and informed consent.
- Ensure there are no elements of coercion in the recruitment of respondents.
- Provide time for respondents to consider their participation.
- Anticipate and address what aspects of data collection efforts may compromise consent.
- Provide contact information for those responsible for data collection in case of any questions or follow-up issues.

**Guard anonymity and confidentiality**

Develop procedures related to anonymity, confidentiality and privacy,\(^9\) including how data will be handled within the project and by different staff. This should align with national legislation and ethical standards for data protection. Put in place a data security strategy that addresses how data will be kept confidential and to explain that strategy to all staff, data providers and data sources. Outline procedures for data collection, storage, protection, retention, transfer, destruction, reuse transfer or exchange, preservation (encryption,\(^{10}\) anonymization,\(^{11}\) etc.) and other use of data. Have procedures and measures in place to avoid unforeseen data usage or disclosure and to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Protocols must also take into account any legal requirements for mandatory reporting when situations of risk are disclosed. Limits of confidentiality must be clearly understood as well as procedures for explaining this to respondents and any actions and follow-up to be taken within the data collection process or in coordination with authorities.

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9 Confidentiality means that information will not be shared. Anonymity is the right to remain anonymous – not be identified, including by indirect background information that could inadvertently reveal the individual’s identity or their personal experiences or opinions. Confidentiality and anonymity are often key in maintaining respondents’ privacy, safety and security. Privacy involves the right to not have personal information revealed to others and is considered a basic human right in most countries.

10 Encryption is the process of encoding data so that only authorized individuals can access it and those who are not authorized cannot.

11 Anonymization is the process of removing all personally identifiable information from data so that the individuals whom the data describes remain anonymous.
Checklist. Guard anonymity and confidentiality

- Establish protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.
- Identify legal requirements in the handling of personal and sensitive data, including any additional protections that must be ensured.
- Implement a data security strategy to protect confidential information and avoid unforeseen data usage or disclosure.
- Train all staff in the data security strategy.
- Assess legal requirements for mandatory reporting.

Consider the safety and well-being of research participants and data collectors

Consider any potential safety and security issues posed by the specific data collection activity for all involved (data sources, data providers and data collectors). Potential risks to personal safety can be identified through risk assessments and minimized through targeted measures. Safety and security considerations might relate to:

- whether data collection sites are safe, convenient and appropriate locations;
- if the data collector’s presence as an outsider in a setting may be identifying or “out” respondents (for example, identify respondents as trafficked, leading to stigma, discrimination and violence);
- if data collection occurs in areas where traffickers are operating and poses risks to respondents and/or researchers; among other considerations.

Safety and security issues will differ substantially by project and context and data collectors should adapt accordingly. Children may be particularly ill-equipped to assess safety or security concerns associated with their involvement in data collection and to protect themselves from harm. The safety and well-being of respondents should always be prioritized above the completion of data collection tasks and efforts.

Consider the safety and well-being of data collectors in planning the logistics of where, when and how data collection takes place, including stress and trauma that data collectors may face as part of their work. Consider the impact of conducting TIP research and develop protocols and procedures to manage issues that may arise (for example, debriefing routines, systems of supervision, spacing out interviews, access to counseling and support, working in pairs or teams and sharing particularly stressful tasks, like interviewing or analysis). Put safety and well-being above the completion of all data collection tasks. Ensure that the available funds and time frames for research and data collection are sufficient to allow for such procedures to be put in place.
Checklist. Consider the safety and well-being of research participants and data collectors

- Assess any potential safety and security issues posed by how the data collection is designed.
- Assess whether the data collection poses a threat to data collectors.
- Consider the safety and well-being of research participants involved in data collection.
- Consider the safety and well-being of data collectors in planning data collection.

Apply child protection principles including the “best interests of the child”

Guarding the “best interests of the child” in data collection involves balancing key factors related to the competing rights of the child: the views of the child; the views of family members and others close to the child; safety as a priority; the importance of the family and of close relationships; and nurturing the developmental needs of the child. For instance, there are specific considerations for informed consent in the case of children. While parents or guardians have decision-making responsibilities and should be consulted and provide informed consent, consent (or assent) is also needed from the child. Data collectors must take into account the potential impact of the power imbalance between children and adults, including whether this creates pressure to consent (by the staff or parent/guardian). Consider also the power dynamics that come into play around differences in race and ethnicity (and other social signifiers) between the interviewee and interviewer. The extent to which children can consent in terms of data collection will vary according to the child’s age, experience, stage of development and evolving capacities.

Ensure that child protection measures are built into data collection initiatives, which means all staff (including translators, assistants and administrative staff) should:

- have experience and knowledge about working with children and be trained in child protection principles;
- be screened for their appropriateness in working with minors;
- be aware of the local legal and social welfare systems and the local social and cultural contexts;
- have information about support organizations in the local area and talk with them about their accessibility and availability for referrals.

Children may disclose violence or other abuse that they have suffered or data collectors might come across other indications of abuse (for example, physical indications). Organizations and institutions carrying out TIP research and data collection with children should have a child safeguarding policy in place. Data collectors should be trained in what to do in these cases as encompassed in the child safeguarding policy. Many countries make it mandatory to report suspected cases of child exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect. As part of design and planning, you should consult national legislation and child protection agencies as to such requirements and procedures. These should be accommodated in the development of child
safeguarding policies and procedures and built into clearly articulated, written guidelines and protocols to address issues that may arise during data collection.

**Checklist. Apply child protection principles including the “best interests of the child”**

- Apply the principle of child protection in all data collection; the “best interests of the child” should be a primary consideration.
- Take into account the views of the child, family members, safety concerns, the importance of family and the development needs and evolving capacities of the child.
- Take into account the specific features of gaining informed consent or informed assent with children.
- Ensure that child protection measures are built into data collection initiatives.
- Determine what mandatory reporting requirements exist and how these will be met.
- Consult legislation, laws and ethical standards in the development of an appropriate protocol for child protection.

**Implement procedures for review and adaptation**

It is not possible to anticipate every possible legal and ethical issue that may arise over the course of TIP data collection. Engage in on-going dialogue, reflection and adjustment over the course of any data collection activity. Create an environment where these challenging and complex issues can be raised and discussed within the research team or data collection project. Moreover, train data collectors to consider and identify ethical and legal issues over the course of implementation. For some projects it may be necessary to seek legal advice to ensure compliance with legal requirements for data protection. Supervision is another vital step in identifying legal and ethical issues that arise and ensuring that these are handled in the best possible way.

**Checklist. Implement procedures for review and adaptation**

- Engage in on-going dialogue, reflection and adjustment on legal and ethical issues over the course of data collection.
- Train and supervise staff to identify legal and ethical issues that arise and how to handle them.

**Prepare a work plan for data collection**

Create a work plan as a discrete document to guide the data collection effort. Define the main goals and associated activities as well as setting milestones for the achievement of each activity, with approximate deadlines. Take into account the timeline and the human and financial resources needed for the project, as well as mechanisms for quality assurance. The work plan also serves as institutional memory of the original intent and scope as well as
procedures, allowing for future reference. The success of a data collection activity rests in large part with the initial work planning.

Anticipate costs, both human and financial in work planning. For example, the costs of presenting and disseminating outputs from the data collection effort should already be anticipated and planned at this stage. Allocate adequate resources for adjustments and course corrections needed during implementation. Data integrity may be compromised when decisions are based primarily on cost and convenience rather than the ability of data to adequately answer data collection questions. While cost and convenience are valid factors in the decision-making process, they must be weighed against the extent to which they may impact data quality and integrity. When a data collection project involves technology (for example, a database) the on-going and long-term operating costs of such systems (including technical assistance and support) must be anticipated and addressed to ensure sustainability of the technology beyond the project time frame. This is also true of other costs that may be associated with the use of technology (for example, a high-speed internet connection, data storage, security systems and so on). It is also important to take into account what is possible within the available time frame and, when needed, either adjust the time frame or the scope of data collection.

Checklist. Prepare a work plan for data collection

- Create a work plan to guide the data collection effort.
- Define main goals, associated activities and set milestones and deadlines.
- Anticipate costs, both human and financial, as part of work planning.
- Anticipate the on-going operating costs of technology, including technical assistance.
- Align data collection with the available time frame.
- Create a plan for and anticipate costs of dissemination of outputs to different target audiences.
- Build review and reflection processes into work planning.
Stage #2. Data Collection

Data collection is the way in which data is gathered and all of the processes that link up with this operational task. Whereas Stage #1 is about designing and planning the data collection effort as a whole, Stage #2 refers to the actual operational work of collecting data. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in a systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated data collection questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes. While research approaches and methods vary, the importance of accurate and transparent data collection remains the same. Accurate data collection processes and procedures are essential in collecting high quality data and in maintaining the integrity of any analysis or data use. It is essential to be able to answer data collection questions accurately and to effectively analyze and use the data to contribute to the TIP knowledge base and/or inform effective policies and programs to address human trafficking.

Data collection requires adequate human and financial resources and a realistic time frame for implementation. Poor implementation of the practical aspects of collecting data can jeopardize the data collection effort as a whole. There are substantial limitations to data, and associated findings, when data collection projects stretch beyond what resources and capacity will allow. This is discussed in Stage #1 but is also important to keep in mind throughout Stage #2, not least when there are changes in implementation that may have budget, staff and time implications. Moreover, issues of resources and capacity need to be considered in each of the five stages of data collection.
Checklist
Steps and Considerations in Data Collection

Select data collectors, as relevant and appropriate
- Ensure technical competence and skills in data collection
- Ensure knowledge of and sensitivity about TIP

Select a sample and implement a sampling strategy
- Consider representativeness and validity
- Assess access to a sample

Select, design and test data collection tools
- Use or modify existing data collection tools
- Design new data collection tools
- Develop guidelines for data collectors
- Prepare explanatory information and referral materials
- Test data collection tools
- Consider the use of technology in designing data collection tools

Develop a data collection manual

Refine legal and ethical guidelines and protocols for data collection
- Ensure informed consent
- Implement guidelines and protocols for contacting data providers and research participants
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality
- Assess when data collection reveals risk or abuse
- Support referrals for assistance and support
- Guard the “best interests of the child” during data collection

Carry out training and on-going supervision of data collection
- Train and supervise data collectors
- Train and supervise translators, interpreters, transcribers and support staff

Document the data collection process

Revisit Stage# 1 work plan and adjust, if needed
Select data collectors, as relevant and appropriate

Selecting data collectors requires careful attention to the specific nature of the data collection initiative. The level and type of staffing will depend on the size, scope and time frame. A short-term research project might involve engaging an individual or team of researchers or data collectors for a finite period of time. Some data collection may be done in partnership with other organizations and institutions and the data collectors may come from these organizations and institutions. When TIP data collection refers to government initiatives such as National Rapporteurs, data collectors may be staff of the office, or staff working in institutions and organizations that contribute data to the National Rapporteur’s office. Alongside data collectors, a range of support staff may be involved in the data collection effort in different ways and to different degrees. This may include project administrators, translators and interpreters, as well as logistical staff (for example, field assistants or drivers), any of whom may come into contact with vulnerable persons or communities during data collection. It is important to ensure that data collectors have technical competence alongside knowledge of and sensitivity to human trafficking and the range of topics under study.

Selecting data collectors includes the following steps:

- Ensure technical competence and skills in data collection
- Ensure knowledge of and sensitivity about TIP

Ensure technical competence and skills in data collection

Data collectors need skills and experience in the specific approach, method and tools to be used for data collection. Whenever possible, identify data collectors with these existing skills and experience. When the requisite skills cannot be found within the data collection team, it is necessary to access this expertise. This might involve partnering with organizations or institutions to assist in data collection or training data collectors in the approach and method.

The level of skills and experience required will necessarily differ according to the specific approach, method and tool. The more discretion that is required in the use of data collection tools (that is, depending on method), the more experience, knowledge and skills that will be required of data collectors. For instance, a detailed questionnaire with little room for diversion can be administered by someone with relatively limited experience, whereas a semi- or unstructured qualitative interview requires a much higher level of knowledge and understanding of the issues to be explored.

Checklist. Ensure technical competence and skills in data collection

- Select data collectors with skills and experience in the research approach and method, where possible.
- Access technical expertise where needed to assist in data collection.
- Access technical expertise where needed to conduct training in data collection.
Ensure knowledge of and sensitivity about TIP

Having data collectors who are knowledgeable and sensitive about TIP as well as the specific topic under study contributes to data quality. The level and specific nature of that knowledge, however, will vary according to the data collection project. In some cases, data collectors may only need a basic understanding of TIP, sufficient to be able to administer a structured questionnaire or survey. By contrast, an in-depth qualitative study about the nature of a particular form of trafficking will require a higher level of knowledge and sensitivity of the issue.

Consider whether for the specific data collection effort it is preferable to use practitioners (like social workers or law enforcement), given their knowledge of and sensitivity to the issue. Take into account the varying capacities and professional backgrounds of different anti-trafficking professionals; carefully assess their capacities and attitudes about human trafficking and in particular toward trafficking victims. Ensure that data collectors behave with the appropriate level of sensitivity and respect, particularly when they are interacting with vulnerable persons, like trafficking victims, as well with all stakeholder/respondents.

Consider different power dynamics in the selection of data collectors. Social, cultural and interpersonal differences may impact who is considered an appropriate data collector. In some cases and when possible, it can be useful to have a diverse team of data collectors (in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality) to anticipate some of these dynamics.

Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of engaging anti-trafficking professionals as data collectors.

Assess and mitigate power dynamics that come into play between data collectors and respondents.

Checklist. Ensure knowledge of and sensitivity about TIP

- Select data collectors who are knowledgeable and sensitive about TIP.
- Select data collectors who are knowledgeable about the topic being studied.
- Select data collectors who are familiar with the specific and local context.
- Ensure that data collectors are sensitized on the issue of TIP.
- Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of engaging anti-trafficking professionals as data collectors.
- Assess and mitigate power dynamics that come into play between data collectors and respondents.

Select a sample and implement a sampling strategy

Sampling strategies have traditionally been one of the main areas of distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods. Very simply, qualitative methods typically aim to
develop in-depth knowledge based on fewer cases (as few as one, on occasion), selected purposefully. This is also known as nonprobability sampling, a method of sampling where it is not known which individual from the population will be selected. This technique does not use random sampling at any stage of the selection process, meaning that some members of the population may have a greater chance of being selected.  

Quantitative methods typically aim at arriving at findings that are representative of the population the sample is drawn from and samples are selected randomly. Simple randomization means that each member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected to be part of the sample, meaning that findings can be generalized to the population the member was selected from. This is also known as probability sampling, which involves the random selection of study participants in a manner that gives each member of the population an equal chance of being selected for the sample.

Sampling will be determined by the specific project and requires technical skills and expertise. Nevertheless, there are common issues for all sampling strategies for TIP data collection, including:

- Consider representativeness and validity
- Assess access to a sample

Consider representativeness and validity
When data are representative, the distribution of different variables (for example, age, gender, trafficking experiences or other relevant points) in the sample are the same as would be observed in the population of interest. Findings can then be generalized. The most common manner of assuring generalizability or representativeness is to draw a random sample, where all research participants have the same chance of being selected. However, this requires the calculation of selection probabilities which requires a sampling frame (a list of the total population of interest from which a random sample can be drawn, which does not exist, for example, for trafficking victims as a whole). A sampling frame is possible for some sub-sets of trafficking victims (for example, assisted trafficking victims) but produces representative data only on these specific sub-populations. That is, it is critical to keep in mind what population the data will be representative of.

In qualitative data collection the focus is less about representativeness and rather about validity, as the goal is to arrive at a deeper understanding of specific issues and phenomena and not necessarily to be able to extrapolate findings to a specific population. There are many different sampling techniques available, but an important distinction is between purposeful (or purposive) sampling and convenience sampling, the former generally being preferable. Purposeful sampling means that the cases in the sample are selected based on specific criteria that will help illuminate the issue being analyzed. Some of these strategies may seek to

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12 Examples of nonprobability sampling include convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling.

13 Examples of probability sampling include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified random sampling.

14 Both are types of non-probability sampling, which does not use random sampling at any stage of the selection process, meaning that some members of the population may have a greater chance of being selected than others. Probability sampling involves the random selection of study participants in a manner that gives each member of the population an equal chance of being selected for the sample.
maximize difference and variety within the sample, while others may seek to identify typical
cases. An example would be sampling with men from a particular place of origin who are
exploited in an industry known to have cases of trafficking and exploitation. Convenience
sampling is when cases are selected primarily because they are available and accessible. In
some contexts, this may be the only option available as the group of interest can be very
difficult to access. This may be the case for some groups of trafficking victims, or for traffickers.
Convenience sampling is not ideal, as it leaves much more room for data to be biased in
different ways and for research participants to be systematically different from others in the
same group who are less accessible. For instance, if traffickers are only accessible while in
prison, it is highly likely that they will be different from traffickers who have not been
convicted and also traffickers in prison may share information in a different way from someone
who is not incarcerated.

Caution is, therefore, needed in terms of how data about particular samples and groups are
used and what they purport to represent. Be clear and transparent about what particular
samples do and do not represent and to avoid generalizing conclusions regarding a wider
population than the sample and sampling strategy permit. Data analysts must be aware of the
implications that any sampling approach has for data and the lack of generalizability to the
wider population (for example, trafficking victims or traffickers) or to the trafficking field. This
needs also to be taken into account during analysis (Stage #4) and made explicit in the
presentation of findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist. Consider representativeness and validity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ Consider what sampling is better suited to the data collection project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Be clear about what population the data is and is not representative of.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✔ Be clear and transparent about what particular samples represent.</td>
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Assess access to a sample

Access will have been considered as part of design and planning in Stage #1, but in Stage #2,
there are also practical issues to be considered. This includes: having sufficient time and
resources to access the data collection sample; being able to access the sample safely and
ethically; the role of gatekeepers; building trust and cooperation with data providers; the
variable priority given to TIP in different settings; political dynamics and sensitivities. Issues to
be taken into account for the collection of primary data will be different from those relating to
secondary data.

Time and resources are needed to be able to access any sample. Some data providers such as
police or social services may not have sufficient time or resources to provide access to different
data sources. Administrative data will require some degree of processing and likely also
anonymization and other protections, which are time consuming and expensive. Time and
resources will also be needed on the part of data collectors to reach out to and coordinate with
data providers when collecting primary data. Secondary data sources also involve different
resource considerations including the costs involved in preparing data so that it can be
understood by others and shared safely and ethically.
It is also important to be able to access the research sample safely and ethically (for example, in a way that does not identify respondents as trafficking victims to their family or community environments, nor risk disclosing their association with trafficking). In some settings, security and safety concerns can effectively bar access to an entire sample (or parts thereof). There may also be legal provisions that influence access to secondary data (for example, whether government data can be shared).

Access to a research sample often goes through gatekeepers and there may be reasons why access is denied (for example, to protect victims from traumatizing or burdensome research participation, concerns that research findings criticise the organization/institution, because gatekeepers are overburdened with work, because they don’t see the value in the research and so on). Access is also influenced by trust; not all data providers may be willing to cooperate in data collection. Time (and sometimes quite substantial periods of time) is generally needed to build trust with data providers. There may also be political dynamics and sensitivities associated with TIP data collection, which limit access to some data sources and data providers (for example, in more constrained political systems or where TIP is a sensitive issue, individuals may not be willing or be permitted to participate in data collection or may not feel able or even safe to do so).

**Checklist. Assess access to a sample**

- Identify safe and ethical ways to access the data collection sample.
- Identify gatekeepers who can assist in accessing the sample.
- Allocate sufficient time and resources to access the sample.
- Consider biases and limitations that emerge from the nature of access and the sample.
- Consider when and where data is collected and be transparent about how this influences the data.

**Select, design and test data collection tools**

To a large extent, the selection of an approach and method narrows down the range of tools to be considered. But it is nonetheless important at this stage to consider what tool(s) will best answer the data collection questions. Each data collection tool has its strengths and limitations, which must be assessed relative to the specific project and then also taken into account in the process of data analysis, including limitations and biases linked to the tool(s). Be conscious of each tool’s strengths as well as the range of potential limitations associated with each and make choices to mitigate these. Take such limitations into account in the analysis of the data later on.

Both the selection of appropriate data collection tools (existing, modified or newly developed) and clearly delineated instructions for their correct use reduce the likelihood of errors occurring and maintain the integrity of the data collection. In addition to guidelines for data collectors, explanatory information about the data collection tools will need to be prepared, including referral information when collecting data from trafficking victims and other vulnerable persons who may be in need of assistance. Once designed it will be important to
test those tools and consider options also for the use of technology in the implementation of data collection tools. This involves the following steps:

- Use or modify existing data collection tools
- Design new data collection tools
- Develop guidelines for data collectors
- Prepare explanatory information and referral materials
- Test data collection tools
- Consider the use of technology in designing data collection tools

**Use or modify existing data collection tools**

Consider how similar data collection efforts were conducted previously including whether they were (or were not) effective. If tools were appropriate and effective consider using or modifying those for the current data collection effort. However, consider the appropriateness of such an approach on a case-by-case basis, recognizing that some projects will need tailored and carefully derived tools. Moreover, any standardized tools need to be accompanied by clear guidance on application, the strength and limitations of the tools themselves and any issues and problems faced in past application. The application of existing tools may not be suitable for more sensitive topics and projects, nor in interacting with some types of research participants.

Even the most robust tools may require significant modification to questions or the wording of the questions as well as the way that the tool is applied. Assess whether the tools are appropriate to use in collecting data from a different source than the one originally intended or whether and to what extent the instrument should be modified. Researchers will require appropriate skills in designing or modifying research tools. There are also specific adjustments needed when designing, testing and adapting data collection tools including:

- ensuring that tools are culturally appropriate;
- tailoring tools to the specific context in which data collection is to take place;
- adjusting tools to different types of respondents; and
- tailoring language to the intended data sources and data providers.

**Checklist. Use or modify existing data collection tools**

- Identify existing tools from similar data collection efforts.
- Assess the existing tool for possible adaptation to the specific data collection effort and with different data sources.
- Adapt the existing data collection tools, if possible.
- Ensure that any existing or modified tools are accompanied by guidance and adequate skills.
- Adapt tools to the specific context, language and data sources.
Design new data collection tools

Designing a data collection tool requires starting from the overall research topic and questions and thinking about how to get answers to these questions. This will be done differently depending on the specific data collection effort. It is important to ask what information needs to be collected to answer the overarching topic and research questions. This requires being very clear about what the project is looking to ask and answer. The process of designing data collection tools involves identifying different categories or themes from the research question and formulating questions within these domains. It also involves limiting the number of potentially relevant questions to be manageable without eliminating entire themes or important categories. The need for data must be balanced against the need to minimize respondent burden; lengthy data collection tools are less likely to be completed or capture high quality data.

Any data collection tool needs to make sense to respondents and be something that they are able to answer. This means paying careful attention to:

- the scope of the questions (that is, seeking information that is specific, not abstract or too general);
- the wording of the questions (that is, making sure they are clear, comprehensible, appropriate, specific and not difficult to answer);
- the wording of sensitive questions (to avoid non-responses or upsetting or even traumatizing research participants); and
- the sequence of questions in terms of logic and flow (that is, whether questions are ordered by content, from broad to specific questions).

Common don’ts in question design include:

- asking double barreled questions (that is, questions that touch on more than one issue);
- the use of double negatives or negatively phrased questions;
- biased or leading questions or questions with built in assumptions;
- the use of abbreviations or slang or ambiguous phrasing of questions; and
- questions that require recall from an unrealistic time frame.

Design tools so that they are not too time-consuming to administer and they align with the amount of time that the data source or data provider is able and willing to commit. Respondent burden refers to the degree to which respondents experience their participation as too stressful and/or time consuming and may lead to respondent fatigue, resulting in lower response rates and lower quality responses. Thus, data collection efforts need to balance what needs to be known against the degree of information that can be realistically (and ethically) collected.

When working in a multi-language setting, consider translation of questions into other languages and dialects. When developing tools across languages, consider how best to formulate questions and what terms are used, particularly in relation to sensitive issues.
Checklist. Design new data collection tools

- Develop data collection tools that are appropriate in nature and scope for the project and data sources.
- Ensure tools are able to collect sufficient and relevant information for the project.
- Align the time needed to complete the tool with the time that data sources or data providers have available.
- Ensure tools align with the capacities and resources of those collecting data.
- Design tools with attention to sensitivities around gender, social equity and other power dynamics.
- Consider the translation of data collection questions into other languages and dialects.

Develop guidelines for data collectors

Alongside the development of tools should be the development of guidance for data collectors on how these are to be implemented. For questionnaires, for instance, this may include: explanatory comments to questions that may be misunderstood; guidance on how to administer questions (for example, whether to ask open questions or present a list of alternative answers); or if and when to probe or try to elicit more comprehensive answers from respondents. If the tool is a structured or semi-structured interview guideline, it is also useful to provide guidance specifically on which topics each series of question is meant to illuminate, as well as whether or how the sequence of questions may be changed to correspond with the flow of a conversation. When tools are self-administered, clear guidance will be needed for the respondent to ensure that questions are clear and understood, answers address the questions and the questionnaire is completed. Questions should clearly indicate the type of responses required including, when appropriate, the desired notation (for example, check or circle). Operational definitions should be included before potentially ambiguous questions, as should clear instructions to skip non-applicable questions. This guidance should be included in the questionnaire itself as well as any cover letter accompanying the questionnaire.

Data collectors also require guidance when collecting data from secondary sources, including guidance on what information is to be captured or instructions for data providers from institutions on what variables they should be collecting or sharing. Guidance is particularly important when there are multiple data collectors involved in gathering the same data, to enhance inter-rater reliability (that is, to ensure consistency of data from one researcher to the next). Guidance is also needed on how information is recorded (for example, as notes, observations or recordings), the suitability of which will depend on the individual instrument as well as the context of data collection. Guidelines for data collection should cover alternative means of recording data if the respondent does not consent to the standard approach for the project.
Checklist. Develop guidelines for data collectors

- Develop guidelines for data collectors in the implementation of data collection tools.
- Guidelines should be specific to the data collection tool.
- Develop guidelines for secondary data collection as well as for primary data collection.
- Ensure that guidelines provide information about how data is to be documented.
- Provide guidance on how to manage any issues that may arise in administering the tool.

Prepare explanatory information and referral materials

Prepare explanatory information about the data collection project, including procedures for ensuring informed consent, to inform research participants (data sources and data providers) about the data collection initiative and their specific role or involvement in it. This material should, at minimum, explain:

- the data collection topic and purpose;
- the types of questions to be asked;
- who is involved in data collection and will have access to data (that is, how data will be handled, used and stored);
- how confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained;
- potential risks and benefits of participation;
- how, where and with whom the information will be used, shared and presented;
- an explanation of the procedures for consent including the option to fully or partially withdraw consent at any stage without negative consequences (for example, in terms of victims’ access to services); and
- contact information for the person and institution responsible for the data collection in case of any follow-up questions or issues.

This material should be written and given to research participants for their later reference and use, as needed. When conducting data collection with trafficking victims or traffickers, consider if modifications are needed to explanatory information to ensure that the information is appropriate to the individual’s age and maturity, native language and educational background. It must be easy to understand in the respondent’s own language and the person must be able to keep the material afterward in case of any questions or concerns that may arise. When respondents are unable to read, explanatory information should be provided verbally.

For some data collection projects, explanatory information will need to be accompanied by referral information, to inform research participants about available assistance and support that they may require and how they can access this assistance. Even when vulnerable persons are not involved in TIP data collection, it may be useful to develop referral information for different types of key informants who would benefit from information about protection and prosecution options (for example, service providers, law enforcement, community leaders and so on). Some professionals may not have access to all information about anti-trafficking assistance and
support and may benefit from this information, not least the opportunity to refer victims they may identify in their operational work.

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**Checklist. Prepare explanatory information and referral material**

- Prepare explanatory information about the data collection project and all aspects of the how data collection will be conducted.
- Present explanatory information in a clear and accessible way.
- Include details about informed consent and options to withdraw from participation.
- Include contact details for the agency or institution conducting the data collection in case any follow-up questions arise.
- Present explanatory information in written form so that the participant can keep the information and refer back as needed.
- Verbally explain the explanatory information when a participant is not literate.
- Tailor explanatory information to the age, maturity, language and education of the participant.
- Develop written referral information to be given to participants.
- Communicate any limits of confidentiality to participants before starting data collection.

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**Test data collection tools**

All data collection tools should be tested and revised as needed. Pre-testing tools may involve preliminary testing exercises, such as data collectors interviewing each other, or completing self-administered surveys or questionnaires. **Pre-testing** evaluates whether respondents interpret questions in a consistent manner, as intended by the data collector, and judges the appropriateness of each question. Data collectors may also ask “test respondents” to determine how improvements can be made, including changes to questions, eliminating questions or writing new questions.

**Pilot testing** is a small-scale trial where a few participants from the research sample are engaged to test the research instrument and comment on the mechanics of the research tool, including: any problems with the guidance/instructions; when questions or terminology are not clear; formatting and typographical issues; the flow of questions; any unusual, redundant, irrelevant or poorly worded questions and responses; and so on. This is also an opportunity to determine the time required to complete the research tool. Pre-testing and pilot testing minimize the chance that research participants will misinterpret questions, fail to recall what is requested or misrepresent their true responses. The information obtained through pre-testing and pilot testing should be used to improve the data collection tool. Testing should be done with the relevant target group and with respect to culture, age, gender and so on.

Care and attention are needed to language in the design and testing of tools. This is not necessarily only a question of linguistically correct translation, but also requires culturally appropriate translation. Some terms may technically have the same meaning but not be used in general conversation. This can significantly alter the tone of the question and, therefore, the response and steps need to be taken to avoid these distortions. Time and resources need to be set aside for testing and subsequent modifications. And yet this is often not carefully budgeted.
Checklist. Test data collection tools

- Test all tools and revise or adjust as needed.
- Be open to multiple rounds of testing, if needed.
- Do not let time constraints prevent testing and piloting of tools.
- Test the translation of tools and adjust as needed.
- Test the tool with the specific target group; test with respect to culture, age, gender, etc.

Consider the use of technology for data collection tools

Various technological options may be available in the implementation of data collection (for example, data collection being administered through a smartphone application, tools to identify missing data, secure transfer and storage of data). Assess if these could be adapted to support or enhance the planned data collection effort. Consider risks or limitations when using technology. In many lower resource countries, online options are constrained by limited internet access, unreliable service, low bandwidth and the high cost of internet services. Moreover, there are resource and capacity issues, particularly when using new technologies for larger-scale and on-going data collection efforts.

Relationships to technology differ substantially across the world, including within communities and cultures. Its use needs to be case-by-case and align with the users of the technology, including data sources, data providers and data collectors. The use of technology may enhance or undermine data collection when interacting with participants of different ages who have different relationships to technology. This might mean using different types of technologies with different groups of data collectors and research participants. Whether and how to use technology will also require reviewing legal provisions and requirements, in particular with regard to the protection of personal and sensitive data, to ensure that the tools and software adhere to legal requirements of a country (or, in their absence, the ethical standards of data protection).

Checklist. Consider the use of technology for data collection tools

- Identify technology options that could support or enhance data collection tools.
- Assess and weigh any limitations of using a technological option.
- Review legislation to ensure that any use of technology is legal and ensure adequate protections.
- Consider any possible ethical issues or risks with the use of the technology.
Develop a data collection manual

A data collection manual delineates the agreed process to guide data collection, allows all persons working on the data collection effort to have a common understanding and serves as a resource to be consulted throughout the data collection process. The manual should contain information on the full process of how data collection is to take place, including, but not limited to:

- the topic, purpose and scope of data collection;
- the data collection or research questions;
- data collection approach and method;
- definitions and terminology;
- how to use the data collection tools;
- the process by which data will be collected;
- procedures for submitting datasets;
- legal and ethical protocols and procedures;
- confidential and secure treatment of data;
- standardized quality control procedures (monitoring, detection and remedial action, when appropriate) for early identification and avoidance of problems and errors; and
- communication procedures between data collectors and supervisors in the case of any issues during data collection.

More advanced data collection efforts with multiple stakeholders will require a set of manuals and guidance to guide data collection for different stakeholders, including data collectors, data providers, data processors and data analysts. The data collection manual needs to be accessible and comprehensible to data collectors and others involved in the process. Because it will not be able to cover all possible scenarios the manual may be a living document, revised and updated over time in response to the realities of data collection. The data collection manual should also be part of a wider process of reflection, discussion and adjustment within the data collection project, which will allow those involved to identify issues and address them collaboratively.

The data collection manual should not replace supervision and oversight. There should be a clearly defined communication structure between data collectors and supervisors as part of ongoing data collection. When needed, this should track what happens when errors are detected, including any steps for what changes should be undertaken. Training and mentoring may be needed for staff who unintentionally deviate from the original protocol. Most important is to create an environment where data collectors feel comfortable and confident to ask questions and raise issues if they are unsure or have made a mistake, that they know whom to contact on the project when problems are faced and that they feel able and have the means to do so.
Checklist. Develop a data collection manual

- Develop a data collection manual that outlines the process of data collection, including for different data providers.
- Delineate instructions and guidelines for all aspects of data collection.
- Include data collection tools, procedures, legal and ethical protocols in the data collection manual.
- Revise and update the data collection manual over the course of data collection.

Refine legal and ethical guidelines and protocols for data collection

During this stage of implementation (Stage #2: Data Collection) real world issues will emerge and will likely require reviewing, revisiting and revising the ethical guidelines developed in Stage #1. TIP data collection is likely to involve a raft of complex ethical issues as well as risks that are not possible to anticipate in advance. As such, while protocols for data collection should anticipate potential ethical issues and dilemmas, ethics should be seen as a process, with ethical issues being explored as they arise, both in the field and when working with data.

Provide training, mentoring and supervision on the ethical and legal guidelines and protocols developed. This should apply to all individuals involved in data collection, namely data collectors, translators and interpreters, transcribers and various support staff. Provide on-going staff supervision on ethical and legal issues that arise over the course of any TIP data collection project. Have procedures in place that allow data collectors to bring forward the various issues and problems that they face in their work for discussion and strategizing. All individuals involved in data collection should be aware of the potential for vicarious trauma in TIP data collection and have tools and avenues to manage trauma and stress that they may face as part of their work. Develop clear procedures for communication between data collectors and supervisors as well as an environment of dialogue and discussion, where data collectors and support staff feel safe and confident to raise these issues and difficulties. Communication and dialogue with supervisors may also be needed in instances when data collectors and support staff may have made an error in the field and have concerns about blame or repercussions.

While there are many different types of TIP data collection, some of the legal and ethical issues that may arise during data collection relate to the following components:

- Ensure informed consent
- Implement guidelines and protocols for contacting data providers and research participants
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality
- Assess when data collection reveals risk or abuse
- Support referrals for assistance and support
- Guard the “best interests of the child” during data collection
Gaining informed consent will necessarily differ depending on the nature of data collection, the context in which data is being collected as well as the data providers and data sources involved. How best this can be achieved requires thought and consideration as well as, in some cases, reflection and adjustment over time and in response to emerging factors. Recognizing the often complex layers of decision-making around participation in data collection, particularly when involving trafficking victims, is part of understanding and navigating informed consent.

Gaining informed consent means anticipating and explaining the potential risks of participation in data collection in the short- and long-term, the dynamics around which are different in the current era of the internet and social media. Risks of participation are not only relevant for trafficking victims as respondents but may also affect professionals who participate in data collection. For instance, organizations working in more constrained political contexts may not be able to safely participate in data collection that may yield negative findings about a country’s anti-trafficking response or even evidence of corruption and associated issues. Key informants in such cases may risk reprisals from government stakeholders. Some professionals, (for instance under certain jurisdictions) may not be allowed to share information about their anti-trafficking work and participating in data collection may not be allowable or advisable. To ensure that consent is informed, it may be advisable to give research participants time to consider their participation and even discuss with trusted others. Further adjustments may be needed to how this is done in practice based on the real-life implementation of data collection. This may cause delays in the data collection process but nonetheless should be handled accordingly. How consent is to be documented (for example, verbally or in writing) will necessarily differ from context to context and informed consent guidelines and protocols need to take careful account of legal requirements, as well as local norms.

While procedures for how to gain and document informed consent will already have been discussed in Stage #1, determining how to proceed may only be possible once data collection has begun. Adjustments and adaptations may be needed in the field, as well as over time.

**Checklist. Ensure informed consent**

- Identify and address any barriers to informed consent with research participants.
- Anticipate and explain any potential risks from participation to respondents, particularly in light of social media and other platforms.
- Be clear about what participation will and will not mean as part of consent procedures.
- Assess whether it is more suitable to use verbal or written consent.

**Implement guidelines and protocols for contacting data providers and research participants**

Guidelines and protocols for contacting data providers and research participants in data collection should be carefully designed and implemented, to ensure that everyone involved is aware of the process and their role within it and has consented to participate. When relying on
gatekeepers like service providers to contact respondents (for example, trafficking victims), ensure that gatekeepers fully understand the recruitment criteria and approach and adhere to it in how they contact respondents.

Establish clear and rigorous guidelines and protocols for contacting any data providers or research participants, to ensure informed consent. Sharing clear explanatory information with participants in advance of data collection facilitates informed consent. Gatekeepers must fully understand and adhere to recruitment criteria. It may be necessary to adjust the recruitment approach when it is not followed in practice.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist. Implement guidelines and protocols for contacting data providers and research participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Consider and adjust the recruitment approach when it is not followed in practice.</td>
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Ensure anonymity and confidentiality
Care is needed to guard anonymity and confidentiality as well as to address any threats to anonymity and confidentiality that may emerge in the way that data is collected and processed in practice. This is particularly pressing in the case of collecting personal and sensitive data (for example about trafficking victims) given the potential for direct and severe harm that may arise when anonymity and confidentiality are not protected. Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality is also relevant for key informants and other data providers generally.

Guarding anonymity and confidentiality requires controlling who has access to data and the handling of data over time. One possible threat to anonymity and confidentiality is when data is shared and transferred without appropriate data protection procedures. Anonymity and confidentiality may also be breached when data collectors discuss cases and information in inappropriate contexts and with persons who should not be privy to this information. Another threat to confidentiality may arise when the boundaries between operational work with trafficking victims and TIP data collection are blurred.

Data collectors must be aware of any potential limits to confidentiality and have procedures in place for when such situations may arise. In practice, this may also require coordination with authorities. Participants in data collection (as well as data providers and gatekeepers involved in facilitating access) must also be aware of when confidentiality may not be guaranteed. This must be clearly explained to participants as part of ensuring informed consent.
Checklist. Ensure anonymity and confidentiality

☑ Be vigilant about ensuring anonymity and confidentiality in the data collection process.
☑ Address threats to anonymity and confidentiality in the way that data is collected and processed.
☑ Educate data collection staff on the risks of breaching anonymity and confidentiality.
☑ Ensure that participants are aware of and consent to any limits of confidentiality.

Assess when data collection reveals risk or abuse

Many countries have mandatory reporting obligations, which require certain groups of professionals to report cases of violence and abuse, particularly involving children. As part of design and planning, national legislation and protection agencies should be consulted on the requirements, procedures and plans put into place to determine how data collectors should respond in situations of risk. In the absence of robust national legislation, different laws and ethical standards should be consulted in the development of an appropriate set of guidelines or protocol. Data collectors should aim for the highest level of protection afforded by such guidelines and protocols. This should include the application of child safeguarding policies by organizations or institutions when working with children.

However, how to act and react in practice does not always align with procedures and protocols, particularly in more challenging settings and environments. Issues may arise in ensuring the safety and well-being of the respondent in ways that may require modifications and adjustments in how data collectors should respond (while ensuring that it remains legal, ethical and safe). Working out what “doing no harm” means in different situations is often complicated. Adaptations to procedures and protocols may be needed to ensure the protection of respondents involved in data collection including when situations evolve and change over the course of a data collection effort. In the case of children, mandatory reporting requirements may prove complicated in practice. All members of a data collection team should be aware of procedures and requisite steps concerning limited confidentiality prior to implementation.

Checklist. Assess when data collection reveals risk or abuse

☑ Consult national legislation on requirements and procedures when respondents are at risk.
☑ Develop a protocol to address risk or abuse, to the highest level of protections.
☑ Take necessary action if a respondent discloses a need for protection in the context of data collection.
☑ Consult with the respondent about what steps may be taken in situations of risk.
☑ Ensure that all data collectors are aware of the procedures to address risk and mandatory reporting requirements.
☑ Adapt practice to ensure the protection of respondents, as needed.
Support referrals for assistance and support

Referral information should be provided to all research participants as part of the data collection protocol. Referral information should be reviewed and revised over the course of data collection by: adding to referral sheets as new services become available or known; removing organizations that do not respond to assistance requests or do not provide adequate services and support; and validating and, as needed, updating contact information for service providers. It will also be necessary to consider if referral information is conveyed in a clear way that is accessible to different types of research participants.

In the case of some types of data collection, data collectors may need to take a more proactive role in facilitating the referral process, including:

- calling the service provider on the respondent’s behalf, with their prior consent;
- providing a phone or funds for a phone call in order that the respondent can call a service provider for assistance;
- accompanying the individual to the office of an assistance organization to inquire about assistance opportunities;
- following up with the respondent about whether they were able to access referral services;
- following up with the service provider to ensure that the respondent’s requests have been received and are being addressed, with the respondent’s prior consent.

As part of this process, data collectors should anticipate and manage respondents’ expectations, ensuring that they are not leading respondents to believe that they will receive benefits like various forms of assistance that may not be possible.

Checklist. Support referrals for assistance and support

- Collect detailed information about various services and referral options.
- Revise and adapt referral information over the course of data collection.
- When needed, take a proactive role in facilitating the referral process.
- Anticipate and manage respondents’ expectations.

Guard the “best interests of the child” during data collection

While many legal and ethical issues will have been discussed at the outset of the project (as part of design and planning), other issues may emerge over the course of data collection in ways that compromise the “best interests of the child”. This might include when children’s consent is not fully informed or when a data collector is not sufficiently trained or sensitized in conducting data collection with children. This requires considering and accommodating the “best interests of the child” at all stages of data collection and making adjustments and course corrections, as needed. This also requires ensuring that children or their parents/guardians have a means of recourse when problems or questions arise and clarifications are needed.
Checklist. Guard the “best interests of the child” during data collection

- Identify issues that may undermine the “best interests of the child”.
- Ensure that children or their parents/guardians have a means of recourse when problems arise.

Carry out training and on-going supervision in data collection

Train and supervise all data collectors as well as translators, interpreters, transcribers, field assistants and other types of support staff. This will necessarily vary according to the specific nature and scope of data collection and the individual’s role within it. Some training may need to be undertaken on an on-going basis or repeated when new staff become involved in the project, or when the tools or procedures for data collection are revised. Provide on-going supervision, including over time and in response to changes to the activity over time. Training and supervision should supplement but not replace the data collection manual. Training and supervision include the following:

- Train and supervise data collectors
- Train and supervise translators, interpreters, transcribers and support staff

Train and supervise data collectors

Train staff in all relevant aspects of data collection (for example, methods, institutional policies and regulations) to equip them to make decisions that ensure data quality and integrity. Train staff on technical issues (research/data collection), the issue of human trafficking and any particular sub-topic(s) being studied as well as the legal and ethical obligations associated with data collection. They should have as much insight as possible as to the topic, purpose, scope and research questions so that they can situate their tasks and work within the wider data collection effort. For instance, training should include attention to definitional clarity and precision, how to operationalize definitions and terminology and how to formulate questions linked to the overall topic. Each data collector should be sufficiently familiar with the tools before they start data collection so that they have a clear idea of what is needed and do not need to refer excessively to guidelines or manuals when conducting data collection or lose track when conducting a survey.

Regularly review and debrief the data collection process with data collection teams, including addressing any issues that arise. Create climate where the data collection team feels comfortable and confident in raising issues, including with regard to mistakes they may have made or questions and concerns that they may have. Data collection teams should debrief and review technical issues that are relevant for the implementation of data collection. This might involve more general issues (for instance any resistance to the project or difficulties in following the workplan) or more specific issues (for instance, in terms of data collection tools.
and how they work, whether the data collection questions are suitable and whether any adjustments are needed). Debriefing also supports quality assurance. Debriefing routines are also needed for data collectors, especially given the difficult issues being studied as well as in the case of stressful data collection settings, heavy workloads and so on. Review and debriefing procedures are as much about ensuring the well-being of the data collectors as the technical issues involved.

**Checklist. Train and supervise data collectors**

- Train staff on the overall data collection project and their role within it.
- Provide training on human trafficking and the particular topic being studied, including definitions and terms.
- Provide training on using the specific data collection tools.
- Regularly review and debrief with data collection teams.
- Address any issues that arise over the course of data collection.

**Train and supervise translators, interpreters, transcribers and support staff**

Train and supervise other professionals involved in the data collection process, including translators, interpreters, transcribers as well as other types of support staff. Many data collection efforts will require translation and/or interpretation. Translators and interpreters must have the requisite qualifications, training and be adequately supervised. When a data collection effort involves translators and interpreters, training should take into account the linguistic capacity for translation and interpretation, as well as TIP-specific skills, interpersonal skills and sensitivity. Sensitivity is of particular importance when interviews are conducted with interpreters who then will be interacting with trafficking victims but is also relevant in interactions with key informants generally. Sensitivity also comes into play when translating transcripts and other datasets, given the sensitivities around issues and terminology that intersect with TIP.

Train data collectors in working effectively with an interpreter or translator including a common understanding of language and meaning to ensure data quality and an agreed way of interacting with research participants. Once suitably skilled translators and interpreters have been identified and trained, use the same individuals as much as possible to ensure comparable data and reduce the risk of variation in language. Establish mechanisms for quality control in terms of language, which may, for instance, involve reviewing language from recorded interviews and validation procedures by external interpreters. Allocate adequate resources as well as sufficient time as part of work planning.

When data collection require transcriptions, transcribers should be appropriately trained and skilled, sensitized to the issues and bound by the same ethical protocols as others involved in the project, including with regard to confidentiality. This will also require supervision and oversight. Indeed, all staff involved in a data collection project must be adequately trained and supervised, including administrative staff, logistical staff (drivers or field assistants), transcribers and translators or interpreters. Some support staff will be in direct contact with respondents or present in communities where trafficking victims may live and it is important that these individuals are trained to act and behave appropriately and sensitively as well as to guard all
ethical and legal protections. Provide debriefing routines and support mechanisms to translators, interpreters and transcribers and support staff, given the difficult issues and topics being studied and discussed. Being exposed to traumatic information does have the potential for negative impacts also on translators/interpreters and transcribers.

Checklist. Train and supervise translators, interpreters, transcribers and support staff

- Identify professional translators and interpreters.
- Work with translators and interpreters to ensure high quality translation.
- Provide training to translators, interpreters, transcribers and support staff when needed.
- Train data collectors to work effectively with an interpreter or translator.
- Establish mechanisms for quality control in terms of language.
- Ensure all staff adhere to legal and ethical requirements.
- Train and supervise transcribers and support staff and ensure ethical and legal adherence.

Document the data collection process

Comprehensively document the data collection process, including the steps before, during and after data gathering occurs, to preserve the integrity of the data and ensure that the data is valid, reliable, accurate and precise. Implement quality control activities aimed at verifying that data collection is processed according to the manual, including the identification of any issues and the provision of any necessary steps to correct faulty data collection. This also provides important information about the context in which data collection took place, which is helpful in assessing the credibility and legitimacy of the findings.

Documenting the data collection process also allows researchers to reflect on and document lessons learned from the research process. This is especially important when data collection occurs over time and there are changes (for example, in practice and procedure as well as content and staff) that need to be accounted for in how the data is analyzed or used. Documenting the data collection process is also important when it comes to the use of existing data or datasets for further research and analysis; it equips analysts with information needed to appropriately analyze, weigh and contextualize the data. Documentation of the data collection process is also needed by other researchers who may want to replicate the study.

Checklist. Document the data collection process

- Document the data collection process to ensure data integrity.
- Document data collection processes to allow for later analysis, if appropriate.
- Implement and document quality control mechanisms.
Revisit Stage# 1 work plan and adjust, if needed

Revisit the work plan developed in Stage #1 and assess if any adjustments are needed. Consider:

- Are there any unforeseen circumstances or limitations that warrant adjustment of the project topic, purpose, scope or approach?
- Are there adequate funds and time to implement the work plan?
- Is it possible to implement the proposed sampling strategy with the identified data sources?
- Is it necessary to raise challenges with funders or stakeholders?

Data collection commonly involves challenges, requiring adjustments and changes over the course of implementation. Reasons may include: limited resources; unrealistic timelines; an unrealistic scope of work; an overly ambitious topic; limited cooperation from data providers; the setting or context; and so on. In some cases, challenges can be so significant that they can’t be addressed within the original work plan and flexibility will be needed in the approach.

Because data collection will inevitably involve unforeseen circumstances or challenges, revisit the work plan and revise, as needed over time. In some extreme cases, this may mean withdrawing from a data collection project when these circumstances threaten the quality of the work or safe and ethical implementation.

Checklist. Revisit work plan and adjust, if needed

- Revisit the work plan and adjust if needed.
- Make revisions when needed or withdraw from data collection efforts if circumstances require it.
Stage #3. Data Storage, Maintenance & Management

Data storage, maintenance and management are not simply the straightforward organizational tasks they may seem at first glance. The strength of these components impacts fundamental issues such as the integrity of the data as well as protecting personal and often sensitive information about the lives and/or perspectives of research participants. How data is stored, maintained and managed, then, must receive careful attention.

This stage involves the way in which collected information is **stored** (that is, housed, stored and secured), **maintained** (that is, entered, processed, cleaned, validated and checked over time) and **managed** (that is, controlled, protected, delivered and enhanced, as well as either retained or disposed of). Good practice in data storage, maintenance and management protects the data itself (particularly personal and sensitive data) and any data collection subjects. It also facilitates the organization and formatting of data, tracks any alterations to the data and retains data integrity during any sharing or usage. How data is stored, maintained and managed depends on the amount and type of data involved as well as the motivation behind storing information and any compliance requirements for the actor(s) involved. Approaches to data storage, maintenance and management must mesh with the particular data collection effort, including the available funding, human resources and time allocations, as well as legal and ethical considerations. This means that there are important distinctions to be made between what is feasible and advisable for different initiatives, which may range from high-tech databases to analog paper-based systems.

This stage of data collection will likely involve the use of technology. Technologies should be chosen and made to fit and support a project’s data storage, maintenance and management. Projects should not be squeezed into a particular technological approach or model. If storage, maintenance and management utilize a database, attention should be paid to a range of external factors and considerations specific to a given project and in different settings when deciding how to ensure a safe, secure and efficient database. External factors might include the legal framework that a database must align with, the political context, which may or may not be conducive to different data collection processes, institutional cultures in organizations and institutions that have different approaches and opportunities for the use of technology and so on.

Even within contexts with more limited resources and scope, steps can be taken to improve data storage, maintenance and management. And regardless of the type of database used, staff must have capacity and competence relative to that specific database. Good practice at this stage is as much about the technical skills and resources of individuals and organizations as it is about the technologies leveraged.
Checklist

Steps and Considerations in Data Storage, Maintenance and Management

**Consider options in setting up a database**
- Identify the best system for one’s needs
- Determine the appropriate system for resources and capacities
- Ensure adequate time, planning and sustainability

**Ensure quality in data entry**
- Entering data and addressing errors
- Ensure training and supervision
- Consider data entry and processing in different languages

**Establish procedures for data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)**
- Consider issues in data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)
- Allocate adequate time and resources and assign or recruit skilled staff
- Explore technology solutions for data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)

**Develop procedures for data storage and management, including retention and disposal**
- Consider the type of data collected
- Secure, store and manage data
- Determine responsibilities and privileges in data handling
- Develop and implement procedures and requirements for data retention and disposal
- Consider the use of technology in data storage and management

**Assess options for data sharing and transfer**
- Consider data sharing
- Assess options for data transfer

**Identify legal and ethical issues in data storage, maintenance and management**
Consider options in setting up a database

The first step at this stage is to determine how data will be stored or housed. A database consists of data, a search capability and an ability to manipulate the data. Designing a database is about systematizing the data that has been or will be collected and then building the infrastructure for this data. A TIP database is a structured set of TIP data that is organized in a way to facilitate the efficient retrieval, management and updating of information. Such databases can include victim data, criminal justice data, or indeed any TIP-related data. TIP databases will be of varying levels of detail and sophistication. While a database today is usually a structured set of data stored electronically, there can be physical (hard copy) databases where data is housed in filing cabinets and other secure locations. Databases are different in nature, scope and purpose, which impacts how data is stored, maintained and managed. A simple electronic database may consist of data collected and organized in Word documents or spreadsheets. More advanced systems may allow, for example, for multiple simultaneous users with varying levels of access, the generation of statistical projections, data models for analysis of geo-data (computerized geographical data stored in a format usable with a geographic information system (GIS) for spatial data visualization) and so on.

Databases may contain data of various scope, ranging from local, national, regional or global concern. The scope, and hence size, of the data has implications in terms of storage, maintenance and management. Determining the most suitable database will also need to consider available time and resources. An organization or institution with a large amount of data and adequate time and resources will likely have access to expertise to build more sophisticated solutions. Organizations with fewer resources and less data may find more moderate solutions meet their needs. These distinctions inform what is possible and appropriate in terms of the options for a database. Some databases are specific to one organization or institution, whereas other databases may be used by multiple stakeholders (for example, within a government across multiple ministries, or between a government agency and civil society partners). Some databases are designed for use by a specific organization or institution, while some data collectors use existing commercial software and programs (for example, the Microsoft Office suite of programs). Databases may also be produced with any number of licenses, including one of the open source licenses that prioritize free distribution of the data contained within in a database.

An important consideration is interoperability between databases (that is, compatibility of systems between various data providers and the centralized database). Databases for data providers from various government departments or NGOs would ideally be compatible with and the database of the National Rapporteur-equivalent mechanism. While considerations around data storage, maintenance and management may be part of design and planning, in some cases, database needs (including the overarching need for a database) may only become clear after data collection has already begun.

Key elements in the design of a database include:

- Identify the best system for one’s needs
- Determine the appropriate system for resources and capacities
- Ensure adequate time, planning and sustainability
Identify the best system for one’s needs

Databases must align with the needs of the individual, organization or institution conducting data collection as well as with the goals of data collection or research. The database should be usable, accessible and responsive to those working with the system. A database needs to give data providers the data that they need to do their work on an on-going basis and in an accessible way. The best system for some organizations and institutions will be a complex database, which leverages various technological solutions. In other cases, a simpler but still electronic system may be appropriate. In still other cases, paper-based data collection may be the only practicable option (for example, where government staff do not have access to computers, where there may be security issues due to staff sharing an office computer, where internet access is limited, or where technological skills are limited).

In some contexts, storing data in hard copy may be required by law, which may influence decisions about the best database system for an organization or institution. There may also be concerns about using an electronic system because it does not align with how things are typically done in a particular context, because of lack of familiarity with various technological approaches, inadequate staff capacity to manage the system or due to the institutional culture within an organization or institution. There are serious limitations to storing data in paper-based systems and it is not, in the long-term, a workable model. However, paper-based systems remain widespread due to insufficient resources, computer illiteracy or suspicion and concerns about electronic databases, among other reasons. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind that, in many contexts and for many organizations and institutions, a paper-based data collection system is realistically the starting point for thinking through possible options in going forward.

What technology is needed and used for a database will vary substantially depending on the parameters of data collection. For electronic databases, there is a wide variety of database design options. In some cases, a standalone database utilizing an application on existing software (such as Microsoft Excel or Salesforce) might meet data collection needs. Other databases are web-based and can sometimes be tailored or adapted from the original design. Some databases allow for concurrent use by several users as well as for varying levels of access rights to meet data protection needs. Some databases are custom-built for a particular data collection initiative. When using existing programs and software (which are generally available in English or a limited range of languages), allocate resources to either translate the program’s user interface or develop guidelines for data entry when entering in another language.

Before any decisions are made about the design of a database, assess the context in which data collection is to take place, including the legal and institutional framework. A database needs to adhere to national data protection requirements including legislation in the country where the data is to be housed. The database should also address multi-jurisdictional issues that may come into play. For example, a data collector may be subject to the laws and regulations of the jurisdiction in which the data collector resides or works but may be storing data in another country that applies different laws and regulations, or be storing data “in the cloud”, which is subject to various and rapidly changing national and international laws. Where legal requirements for data protection are not robust, systems should be designed in line with international data protection standards.

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15 The “cloud” refers to software and services that run on a server or a network of servers.
Given the highly complex nature of setting up a database, a multi-stage process may be beneficial, starting with a simple approach at the outset and moving toward the development of a more tailored and complex system once the range of external factors and considerations have been identified and assessment. Alternatively, it may be beneficial to pilot the database before scaling it.

**Checklist. Identify the best system for one’s needs**

- Ensure the database aligns with the needs of the organization or institution.
- Ensure the database aligns with the goals of data collection or research.
- Make sure that the database is usable and accessible.
- Provide options for technical support to ensure the database is manageable and accessible.
- Choose a technological option that fits with needs and purpose of data collection.
- Consider if a simpler, low-tech solution is sufficient for one’s needs.
- Take into account infrastructure, resources and capacity when considering technological solutions.
- Consider a multi-staged approach or options for piloting the database.
- Utilize technological expertise in design and planning of the database.
- Ensure the database adheres to relevant legislation and ethical standards.

**Determine the appropriate system for resources and capacities**

Databases must align with available resources and technical capacities. Assess these from the outset, including the availability of resources over time (for example, beyond the duration of a donor-funded project). Success and sustainability of a database correlate with having accurately assessed resources – both in the design and operation of the system. Databases need to be manageable in terms of available resources. Data entry and processing requirements need to align with staff’s other tasks and responsibilities, including when human trafficking is only one part of their work portfolio. Another consideration is the on-going operating costs of the database. Consider the time and resources available to data providers to collect and feed the database. Allocate adequate resources and time for a range of possible activities over the course of implementation (for example, maintaining and potentially upgrading the database, training staff in maintenance and management, building capacity for data analysis, and so on).

When resources are not available in house, hire a technical expert or establish a partnership with a specialist organization or company. Partnerships between those who collect data and those who know how to organize and structure it (including how to build a database) are a useful strategy, with each partner working within their area of expertise and skill set.

Allocate resources for training (and re-training) staff in the use of databases. This may involve not only one-off trainings but multiple trainings as needed, as well as on-going mentoring and support. In contexts with high staff turnover or rotation, repeat training with all new staff to ensure consistency and quality in terms of data entered into the database. Training should be accompanied by written training manuals that can be referred to over the course of implementation; training manuals should be revised and updated with any changes to the database.
Checklist. Determine the appropriate system for resources and capacities

- Allocate adequate and appropriate human and financial resources.
- Factor in the total costs of implementing a database, including personnel time.
- Assess resources and capacities at the outset, including availability of resources over time.
- Develop a system that is manageable in terms of costs and staff time.
- Consult with partners about their available time and resources to provide data into the database.
- Assess technical capacities of staff as part of design.
- Assess available technical tools and skills to support the system, including over time.

Ensure adequate time, planning and sustainability

Adequate time and planning are needed to design an appropriate and sustainable database. Organizations and institutions may be under pressure from government agencies, donors or partners to develop databases. This pressure should not overtake the need to take time at the outset to think through and plan the database in line with the precise parameters and needs of data collection.

Designing a database may benefit from a staged process that starts with a simple database at the outset, from which a more tailored system can be developed. Design should also anticipate the need to expand and upgrade the system over time. Consider the sustainability of the database over time, for instance, once the external organization or funder is no longer involved. Consider sustainability from the outset, including how to address problems that emerge during implementation. Plan in the long-term when designing and implementing TIP databases. Set realistic timelines for funders and implementers and be aware of the inevitability that problems will arise and need addressing over the course of implementation.

Checklist. Ensure adequate time, planning and sustainability

- Allocate adequate time and resources to design a suitable database.
- Start simple and revise/update the database over time.
- Plan for the sustainability of the database beyond the duration of a project.
- Design the database such that it can be updated and expanded over time, as needed.

Ensure quality in data entry

Data entry is the act of entering information into data collection formats, usually electronic formats or software on a computer. Data entry is done on an on-going basis, with care and precision. Ensuring data quality in data entry requires:
Entering data and addressing errors

Remediating potential errors in data entry is critical in ensuring data quality. This process is often referred to as data editing. There are different means by which this can be done depending on the nature of the data being collected and the format or approach in which it is entered. Technical mechanisms may be built into a database to provide checks and reduce errors including:

- automating manual operations;
- preventing duplicate cases or double counting by tracking single case data;
- reducing invalid numeric responses through the inclusion of range limits;
- preventing invalid response options through logic flow checks; and
- preventing insufficient data through the incorporation of mandatory fields.

These checks help to enhance data quality. Data entry staff should also implement procedures aimed at ensuring data quality including checking for high levels of missing data, outliers or unusual trends.

Data entry errors may be minimized when the individual entering data is able to select from a number of predefined fields as compared to inputting open, narrative data which is more difficult to standardize and code. Closed fields can be useful in limiting errors. Some errors may be prevented or lessened by offering guidance during the process of data entry (for example, providing instructions and definitions as part of the database interface or a manual or codebook for data entry).

For some types of data collection, stricter database systems may not always be suitable because they lack flexibility (for instance, to accommodate new patterns and unanticipated trends and behaviors). Those entering data may find themselves trying to choose the best (predefined) answer from a menu of often less than adequate responses. Some databases must be flexible in documenting more qualitative information. In such cases the role of data entry staff is particularly important in ensuring data quality and procedures must align with the nature of the data being collected and the database itself.

Checklist. Entering data and addressing errors

- Establish and implement quality control measures to address errors.
- Ensure quality control activities suitable for the data collection project and approach.

Ensure training and supervision

Allocate time and resources for training to ensure that data entry and processing are of a high quality. Different levels of training (and often re-training) may be needed given different levels
of proficiency within and between organizations and institutions. In some cases, this may involve training on how to enter data in hard files or in simple electronic formats and may also involve basic computer literacy skills. In other cases, training may be for more advanced and complex databases. Conduct on-going and repeat training when there is high rotation or turnover of staff, resulting in a lack of institutional memory. Training should be assessed for efficacy and adjusted as needed. Supervision and oversight are also needed to ensure high quality data entry and processing. All training and supervision has resource implications, particularly in terms of human resources, which need to be built into the budgeting for this work.

Checklist. Ensure training and supervision

- Provide robust on-going training to staff involved in data entry and processing.
- Conduct on-going training, particularly when staff changes.
- Tailor training to different levels of proficiency.
- Assess the effectiveness of training over time and make changes as needed.
- Provide supervision and oversight of staff conducting data entry and processing.

Consider data entry and processing in different languages

Some projects involve multi-lingual databases and/or data entry instructions available in multiple languages. Working across multiple languages introduces potential errors, which may compromise the precision of the data. It is important to identify and address potential errors in data entry caused by language. Different levels of language proficiency should also be taken into account given how this impacts data entry and, thus, data quality.

When data entry and processing are done in different languages, allocate adequate time to complete tasks. Varying levels of fluency among staff collecting and entering data may impact the level of precision, particularly when staff must translate from one language to another in data entry. Consider quality control mechanisms with variables of language proficiency.

Checklist. Consider data entry and processing in different languages

- Identify and address potential errors in data entry due to language.
- Allocate adequate time for data entry and processing given language barriers.
- Check for precision in data entry when working in different languages.
- Take into account different levels of language proficiency and how this impacts data entry.

Establish procedures for data editing (data validation, cleaning and maintenance)

Errors may be mitigated through robust practices in data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance), processes that can be supported by computer technology. Data editing involves
reviewing data for consistency, detecting errors and outliers and ensuring accuracy and adequacy of the data. The goal is to identify and correct as much error as possible. Data editing involves the contiguous and mutually reinforcing tasks of data validation, data cleaning and data maintenance.

**Data validation** occurs at the time of data entry and generally means certain data is considered invalid and removed from the database. **Data cleaning** is the one-off process of detecting and addressing errors within the dataset (that is, amending, correcting or removing data that is incorrect, incomplete, improperly formatted or duplicative). **Data maintenance** refers to the on-going correction and verification of the dataset. These tasks are all important in ensuring data quality.

Different procedures for validation, cleaning and maintenance will depend on the specific data collection effort. This included the following considerations:

- Consider issues in data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)
- Allocate adequate time and resources and assign or recruit skilled staff
- Explore technology solutions for data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)

**Consider issues in data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)**

Duplicate cases and double counting within a database can happen, for example, when one victim is counted multiple times by different institutions or organizations involved in the victim’s identification and assistance or when one trafficker is documented by different criminal justice actors. Duplication may also arise between countries of origin and destination. Identify and mitigate duplicate cases in datasets.

**Checklist. Consider issues in data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)**

- Identify issues in data validation, cleaning and maintenance.
- Anticipate and address duplicate cases in administrative data.

**Allocate adequate time and resources and assign or recruit skilled staff**

Data validation, cleaning and maintenance processes are labor intensive and time-consuming, particularly in terms of some types of datasets (for example, when data comes from multiple data sources or different countries). This should be done by well-trained staff. Allocate sufficient time and staff for this task. The amount of time needed will vary according to the data collection project and approach. In more complex systems (for example, involving multiple organizations and institutions as data providers), this would likely require one organization or institution taking responsibility for oversight and for ensuring clean and consistent data.
Checklist. Allow adequate time and resources and assign or recruit skilled staff

- Dedicate sufficient time and resources for validation, cleaning and maintenance.
- Train and supervise staff in validation, cleaning and maintenance.

Explore technology solutions for data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)

There are technology solutions, specifically software programs, to support data editing. These can be useful, for example, in identifying outliers, which can skew the results and raise questions about validity. Consider what technology solutions are available to conduct or support the process of data validation, cleaning and maintenance. The appropriateness of technological solutions will be determined by the specific data collection project. The extent to which technological solutions are appropriate is a function of the specific database and data collection project. The use of such programs and applications will require resources as well as staff training. Resources will be needed for the purchase of software licenses as well as to train staff in its use and application. The use of such programs, though, is not a substitute for having skilled staff engaged in this process and adequate supervision of this staff.

Checklist. Explore technology solutions for data editing (validation, cleaning and maintenance)

- Identify a technology solution to support data validation, cleaning and maintenance.
- Allocate resources for the purchase of any needed technology solutions.
- Train staff in the use of any programs or applications for validation, cleaning and maintenance.

Develop procedures for data storage and management, including retention and disposal

Data storage is the recording (storage) of data in a storage medium. Data storage can be both physical (hard copy) and digital (electronic). Data storage is different from data archiving in that data storage is generally for current and active data (data that is being accessed or that will be used for analysis), whereas a data archive is intended as a repository for data that needs to be kept for a long period of time but is not necessarily important for current activities. For example, data may be archived when legal compliance requires that it be retained. Data that is archived is generally no longer in use, not changing frequently and/or not required on a regular basis.

Data management refers to the control, protection, delivery and enhancement of data. Data management includes developing and implementing protocols for data retention and disposal, which involves deciding which data is retained (archived) versus which data is disposed of (destroyed). TIP data must be stored and managed in a safe and secure manner during and after data collection. Considerations in how this done include:
Consider the type of data collected
- Secure, store and manage data
- Determine responsibilities and privileges in data handling
- Develop and implement procedures and requirements for data retention and disposal
- Consider the use of technology in data storage and management

Consider the type of data collected
How to secure data is determined by the data collection project itself. Different data storage and management approaches will be needed depending on the nature of the data and the overall data collection activity. Different types of data will have different requirements in terms of data storage and management. These are most often legal requirements. For example, **personal data**\(^{16}\) requires that extra protections be in place for storage as well as in terms of who has access to that data.

Legislation in a given jurisdiction may explicitly prohibit the collection of certain types of data or may require specific measures to be put in place to protect some types of data. For instance, TIP data collection that includes personal data raises specific legal requirements in terms of storage and management. Other types of data (for instance, open source court documents or a case law database) may not require the same high threshold of protection for data storage. However, this should not be taken to mean that this data does not have its own storage and protection requirements. In the absence of robust data protection and privacy legislation in a given country, data collectors should adhere to a higher level of protection than what may be legally required. Some types of data may require specific storage protocols because of the political environment or the topic about which data is being collected. For instance, in constrained political contexts it may be risky to collect information on human trafficking (for example, in countries with poor human rights records and a limited space for civil society). This necessitates greater care in data storage than may be required in more open political contexts.

### Checklist. Consider the type of data collected
- Review legislation for requirements related to data storage and management.
- Design procedures for data storage and management in line with relevant legislation.
- In the absence of robust legislation, design storage and management procedures in line with ethical principles.
- Consider the political context and adjust data storage and management procedures accordingly.

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\(^{16}\) Personal data refers to any information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify an individual (data subject). Sensitive data is personal data that may be used in a discriminatory way against an individual and as such should be treated with greater care and be subject to more stringent restrictions. Examples of sensitive data include personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership; the processing of genetic data or biometric data; data concerning health; and data concerning an individual’s sex life or sexual orientation.
Secure, store and manage data

How to store data safely will depend on the nature of data being collected (how, when and by whom). Data may be stored in hard copies and secured in locked cabinets; it may be in electronic format and password protected; it may be stored in the cloud with limited access. How to best store data is directly linked to the specific database that has been designed as well as any legal or administrative requirements and the environment in which data is collected. Different approaches include but are not limited to:

- de-identifying and anonymizing all files and records (or not collecting any identifying information);
- using codes, numbers or pseudonyms for each discrete file or case;
- storing code source files in a secure location separately from the files;
- encrypting audio files and “shredding” them once transcribed;
- using password protections (including multiple levels, when needed);
- storage on private services; and
- storage on hard discs that are not connected to the internet.

Regardless of the specific parameters, there must be sufficient storage capacity for the data being collected and systems need to be reliable with effective retrieval capacities. Back up all stored data, both for hard copy and electronic files. In spite of techniques for safe and secure data storage, vulnerabilities will nonetheless arise. This is the case in the storage of both hard and electronic copies. Regularly assess and update these approaches, as needed.

Checklist. Secure, store and manage data

✔ Assess the storage needs for the specific data collection effort.
✔ Protect systems and individual files with login and passwords.
✔ Hard copy files should be securely locked in cabinets and locked offices.
✔ Regularly update virus and other systems protections to prevent data vulnerability.
✔ Backup multiple copies in secured multiple locations, for electronic and hard copy data.
✔ Ensure adequate storage capacity.
✔ Regularly assess the reliability and security of the storage and management system.
✔ Ensure data is stored in line with legal and administrative requirements and ethical standards.

Determine responsibilities and privileges in data handling

Data handling is the process of ensuring that data is stored, archived or disposed of in a safe and secure manner during and after a data collection effort. This includes the development of policies and procedures to manage data handled electronically as well as through non-electronic means. In some cases, it may be necessary to manage access rights to datasets with varying levels of access (for example, with some individuals only having access on a need-to-know basis). This may also involve limiting physical access to equipment and storage media, including limiting access to equipment where data is stored, where appropriate and possible. Considerations include:
• Which organizations and institutions can handle data?
• Which individuals within these organizations and institutions can handle data?
• Which portion of data do they have access to?
• At what point during the project do different individuals or institutions have access to data?
• For what purpose do institutions or individuals have access to data?

Differing levels of access within an organization or institution are needed between different staff, depending on their specific roles and responsibilities. Access to data needs clear and strict guidance. This may include tools such as terms of references (ToRs), confidentiality agreements, security clearance, memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and so on. When databases are in hard copy, access issues will not only be about how data is stored but also where data is stored and which individuals or institutions have access to these locations.

**Checklist. Determine responsibilities and privileges in data handling**

- Manage access to data with clear and strict guidance.
- Limit and control access to all data in accordance with legal requirements and administrative procedures.
- Outline access to data in formal agreements like MoUs and ToRs.
- Implement and enforce confidentiality requirements.
- Control who has access to data as well as what portion(s) of that data.
- Identify technical solutions that enforce data access restrictions.

**Stage #3. Data Storage, Maintenance and Management**

- Develop and implement procedures and requirements for data retention and disposal

Retention periods for TIP data should be determined at the outset of the data collection effort, in line with legal, ethical or regulatory requirements. This issue will then likely need to be returned to as part of work on data storage and management. Key considerations include:

- How long should data be kept?
- When should it be disposed of?
- Who should handle data for storage, retention, retrieval and disposal purposes?
- How should data be handled for storage, retention, retrieval and disposal purposes?

Depending on the specific data collection effort and context, a different scope of data retention may be considered. Deciding how long data should be kept may depend on any number of factors, including the nature of the project or initiative, ethical guidelines, legal framework (of the project country, implementing agency, or the sponsoring agency or donor), on-going interest in or need for the data and the cost of long-term data maintenance. Data collection that informs national policymaking may be considered for permanent preservation or archiving. At the same time, retaining data once a project is over can lead to unauthorized access to confidential data and incur high costs for maintenance and protection. Additional considerations come into play depending on the precise nature of the data collected, including the extent to which it includes personal and sensitive data. It is important to think through and
develop clear policies on the retention and destruction of data in relation to each specific project.

Disposing of data requires adequate plans, procedures and impact analysis to ensure that data is discarded in a safe and secure manner. This includes establishing proper data management procedures according to which data should be stored, retained, shared, disposed of and so on. Without a proper plan or procedures in place, data collection efforts can be jeopardized when there is, for instance, staff turnover or institutional restructuring. Take additional care when disposing of confidential information to ensure that the information cannot be reconstructed after disposal.

Data disposal may be at the request of data subjects who may withdraw consent after data collection. Data collection efforts should be designed in ways that support data subjects to leverage their rights in terms of their own data, including data disposal. This would include setting up procedures and policies for how this is done and steps for data subjects to follow should they so choose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist. Develop and implement procedures and requirements for data retention and disposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ Identify at the outset any legal, regulatory and ethical requirements for data retention and disposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Consider the period of data retention at the outset of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Consider different factors and interests in decisions about data retention and disposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Establish procedures for safe and secure data retention and disposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Align procedures with the rights of data subjects in terms of their own data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Assess and adhere to legal and regulatory requirements for data disposal and retention.</td>
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</table>

Consider the use of technology in data storage and management

Technological tools can also be used to support safe data disposal. Instead of putting files into the trash folder on a computer and deleting (where they may be reconstructed), use programs that destroy digital files, “shredding” them to ensure their secure and permanent removal (erasure) from the computer. Technological tools can support safe storage and management but, at the same time, also have risks that need to be considered. Moreover, careless or uninformed application of technologies has the potential to create a range of problems. Using technological tools to secure and store data requires adequate staff capacity in the use of these tools, including to prevent technology-related integrity violations. It may also require technical assistance and support, which may be in house or available through third-party technology providers.

In sensitive political environments, there may be higher risks of data being stolen or confiscated by authorities who may abuse the data or do harm to certain individuals or organizations. In such environments, secure technological options for data storage and management may be particularly important to leverage (and leverage correctly).
Even when data storage does not use advanced technologies, implement procedures for data retention and disposal (and staff with the requisite skill set to implement those procedures). Retention of hard copy files (papers, printouts, books, photographs) requires consideration of secure storage and backing up of that data. Destruction of hard copy files will involve securely and permanently destroying data.

**Checklist. Consider the use of technology in data storage and management**

- Identify programs, applications and systems for data storage and management.
- Allocate resources for the purchase of any necessary applications, programs or systems.
- Ensure staff is adequately trained in the use of applications, programs or systems for data storage and management.
- Plan and budget for technical assistance that may be needed for applications, programs or systems used for data storage and management.

**Assess options for data sharing and transfer**

Data sharing refers to making data available to others through a variety of mechanisms. Some data may be shared within an organization or institution. Data sharing may also occur between organizations and institutions and across jurisdictions. Data transfer refers to the transmission of data, either electronically or in hard copy, from one individual or organization/institution to another. Establishing parameters of and procedures for data sharing and transfer are core issues in data storage, maintenance and management. This requires consideration of the following issues:

- Consider data sharing
- Assess options for data transfer

**Consider data sharing**

Data sharing in the context of TIP research can support different goals including to: reinforce open scientific inquiry; encourage a diversity of analyses and conclusions; permit reanalysis to verify or refute reported results; and allow for alternative analyses to refine results and analyses. Data sharing also allows for the re-use of collected data, which can be cost effective.

Clearly establish at the outset of any data collection activity if data can (or cannot) be shared, what specific TIP can be shared (safely, legally, ethically) under what circumstances data can be shared, by and with whom and for what purposes. Ethical principles and applicable legislation necessarily vary when it comes to data collection involving human subjects and personal data. In the case of some TIP research and data collection efforts, data sharing would be neither ethical nor legal. In other cases, data may be shared if the necessary protections are put in place. In the case of data from and about trafficking victims these protections would include, for example, data being de-identified or anonymized to a satisfactory level of anonymization.
Even when data sharing may, in principle, be allowable, it may not be advisable or appropriate. Some types of data are harder to de-identify and anonymize than others, which needs to be considered in terms of whether and how data sharing takes place. Some types of datasets do not easily lend themselves to data sharing. Some data sets cannot be divorced from the context in which they were collected, risking misinterpretation by analysts who are not privy to this contextual backdrop.

Data sharing, when assessed to be permissible and advisable, should be guided by legislation and administrative requirements. This would include parameters around what data should and should not be shared, between whom, when, for what purposes and how it can be done safely, ethically and legally. Data sharing can be a time-consuming and labor-intensive process, requiring staff and resources to prepare the data for sharing including putting adequate protections in places. These costs need to be considered in relation to any decisions about whether and to what extent data may be shared.

**Checklist. Consider data sharing**

- Review legal requirements and ethical standards related to data sharing relative to each data collection effort.
- Determine if data can be shared, including what data, under what circumstances, by and with whom and for what purposes.
- Outline parameters for data sharing, in line with legislation and administrative requirements as well as ethical principles.
- Allocate adequate time and resources to process data for safe and secure sharing.
- Weigh the costs and benefits of data sharing.
- Assess if data sharing poses any risks to data sources, staff, the project or the organization or institution.
- Store and archive data securely to allow for data sharing, if appropriate.

**Assess options for data transfer**

Data transfer refers to the transmission of data, either electronically or in hard copy, from one entity (individual, organization or institution) to another entity. This may or may not refer to the transfer of personal or sensitive data. Regardless, it is important to ensure that all data transfer is legal, ethical and secure. For instance, it is necessary to encrypt or otherwise secure files when transmitting sensitive information. How the transfer process takes place will differ according to country and legislation.

When data is transferred between stakeholders, ensure data transfer agreements are in place between the transferor and the recipient, outlining the terms and conditions of use, including what data to be shared, the mode of transfer, the use that may or may not be made of the data and the data security measures in place. Before any transfer takes place, the transferor should verify that the recipient’s use of data is equivalent to the principles and standards that the transferor itself has in place. When data transfer is not in an electronic format (for example, when it consists of hard copy case files or audio recordings), protections also need to be in place. This might include ensuring files are out of sight during transfer (such as keeping them in a secured case) or requesting that hard copies be locked in a secure location once delivered.
Checklist. Assess options for data transfer

- Review and adhere to legal and regulatory requirements related to data transfer.
- Consider requirements for the transfer of both electronic and hard copy data.
- Establish data transfer agreements outlining the terms and conditions of use of the data transferred.
- Establish data transfer agreements for both electronic and hard copy data.
- Make clear that the entity transferring the data is accountable for its protection.
- Establish guidelines for what constitutes secure data transfer.

Identify legal and ethical issues in data storage, maintenance and management

Properly addressing legal and ethical issues is deeply intertwined with good practice in data storage, maintenance, management and use. Safeguarding data is critically important when conducting TIP research and data collection with its many sensitivities and vulnerabilities. Complying with legal and ethical standards that protect the safety and security of data must be a paramount concern. The design of databases and the related procedures for data storage, maintenance and management must align with national legislation on data protection and administrative regulations and requirements for data collection (for example, in criminal justice administration or provision of health care services, or in record keeping about welfare and housing), which will also determine how data may be shared between different institutions (within the government as well as with civil society organizations such as NGOs).

Data collection initiatives will need to be clear about the legal framework for data storage in the relevant jurisdiction to ensure compliance with the law. Professionals engaged in TIP data collection may also need to comply with sector-specific data protection requirements. Adhering to laws in data storage, maintenance and management may also require attention to legislation across jurisdictions (for example, when data is being stored in multiple jurisdictions or when governance of a particular data collection effort straddles multiple laws and jurisdictions). Develop tools and resources on the legal and ethical requirements in relation to any particular TIP data collection initiative. Such tools may be shared and used to inform data collection by other organizations and institutions that collect data as part of their work.

Underpinning all legal and ethical data storage, maintenance and management is informed consent. Ensure that informed consent is not violated in how data is stored, managed, shared and used. This may mean, in some cases, that data must be disposed of at the request of the data subject. It may also mean that data sharing may not always be possible and should, in all instances, be approached with care and caution. Trafficking victims may not wish for their data to be shared with, for example, law enforcement or other government agencies, which may put the principle of informed consent in conflict with legal requirements.

The level of security and protection required will also depend on the context in which TIP research and data collection takes place. Data collectors need to consider databases within the wider political context in which data is being collected. Risks may arise in some political
settings, necessitating robust data storage and management. Conducting TIP data collection in more sensitive or high-risk political environments will require additional protections and security, which need to be considered and addressed on a case-by-case basis.

There are specific considerations when storing and maintaining data about children. These should be assessed in relation to each individual project and over the course of implementation. Guarding the “best interests of the child” during data storage, maintenance and management means, at minimum, that the needs and interests of the child supersede any data collection needs. While many legal and ethical issues will have been discussed at the outset of the project (as part of design and planning), other issues may emerge over the course of data storage, maintenance and management. Adapt procedures as needed over the course of the project to adhere to legal and ethical protections.

Checklist. Identify legal and ethical issues in data storage, maintenance and management

- Assess legal and ethical requirements for data storage and management in all relevant jurisdictions.
- Identify what issues may arise when data is stored and managed in multiple jurisdictions.
- Adhere to international standards and procedures for data storage and management.
- Develop tools and resources on legal and administrative requirements for data storage, maintenance and management.
- Ensure informed consent is not violated in how data is stored and managed.
- Gain informed consent for data sharing and use.
- Assess risks within the context in which data is collected.
- Adapt procedures to the specific context as needed.
- Establish procedures for data storage, maintenance and management.
- Train data collection staff in all procedures.
- Take the context into account in establishing procedures for storage, maintenance and management.
- Identify specific considerations when storing data about children; guard the “best interests of the child”.
Stage #4. Data analysis

Data analysis is the search for understanding and meaning through patterns, trends, ideas, themes and even contradictions. It is the process of examining, transforming and presenting data with the aim of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision-making, in this case around trafficking in persons. There are myriad approaches to data analysis, drawing on varying disciplines and encompassing diverse techniques. Data analysis is intimately connected with and informed by the approach and method used for data collection. Good practice in data analysis is closely bound with rigorous and method-specific analytic procedures.

Data analysis, whether qualitative or quantitative, involves organizing data in an order where patterns can be recognized. However, there are fundamental procedural differences between qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Quantitative data collection is more commonly organized as clear and distinct processes, analysis being one such step. Data collection questions are determined and transferred into, for example, questionnaires, following which the data is collected, cleaned and stored and then analyzed and presented. Analysis of quantitative data leads to a statistical rendering of the data, generally presented in tables or charts and a discussion. In qualitative approaches, there is not one specific point where data collection ends and analysis begins; analysis will occur also during data collection. Data collection is an iterative process where preliminary findings can lead the data collector to ask other questions to either confirm, disprove or add nuance to initial patterns that emerge. In some cases, issues and questions may emerge during analysis that call for more data collection.

While it is beyond the scope of these guidelines to outline data analysis techniques, there are a number of steps and considerations that are common to most, if not all, forms of data analysis and which are noted below.
Checklist
Steps and Considerations in Data Analysis

1. Assess and describe data
2. Consider factors and biases that influence the data
3. Identify and describe relevant patterns in data
   - Interpret patterns and findings
     - Interpret the data
     - Align interpretation with existing research and knowledge
     - Identify biases influencing interpretation
     - Interpret meanings across languages
4. Validate findings
5. Train and build capacity in data analysis
6. Consider ethical aspects of data analysis
Assess and describe data

A first step in data analysis is getting to know the data (that is, to organize, assess and describe the data or dataset that the analysis will build on). Gain an overview of the data and begin to assess what data one has and what one can use it for. This might begin with organizing and describing the basic features of the dataset being analyzed. This may include, for example, the number of respondents and the distribution of relative variables or dimensions of respondents such as gender, age or nationality. In analyzing the nature of trafficking in a specific context, this might involve presenting the number of trafficking victims disaggregated by gender, age or nationality as well as form of trafficking exploitation. In analyzing trafficking cases, this might consider the number of cases as well as the form of TIP being prosecuted, as well as the number of victims or defendants. In the case of secondary data, this might include a description of the nature and scope of the material itself.

Some analysis will involve only describing the data (for example, descriptive statistics that summarize and describe). In other instances, assessing and describing will involve more interpretive analysis concerned with the response as well as what may have been inferred or implied. Presenting features of the data or dataset in a table or easy-to-read format is useful for both quantitative and qualitative data. Depending on the format and intended audience, tables or easy-to-read formats may also be included when the analysis is presented (for instance, in reports, papers or articles).

Software packages can assist and support quantitative and qualitative data analysis. These packages assist in coding, categorizing, matching, linking and comparing the data. Each software package will have specific features that need to align with the data collection approach and the planned outputs. Quantitative data will be analyzed for frequencies of variables; differences between variables; and the significance of the results (that is, the probability that they did not occur by chance). This is achieved by counting and comparison of variables.

There are also several technical options when analyzing qualitative data. Qualitative data analysis software programs can accelerate coding, categorizing and linking of often dense datasets. However, these software programs may assist in the analysis process, not analyze the data. Whether or not qualitative data should be analyzed with qualitative analysis software is partially a question of the size of the dataset, available time and resources (including capacity) and personal preference. When working with a small dataset (for example, a service provider organization analyzing a handful of cases of assisted trafficking victims) such software may not be useful and may add a burden (for example, the cost of the software, time needed to learn how to use the software). By contrast, very large qualitative datasets can quickly become difficult to work with without qualitative analysis software, particularly for cross-case analysis (that is, when examining answers from different respondents or cases in terms of themes, similarities and differences).
Checklist. Assess and describe data

- Begin by organizing, assessing and describing the data.
- Get to know the data and what it can and cannot be used for.
- Organize and describe the basic features of the data.
- Present features in a table or easy-to-read format.
- Assess whether software packages are suitable for the dataset.

Consider factors and biases that influence the data

Part of getting to know the data is assessing what it does and does not reveal. Be realistic and transparent about what data does and does not cover or explain. Document aspects of the data that are relevant to the analysis in different ways. Being transparent about limitations and potential shortcomings in data adds to, rather than diminishes, the credibility of the analysis. Perfect data does not exist; all data is informed by different factors and biases.

Many limitations are linked to datasets themselves. Each dataset has its own strengths and limitations in terms of what it can and cannot answer. With transparency and proper analysis, limitations and challenges neither invalidate nor undermine a particular dataset. Making limitations explicit allows both analysts and readers to contextualize information and, by extension, better interpret its meaning so that it can be understood and used in the most appropriate and effective way.

For quantitative data, it is important at this stage to determine response rates (that is, how many of those approached as potential respondents declined, actively or passively, to participate in data collection, as a whole or for specific questions or variables) and the possibilities for response bias and respondent bias. While usually discussed in terms of quantitative data collection, these are also important to consider for qualitative data collection.

Respondent bias refers to the effect of non-responses on survey estimates. That is, if the non-respondents had responded, would the overall results have changed substantially? Are there systematic differences between those who respond and those who do not? For instance, people who are overburdened with work may have less time to answer a questionnaire, creating systematic differences if the goal is, for example, to answer questions about resources in service provision or experiences with investigating trafficking. And because those who are very busy providing services or investigating cases may not have time to answer questionnaires, there will be a bias in the type of information gathered.

Consider whether there were particular difficulties in accessing any individual or types of respondents. There may be wide variations in how easy it is to include different groups of respondents. Some respondent groups are systematically harder to access. The role of gatekeepers (persons or institutions that, one way or another, control access to the data collection site or to respondents) can be a factor that systematically skews access, as gatekeepers will determine the allowing or denying of entry. There are myriad ways that gatekeepers may influence who is part of data collection and, by extension, what biases this introduces. It is critically important to identify how gatekeepers influence data and factor this
into the analysis. Being clear about difficulties in accessing some types of respondents is important in order to understand and analyze data and its limitations.

**Response bias** refers to different cognitive effects that can lead to less accurate or less truthful disclosure from respondents. This is particularly important to consider when the research topic may be stigmatizing or the respondent has a real or perceived sense of being judged, which can be the case in much TIP research or data collection. Often referred to as **social desirability response bias**, this can significantly influence the extent to which respondents are open and forthcoming. For instance, trafficking victims may sometimes underplay their agency in decisions around their migration, for fear of being seen as somehow complicit in their own exploitation. This is particularly a factor when data is collected in a context of assistance, where victims may fear being cut off from help or being ineligible for certain programs or services. The desire to please the data collector or to perhaps express gratitude for assistance received may also impact responses, especially when staff of a victim service agency is collecting the data. Data collection with traffickers is also influenced by social desirability response bias, where openness can disclose criminal and punishable behavior. Practitioners and policymakers working on TIP may also be influenced by a social desirability response bias, in that they may seek to present themselves (their work, their employers and their organizations or institutions) in the best possible light. It is difficult, if not impossible, to fully guard against or compensate for response bias. However, being clear and up front from the outset about confidentiality where appropriate and creating a non-judgmental atmosphere during data collection can go some way towards alleviating the issue. In the analysis phase the possibility for response bias should be taken into account and inform both the assessment of the data as well as the strength of the conclusions that are drawn.

Data analysis needs also to take into account the method and tools used and how this may influence the data (for example, face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, surveys or administered questionnaires). The dynamic in a two-person exchange (for example, interviewee and interviewer) differs from the group dynamic (for example, in a focus group discussion) because of the number of participants and how they react to each other’s responses. Equally, anonymous questionnaires can lead to higher or lower rates of disclosure depending on the topic, profile of respondent and so on. Data can also be influenced by the environment or context in which data was collected, even when using the same method and tool with the same type of respondent. More constrained political environments where respondents may feel less able to disclose certain behaviors or experiences will also influence what may be shared by respondents. Data collectors and analysts should take all of these factors into account when conducting data analysis and, by extension, drawing conclusions.

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**Checklist. Consider factors and biases that influence data**

- Assess limitations and bias in the specific dataset.
- Be transparent about limitations and potential shortcomings in data.
- Identify factors that may impact data and analysis.
- Consider how respondent biases, response rates and response bias influence data.
- Consider the environment or context in which data was collected in analyzing data.

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17 Social desirability response bias is the tendency of respondents to answer questions in a manner that they deem to be more socially acceptable than their “true” answer in order to project a favorable image of themselves and to avoid receiving negative evaluations. This can lead to the over-reporting “good behavior” or under-reporting of “bad” or undesirable behavior.
Identify and describe relevant patterns in data

Fundamental in identifying relevant patterns in data is to return to the initial data collection topic, purpose and questions and seek to answer them with and through the data that has been collected. For both quantitative and qualitative methods, data should be analyzed with a view to identifying patterns to answer the questions posed. That is, to answer the questions that begin with what and how, rather than jumping ahead to make conclusions about what causes the patterns. This is essentially a process of data reduction. Data reduction means to condense data, which is necessary in making it manageable, by organizing and summarizing it. In some cases, this process is the end goal of the analysis (that is, to present a very simple distribution of variables).

A variety of analytical procedures are available and their use will need to be adjusted relative to the approach, method and collected data. While these guidelines will not detail specific analytical procedures, they discuss the different approaches to analysis, which can guide the search for patterns in the data. In broad brushstrokes, there is deductive analysis, which is testing existing theories and assumptions and inductive analysis, which is setting out to generate a new understanding. Deductive analysis sets out to confirm or disprove a general hypothesis by examining the specific. Data is analyzed according to an existing framework. For example, one hypothesis may be that most people are trafficked by someone they know and an analysis of patterns of trafficking may prove or disprove this hypothesis. Inductive analysis is concerned with the generation of new thinking emerging from the data, to move from the specific data to generate general knowledge. Inductive analysis is about finding patterns, themes and categories in the data. Findings emerge from the data and the analyst’s interactions with the data. Data collection that pursues exploration and discovery angles requires an inductive approach. For other purposes, a more deductive approach might be desirable (for instance, when seeking to prove or disprove established knowledge or widely held assumptions).

An important decision at this stage, both for analysis and later presentation, is to determine proper units of analysis. A unit (or case) is what has been studied and might be a victim of trafficking, a human trafficker, a trafficking case or instance, a criminal investigation, an assistance pathway and so on. Determining the proper unit of analysis will be directly informed by decisions made earlier in the process in relation to the sampling strategy and the research sample. Units may then be aggregated for the purpose of analysis (for example, to consider all trafficking investigations in a particular geographical area or to review the assistance experiences of trafficked males from an area or country). It will also often be useful to disaggregate the sample, to examine particular sub-groups in the sample, or compare groups with each other. For instance, do victims of different national groups experience assistance differently? Does this also vary with age? Are there different patterns of trafficking from different countries of origin? However, breaking down the sample into groups smaller than a certain size can lead to identification of individuals within the dataset and must be considered carefully with this in mind. Another issue is that this can lead to very small sub-samples, undermining the ability to identify patterns and draw meaningful conclusions from the data.

A common and intuitively accessible approach in qualitative analysis is to identify themes and patterns across a dataset to provide an answer to the research question (for example, identifying what different respondents say and whether there are themes that are common or different between cases). Data analysis needs to link back to the research purpose and
questions and how patterns and themes help to answer the research question(s). In quantitative analysis, one looks for statistical significance. In qualitative analysis, one looks for substantive significance. Analysis of patterns in the data can be conducted at different levels, from the very simple to the very advanced (such as specialized quantitative modeling). The central issue is to select a level that is appropriate for the purpose of the data collection effort and the size of the sample.

Time and resources permitting, it can be useful to be open to other patterns emerging from the data. Issues not foreseen in the original design may lead to a series of new questions. This is particularly the case for qualitative research and the analysis of qualitative materials.

Triangulation is an important part of the analysis process as it has potential to enhance the quality of the analysis and offset biases with multiple sources, methods and perspectives.

- **Methods triangulation** uses data generated by different research methods. It provides data from multiple perspectives, helping to offset the limitations of any one particular method on data and findings. For example, data collection about TIP prosecutions may be both quantitative (counting the number of TIP prosecution) as well as qualitative (assessing the quality of TIP prosecutions by interviewing criminal justice practitioners and reviewing court documents).

- **Triangulation of data sources** involves using multiple data sources within the same method and approach to address the same question. For example, when analyzing a trafficking case, a review of court records may, as part of the approach and method, be triangulated with interviews from stakeholders observing the trial. Research on trafficking victims’ assistance needs will benefit from interviews both with victims and with service providers working with them. Interviews with key informants about patterns of trafficking within a country or area can be supplemented with a review of literature on that topic. Triangulation of data sources also involves secondary data sources, whereby the analyst checks information from different sources to assess the relevance and validity of emerging themes. This can be done, for instance, by considering and discussing the findings relative to the literature. That is: are findings in line with what has previously been observed? Is there divergence from past findings? If so, can reasons for this divergence be identified and discussed?

- **Analyst triangulation** engages different analysts (or different teams of analysts) in analyzing the data. Analysts may be asked to individually analyze the data to identify patterns and trends, including offering different perspectives on the same dataset. For example, prosecutors examining investigative files to identify problems at the investigative stage may conduct this review individually and then jointly as a team.
Checklist. Identify and describe relevant patterns in data

- Return to the initial data collection purpose and questions in the analysis.
- Ask “what” and “how” rather than jumping to make conclusions about what causes the patterns.
- Condense data by organizing and summarizing it.
- Adjust analytical procedures, tools and approaches relative to the approach, method and collected data.
- Select a level of analysis that is appropriate for the purpose of the data collection effort and size of the samples.
- Consider what time and resources are (and are not) needed for a specific data collection project.
- Determine proper units of analysis.
- Identify whether it is preferable to use deductive and inductive analysis.

Interpret patterns and findings

The previous step in analysis (Identify and describe relevant patterns in data) sought to answer what and how by organizing and describing data and identifying relevant patterns, but not to draw conclusions about what causes the identified patterns. Some TIP data collection may stop at this step and aim only to describe a situation (for example, for monitoring or mapping purposes). In many cases, however, the aim will be to say something about more complex relationships and processes (for instance to inform change in policy or practice). In such cases, data analysis also involves asking why – in other words, interpreting the data.

Interpretation of data means to make inferences about connections between the themes and patterns that were identified in the previous step in order to answer the issue(s) or problem(s) posed. It moves beyond the descriptive data, attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, considering meanings and drawing conclusions. It is important not to move into the interpretation stage before having answered the descriptive questions. While it may be tempting to move to this creative step as patterns emerge, it is important not to develop fixed explanations and understandings too early or before the data has been fully explored. Interpretation can take different forms including:

- using data to confirm what is known;
- correcting misconceptions; and
- illuminating important things that were not but should be known.

This step though it not only about the interpretation of patterns and findings. It involves the following considerations:

- Interpret the data
- Align interpretation with existing research and knowledge
- Identify biases influencing interpretation
Interpret the data

Having organized and described the data, it is then necessary to interpret the data, answering questions such as:

- What does it all mean?
- What are the implications of these patterns and findings?

Interpretation is the process of finding or making meaning out of the data. It involves moving beyond a statement of information and engaging with the data itself to be able to move forward with explanations and understanding. An informed, nuanced and sophisticated interpretation is central to any TIP data collection effort. Interpretation is needed to go beyond the numbers, to get to the meaning of the numbers, if data is to be useful in crafting interventions.

Interpretation leans on different understandings of the topic and, where appropriate, on previous literature. It may also involve presenting different, even conflicting, understandings and interpretations as needed. Particularly in qualitative research traditions there is an understanding that there are multiple possible interpretations (and, in that sense, multiple realities) depending on what perspective is used. Be open to multiple interpretations and alternative conclusions even when conducting more targeted and bounded research (for example, with an explicit goal or a limited time frame).

Interpretation requires situating results within the broader context and against comparative data, so that meaning can be drawn from the data. Without an understanding of context (and the ability to compare data with other relevant information), it is not possible to make informed conclusions about what the data signifies.

Interpretation of data also requires ensuring that the voices of research participants come through and are fairly represented. Care is needed in the ways in which analysts speak for others and how others’ experiences are interpreted and presented. Analysts should be attentive to their own voices and perspectives, as well as the voices and perspectives of those with whom they are collecting data and with whom they are sharing results and findings. Reflexivity involves researchers taking a step back and critically reflecting on their role in the research process, including what factors influence their construction of knowledge in the planning, implementation and analysis of the research. Being reflexive improves the quality and validity of the research and makes explicit the limitations of findings, thus leading to more rigorous research. How this is done differs depending on the individual data collection effort.

Checklist. Interpret the data

- Move on from what and how to answer why.
- Offer informed, nuanced and sophisticated analysis of what data means.
- Present different understandings and interpretations, where appropriate.
- Be open to multiple interpretations and alternative conclusions.
Align interpretation with existing research and knowledge

An important step in interpretation involves assessing findings compared to previous research and literature. In Stage #1: Design and Planning, we discussed the need to conduct a thorough literature review and here again in Stage #4 there is the need to return to that literature, aligning and testing the findings against past research and the existing knowledge base. Revisit literature reviewed at the outset of the project and how the project fills any gaps or otherwise contributes to the knowledge base on TIP. Examine what existing research says about the specific research topic and questions, noting any similarities or dissonance with one’s own results.

When research findings do not align, this does not necessarily mean that the analysis or results are inaccurate. There are many external factors that may influence TIP data and findings. Explore how, where, when and why these results vary and to work with the data (and past research) to account for these differences.

Checklist. Align interpretation with existing research and knowledge

- Align and test findings against the existing knowledge base.
- Analyze how, where, when and why results differ from past research.

Identify biases influencing interpretation

Various selection biases imply a selective inclusion or exclusion of certain types of data or experiences. Pay attention to and offset these biases in the interpretation of the data. While some biases may be a function of the data itself, other biases are linked directly to the process of interpretation, including the role of the analyst.

Confirmation bias is the tendency to look for patterns in data that confirm preconceived notions about connections and explanations. Confirmation bias also results in overlooking patterns that may disprove or fail to support preconceived ideas (for example, men and boys being overlooked as victims of trafficking, the orientation of victim services to women and girls, a focus on foreign nationals over national victims of trafficking and so on). The intrusion of a researcher or analyst’s opinion or perspective can distort the knowledge base on TIP. One possible strategy to offset confirmation bias may be to map and record one’s own perceptions and ideas at an early stage, possibly even before the descriptive stage of analysis. This can serve as a reminder of what these ideas were and to invite self-reflection on whether they have become unduly dominant in the analysis. Avoiding bias in interpretation also requires looking at assumptions in the data and how this may influence the findings.

Data may also be misrepresented (that is, when analysts omit data that does not support their hypothesis or overall objective or even when analysts fabricate data that was lost or interrupted to align with their results.) Analysts may be tempted only to use data that supports their research hypothesis and set aside or omit data that does not. Overstating and misrepresenting what patterns and findings actually mean has significant implications for what is then understood as the knowledge base on TIP. Tied intimately with this type of selective reporting is selective referencing and citation, which ignores citations or prior work that challenges the
findings. This is important to keep in mind in the human trafficking field, which is prone to political and ideological positions on a range of interrelated issues.

Other examples of poor practice in quantitative analysis are **dredging the data**, which refers to analysis by several methods to find a significant result; reporting differences or lack of differences as a trend when the statistical significance is not adequate to provide a conclusion either way; and failure to include the total number of eligible participants or reporting percentages rather than absolute numbers due to small sample size. Converting data to percentages rather than using absolute numbers is particularly salient in the field of human trafficking, where much research is qualitative and sample sizes are small and unrepresentative.

There are myriad ways that data may be misinterpreted, misused and misrepresented. Training analysts to be aware of potential biases and how to overcome them in the interpretation process. A helpful means of addressing bias in interpretation is **analyst triangulation** whereby different analysts (or different teams of analysts) analyze the data, offering different perspectives on the same dataset and validating one another’s analysis.

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**Checklist. Identify biases influencing interpretation**

- Be aware of biases in the interpretation process.
- Train analysts to be aware of biases in the interpretation process and how to overcome them.
- Be cognizant of confirmation bias.
- Do not overlook patterns that contradict one’s interpretation.
- Map one’s own perceptions and ideas ahead of data analysis to allow for self-reflection.
- Do not discredit data that does not support one’s hypothesis.
- Avoid overstating the significance of patterns and findings.
- Consider one’s objectivity in the analysis process including recognizing the limits of one’s objectivity.

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**Interpret meaning across languages**

Working with translated data poses challenges when interpreting findings. Misinterpretation of a single word can change the meaning and significance of an entire interview or survey. Terms and concepts can be difficult to translate so that they have identical meaning in different languages. Comparing data from different language data sources can, therefore, be complicated and should be done with some caution before drawing conclusions about differences between national or ethnic groups. Consider whether there is any alternative explanation or interpretation of a statement due to translation.

Consider the possibility of systematic cultural differences in how questions are answered. The tendency to answer “yes” (or in the affirmative) or to select the extreme values on a scale (for example, whether one is “extremely satisfied” or “extremely unsatisfied” with services) may also vary between different ethnicities and nationalities. Questions about culturally sensitive topics (for example, mental health) may translate with varying degrees of accuracy into the
corresponding terms in different languages. This can produce systematically different results that may have more to do with language or concepts and less with real difference.

All of these issues should have been considered during the development of the data collection tools but are nonetheless not always possible to avoid or address at that stage. Being aware of limitations at the analysis stage helps avoid unduly strong assumptions and conclusions about differences between groups. Interpreting translated data is as an issue in both qualitative and quantitative studies and projects.

**Checklist. Interpret meaning across languages**

- Review translated data for misinterpretations or alternative explanations.
- Exercise caution when making conclusions about differences based on data from different language sources.
- Consider translation as an issue in quantitative data interpretation.

**Validate findings**

Having described and interpreted the data, it is then necessary to validate the findings. Engage with stakeholders and end users in the validation of findings as a means of quality assurance and to afford stakeholders and end users the opportunity to offer alternative understandings and explanations. This also offers an opportunity to present and explain the data collection objectives and results to stakeholders and end users in a constructive way, before the findings are formally released and ensure that key stakeholders and end users have access to and are aware of findings, either by reading the outputs ahead of a validation session, or by learning about the findings as part of a meeting. This is no small benefit given the information overload with which most practitioners and policymakers necessarily grapple.

There are different ways that validation may take place, depending on the nature of the TIP data collection effort as well as those involved. Validation may be done early on in the analysis, to inform the analytical process and inform findings. Validation may also take place at a later stage, in relation to the final results and findings. It might involve engaging with data sources when the data collection is about their personal or professional experiences or with data providers when data collection is about their professional work. TIP experts might also be engaged to draw from their knowledge and experience in relation to the data collection question and topic, at various stages of the project. Other approaches might include sharing preliminary findings with involved stakeholders and intended end users for written feedback; presenting findings at a consultation meeting for discussion and feedback; and so on.

The parameters of the validation process should be carefully considered in advance, including how, in practice, to use feedback from those engaged in the validation process. Determine what weight should be given to the feedback of those involved. Some stakeholders will have a vested interest in a particular interpretation, which requires caution in how validation is approached and agreement from the outset as to what influence the validation process may (and may not) have over findings. The validation process should not be used to stifle or change uncomfortable or inconvenient findings or research results. Consider the political context in which data collection takes place and whether, in some cases, a validation process may
silence or lead to demands to change important (but uncomfortable) findings and results. In such environments, validation may need to be approached differently and with care.

A validation process of any nature or scale implies the allocation of time and resources, which needs to be considered and anticipated from the outset. Ensure that adequate time is given to those who are engaged to validate the findings, especially practitioners who will be busy with their day-to-day tasks.

Checklist. Validate findings

- Engage with end users to validate findings.
- Consider the parameters of the validation process, including how feedback will be used.
- Consider the weight to be given to the feedback of those involved.
- Allocate time and resources to the validation process from the outset.

Train and build capacity in data analysis

Data analysts must have the necessary skills to appropriately and ethically analyze the data. They must either have these skills when they are hired for the task or acquire them through training, capacity building and supervision. Many organizations and institutions, especially smaller ones, do not have this in house expertise to gather and write up data and may struggle to understand and explain what data means. Different levels of skills in data analysis will be needed, depending on the nature of the analysis to be done, the type of project and the staff involved. Developing skills in data analysis can be done through training sessions, on-going mentoring as well as the secondment of researchers or researcher partnerships. Supervision will also be needed to ensure that these skills are attained and used.

Some training will be basic and not excessively time-consuming. This is especially important when engaging frontline practitioners in data analysis (for example, social workers or law enforcement) who benefit from analytical skills training, but for whom data analysis is usually an ancillary task. Data collection and analytical skills need to dovetail with on-going work, including in terms of available time, resources and other commitments. This can be adapted to the skill level and needs of each project as well as the specific counterparts involved.

Train data analysts to understand and accommodate biases and limitations in the data (for example, respondent bias and response bias) as well as biases introduced by the data analyst (for example, confirmation bias). Train also in ethics, including the roles and responsibilities of data analysts in presenting results in a way that is respectful and safe and that adheres to the principle of “do no harm”. Analysts should be oriented and trained to be aware of the potential for vicarious trauma during data analysis, particularly when analyzing sensitive and difficult data, and have access to support to deal with such issues.

Training will also be needed in the use of data analysis software, when this is to be used. This generally requires understanding how to set up a program, enter and manage the data and also how to use the software for data analysis. Building capacity in the use of software requires time and, by extension, adequate resources. However, allocating a lot of staff time for training and
capacity building may not be needed for small data collection efforts or when aiming for a basic level of analysis. Supervision is an essential aspect of training and capacity building in relation to data analysis. This supervision may come from in house managers and researchers or from external partners and experts who, in addition to offering training and mentoring, can supervise the application of data analysis skills. Develop handbooks and guidelines to accompany and reinforce training and capacity building efforts.

**Checklist. Train and build capacity in data analysis**

- Ensure data analysts have the necessary skills to analyze the data.
- Ensure that analysts have appropriate skills in relation to analysis needed, the type of data collection and the staff involved.
- Develop skills in data analysis through training sessions or on-going mentoring.
- Accompany training and mentoring with handbooks and guidelines for use on an on-going basis.
- Pay attention to biases and limitations in the data when conducting data analysis.
- Train staff in the use of data analysis software.

**Consider ethical aspects of data analysis**

Several important ethical considerations that are integral to analytical procedures have been discussed above, not least in terms of producing truthful and trustworthy analyses that are open about their own limitations and possible biases and, by extension, do not misrepresent the solidity of data, findings and conclusions. There are also other issues to consider in terms of ethics and analysis. The analysis stage is simultaneously the beginning of the presentation and dissemination stage. Beginning to formulate and present patterns and conclusions to answer data collection questions as part of analysis is also a process when decisions are made about how these findings and results will be presented to a broader audience.

A most pressing consideration in the analysis of data is the injunction to “do no harm”. Ensure fairness and respect in the representation of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including trafficking victims. The results should not contribute to a worsened situation for individuals that are already vulnerable or stigmatized. Results and findings should be conveyed with respect for the values and attitudes of those who have responded or shared data and also to accurately and fairly represent their voices and perspectives. A dilemma that may arise during data analysis is whether, in some cases, it is more ethical to not include or share certain important, but sensitive findings. Some findings may put people in danger or be detrimental to their more general well-being or have repercussions in society more generally. This can be the case, for instance, if findings are somehow stigmatizing or if they do not align with the way that respondents view themselves. On the other hand, this is not an uncomplicated determination and there is an argument to be made for the freedom of academic inquiry. There is also a need to be explicit in defining the limitations of the data collection effort and the reasonable interpretations of the findings. This is needed to avoid or to help minimize the chance that others may focus on particular aspects of the results and misinterpret them, leading to harm for trafficking victims, families, practitioners and others.
Another ethical issue relates to how to guard anonymity, confidentiality and privacy. Data analysts must take care not to include information that makes data sources identifiable to others. Breaking datasets down into very small units of analysis may compromise anonymity and privacy of respondents. Data analysts may need to carefully consider how many background factors (for example, the country of origin, age, gender, or region of origin) can be combined without resulting in identification of research participants. Thick description\(^\text{18}\) or the use of quotes from respondents can also lead to cases and respondents being identifiable in the analysis. One solution might be to use compound quotes (that is, quotes constructed from different respondents) to convey a general theme. However, these must be used cautiously and transparently and only in ways that do not misrepresent data. There is also a risk of adding a layer of interpretation when combining different elements, or assuming that something is typical.

Ethical issues and considerations may arise in terms of guarding the “best interests of the child”. At this stage this means, at minimum, assessing if and how children may be harmed from analysis (and subsequent presentation) of the data and putting in place procedures to address this. The needs and interests of the child supersede any needs of the data collection effort.

Another ethical consideration is the presence of any conflict of interests in research or data collection. Conflicts of interest may arise when institutions or organizations that assist trafficking victims present high numbers of victims, which then may translate into increased resources for the organization. It may also arise when research and data collection are conducted about an anti-trafficking intervention, program or organization in which the data collectors and analysts have a vested interest. Disclose any potential conflicts of interest and affiliations, especially when conducting research about one’s own activities.

Ethical issues also arise in the analysis of secondary data where it is necessary to verify the origin of the data, including whether it was collected and stored ethically and correctly. Pay attention to anomalies or discrepancies in the data and make sure to report on them accurately, not omitting data that refutes one hypothesis or assumptions.

Ethical considerations must be integrated from the outset of data analysis and included in the training and supervision of data analysts. Data analysts must be fully aware of the responsibility that goes with data analysis. Findings form the basis of policy and interventions and policy that result from weak findings will not only be unhelpful but, in the worst-case scenario, may cause harm.

Consider and guard the well-being of researchers and analysts working with and analyzing sensitive and difficult data (such as data collected with and from trafficking victims). Analysts working with this data may be exposed to vicarious trauma and require support to deal with the impact of this difficult and potentially traumatizing work. Ensure that TIP research is done in an appropriate way, with adequate time and resources as well as support.

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\(^{18}\) Thick description refers to the detailed account of a particular human behavior in which the researcher not only describes the behavior, but also makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context. Thick description usually includes subjective explanations and meanings provided by the people engaged in the behaviors.
Checklist. Consider ethical aspects of data analysis

- Assess if and how harm may result from analysis of the data.
- Be open about limitations and possible biases.
- Do not misrepresent data, findings and conclusions.
- Consider how findings and results will be presented to a broader audience.
- Ensure that the results do not contribute to a worsened situation for research participants.
- Consider how to deal with sensitive issues that emerge in data analysis.
- Guard anonymity and confidentiality of respondents in data analysis and presentation.
- Assess if and how children may be harmed in data analysis and guard the “best interests of the child”.

Stage #4. Data Analysis
Stage #5. Data Use, Presentation and Dissemination

Data use, presentation and dissemination refers to the ways that data or research findings are used, presented and disseminated to interested persons, organizations or institutions. The honest and accurate use, presentation and dissemination of data and research findings are an essential step of any data collection effort. Inaccurate data reporting and publishing negatively influence the evidence base. This can lead to ill-conceived programs and policies, which impact anti-trafficking work (including criminal justice responses and the development of protective measures) as well as the lives of trafficking victims and their families. Poor data use, presentation and dissemination also threaten to compromise the credibility of the anti-trafficking field more broadly.

Data about trafficking in persons may be used for any number of purposes, including to:

- educate anti-trafficking stakeholders on specific issues;
- inform decision-makers;
- educate and raise awareness among the general public;
- make findings and knowledge available to other researchers;
- advocate on the issue;
- request funding for a specific program or policy;
- monitor and evaluate trafficking trends and responses.

Intended use impacts what information is shared, how the information is conveyed and to whom. Data should be presented and disseminated to intended end users. The way in which one presents and disseminates findings can determine whether, how and to what extent that information is used by different stakeholders and end users, and by extension, the impact that the data collection effort has in terms of the TIP knowledge base and anti-trafficking responses. Engage a range of possible end users (for example, practitioners, policymakers, researchers and so on) to use the findings. Too often TIP data and findings are not accessed and applied in practice, hindering the ability of anti-trafficking practitioners and policymakers to act and react appropriately.

Dissemination strategies should be considered, planned for and budgeted for at the outset in the design and planning stage (Stage #1) and then adjusted as needed. Set aside adequate resources for data use, presentation and dissemination, as well as for training and supervision in these tasks.
Checklist
Steps and Considerations in Data Use, Presentation and Dissemination

Target appropriate audiences, including differentiated outputs for different groups
- Assess consumption patterns of different target audiences and/or end users
- Differentiate outputs for different target audiences and/or end users
- Include research participants as target audience

Select presentation formats and language
- Provide a clear presentation of methods including limitations
- Ensure accessibility of findings and results
- Consider data display and visual presentation
- Tailor and target recommendations
- Ensure findings are accessible in multiple languages

Identify different media and platforms to maximize impact and reach
- Identify relevant media and platforms
- Assess and address constraints in dissemination media
- Consider resources and capacity for effective communication

Ensure access to outputs

Consider ethics in data use, presentation and dissemination
- Assess the ethics of sharing and not sharing research
- Consider ethics of representation and misrepresentation
- Ensure anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and safety
- Determine just attribution of contribution
- Guard the “best interests of the child” in data use, presentation and dissemination

Measure reach and impact
Target appropriate audiences including differentiated outputs for different groups

An essential aspect of data use and presentation is to identify the specific target audiences or end users for the research findings and the different outputs needed. This ultimately determines what outputs are produced and how the information is presented and to which audiences or end users. This involves:

- Assess consumption patterns of different target audiences and/or end users
- Differentiate outputs for different target audiences and/or end users
- Include research participants as target audience

Assess consumption patterns of different target audiences and/or end users

Have a clear understanding of how different types of audiences and end users consume information, including what presentation formats are most accessible, what languages are needed and what media and platforms are best mobilized. The format (or packaging) of information and results will vary substantially between, for instance, a researcher or academic (for whom a journal article might be useful); a practitioner (who would benefit from a practical report with guidelines or specific recommendations); a policymaker (who would best be reached through a policy brief and a policy-oriented recommendations); research participants (who may prefer a brief report and/or presentation of findings); and the general public (for whom a social media post or an editorial piece (op-ed) may be most accessible.

Depending on the data collection effort, it may be necessary to further disaggregate the target audience. For example, findings for practitioners should be further tailored to different types of practitioners (for example, NGO as compared to government or social workers, psychologists as compared to law enforcement and prosecutors). Equally, among researchers the presentation of applied research and more theoretical research directly informs the format and presentation. And within a professional sphere (for example, social work or medicine), different end users will range from frontline responders who will need practice guides and operational tools to policymakers who will require specific, policy-oriented findings.

Tailor outputs according to important characteristics of one’s audience (for example, factoring in education levels, literacy, as well as different languages used within and between different target audiences). This is particularly the case when disseminating results and findings outside of typical circles of end users (for example, with trafficking victims and their families, community leaders, grassroots organizations and so on). There may also be differences in terms of the country or region where data collection outputs are to be shared, in terms of what are the most suitable and accessible formats for different end users. Cultural and social norms will need to be taken into account in deciding how best to format and package findings.

Understand one’s target audience in terms of the media and platforms that are best used to disseminate research findings. For instance, while in some contexts social media may be a useful way to announce new data findings or results, in other settings where social media may
be less prominent among the intended audience. There may also be aspects of hierarchy, protocol and decorum that need to be borne in mind in terms of dissemination. For instance, when engaging with high-level government stakeholders, a formal announcement letter with a hard copy of a research report will be more appropriate than announcements on various social media feeds accompanying an online, downloadable version of the research findings.

One format or medium need not preclude another. Often multiple formats and media are important and have strategic value for reaching specific audiences. The use of formats, media or platforms and languages is not evenly distributed across various anti-trafficking stakeholders, who come from diverse professional backgrounds, organizational and institutional cultures as well as cultural and national groups.

### Checklist. Assess consumption patterns of different target audiences and/or end users

- Assess how different target audiences and end users consume information.
- Identify the most suitable format and medium for the target audience(s).
- Use multiple formats and media to have the greatest impact.

### Differentiate outputs for different target audiences and/or end users

The same data collection effort may be relevant for various target audiences and/or end users, each of which may approach the issue from different perspectives and with different priorities. Consider whether it is possible and useful to differentiate outputs to present results and findings to different audiences or end users. Some research may need to be tailored in terms of its format and presentation depending on whether it is targeting an academic audience or practitioners. Consider how the material from any data collection effort may be made relevant and accessible for different practice and policy responses as well as in building knowledge generally. This involves meeting the information and knowledge needs of various audiences working on the issue from different angles.

Use, presentation and dissemination involve an adjustment not of what data and findings are being shared and presented, but rather of how and where they are presented. Differentiating outputs does, however, imply time and resources that may not always be available. There is, for example, a tension between publishing academically and for practice and it may be possible to only publish in one format. Some data collection is for internal use within an organization or an institution, rather than for widespread public distribution (such as monitoring the implementation of programs or policies, internal data collection within a network of partners or for donor reporting). Tailor outputs to the organizational or institutional environment and the needs of sometimes different end users within these. Formats and presentation are likely to be dictated by internal procedures for data presentation and perhaps also, in some instances, by administrative requirements. Ensure that data is presented in the best way for the target audience and for different audiences and end users within an organization or institution. How best to share operational information with frontline responders will differ from how best to share information with higher-level executives within an institution or policymakers. Both target audiences are vital recipients of the data and research, making it important to tailor outputs accordingly.
Include research participants as target audience

Share results and findings with those who have participated in and contributed to the research or data collection activity, in line with their interests and needs. This includes data sources (those who have provided information and data) as well as data providers (those who have facilitated access to data sources). Tailor how an output is presented to the target audience or audiences. Determine the best ways to present data to different target audiences may be usefully based on consultation with end users themselves.

When research or data collection has involved vulnerable persons, such as trafficking victims, a feedback process may be practically challenging (for example, requiring time and resources when respondents are geographically dispersed). Feeding back research results may also be ethically complicated, particularly when victims have moved on with their lives and may not wish to think about past trafficking experiences. Sharing research results with some respondent groups may also be risky, not least when victims have returned to their home communities and when victims’ families and communities don’t know about their TIP experiences. Decisions around feeding the results of data collection back to respondents need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and in line with the self-expressed interests of respondent target groups.

Research participants may also be key informants including different types of stakeholders from government and NGOs (such as social workers, lawyers, law enforcement and psychologists). How to feed back to these groups will depend on the specific data collection effort but may be through formal reports or through presentations and round table discussions. Nonetheless, while most practitioners and policymakers appreciate a formal report, many also appreciate the option of a shorter and easier to read version, like a practitioners’ guide or policy brief. Presentations and workshops may also be valued, particularly when a more interactive format allows for discussion and inquiry as well as feedback on the findings. For on-going data collection efforts, such as those implemented by National Rapporteurs, the process of feeding back and engaging with data providers is often on-going and reciprocal, with data providers feeding into the databases and data systems and then receiving feedback through reports and meetings, including opportunities to comment on and clarify findings.
Checklist. Include research participants as target audience

- Share findings with research participants (data sources and data providers).
- Tailor outputs to be accessible to research participants.
- Make findings available in the language of research participants (data sources and data providers).
- Consider alternative media to share findings with research participants (data sources and data providers).

Select presentation formats and language

Data may be presented and disseminated in any number of formats (for instance as reports, research papers, journal articles, books or book chapters, policy briefs, presentations, videos or film, maps, interactive visualizations, infographics, or artistic productions). Select the appropriate format for the main target audience and/or end user and relative to the topic or theme. For instance, research and data with an academic orientation will require a different presentation of analysis (and also a different means of dissemination) from practitioner- or policy-oriented research and data).

Knowing the target audience is important in identifying how best to share information and results in the most accessible way. For instance, lengthy written reports will likely not be read (at least not in full) by people with limited time or who have a diverse portfolio of work. This may then require accompanying such reports with an executive summary and a conclusion that accurately summarizes the findings, as these may be the only sections read by many and, therefore, need to capture nuance while, at the same time, simplifying the overarching report. Consider alternative formats that may better align with an end user’s available time or professional background (for example, organizational or institutional reports and studies, policy briefs, practitioner reports, summary reports or executive summaries, issue and working papers, blog posts or online articles, among others).

Regardless of the presentation format(s) selected, considerations in how to ensure high quality presentation of data and results include:

- Provide a clear presentation of methods including limitations
- Ensure accessibility of findings and results
- Consider data display and visual presentation
- Tailor and target recommendations
- Ensure findings are accessible in multiple languages
Provide a clear presentation of methods including limitations

Include a clear description of the research approach, method and process at the outset of any presentation of findings. This should include information about what data was collected, who or what were the data sources, how data was collected, when and where data was collected as well as what definitions were used and the legal and ethical procedures followed. The methods section should theoretically allow another researcher to duplicate the data collection activity.

Explaining what the data does and does not mean, to ensure that the information is read and understood correctly. This may be particularly important when explaining data to the media and general public (for example, in relation to prevalence studies which tend to be widely reported, but often insufficiently contextualized). But it is also an issue with other datasets and data collection projects. Including the limitations and challenges of a research method or approach is critically important in understanding the findings of any data collection project and in advancing the TIP data collection methods and approaches.

Checklist. Provide a clear presentation of methods including limitations

- Describe the research approach and method at the outset.
- Be clear about what data does (and does not) mean.
- Present limitations and challenges faced with the approach and method.

Ensure accessibility of findings and results

While the style of writing and presentation may be more technical for certain specialized audiences, findings should be clear and accessible to as wide an audience as possible, including beyond the sphere of TIP or research experts. This is essential in communicating what data means.

Part of clear and accessible language is clarity around definitions, presenting information in as precise a way as possible. Terms and concepts will have been operationalized at the outset of the study. Explain all terms and concepts to ensure a common understanding of what is being discussed, reduce confusion and avoid misuse or misrepresentation of findings. Common categorizations may have diverging implied meanings to researchers and end users, making it important to clarify the use of terms.

Some data collection may be very specifically directed at experts in their fields, in which case professional terms are necessary. Nonetheless, whenever possible one should avoid using overly technical or specialist terminology without explanation or definitions (such as procedures or categorizations that are unlikely to be known outside an organization or institution).

In the case of regularly produced reports, such as those by National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, another dimension of accessibility is the harmonization from year to year of the report’s structure and content, including the terms and definitions used and the statistical information gathered. This allows different target audiences and end users to understand findings as well as compare findings about the same topic indicators or data point across time.
Information and findings should be presented in a measured way, without overstating or dramatizing the results. This is particularly salient issue in a field where sensationalized presentation is commonplace by some organizations and institutions.

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**Checklist. Ensure accessibility of findings and results**

- Write and present results and findings in clear and accessible language.
- Ensure findings and results are accessible to the target audience and end users.
- Explain all terms and concepts to ensure a common understanding.
- Use precise definitions.
- Avoid technical or specialist language and terminology.
- Ensure the language (and level of language used) is appropriate to the target audience.

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**Consider data display and visual presentation**

A visual display presents information in a clear, accurate and accessible way while being engaging and appealing. It should provide ready access to information and convey a message, a finding or a particular perspective on specific data or topic. Visual presentations should aid in conveying information and not complicate or confuse the interpretation of the data. Visual presentation is more immediate than a sequential scan of numbers and letters; it moves the reader from the specific and literal to the general and abstract; it can tell a story; it reveals patterns in the data that may be otherwise difficult to detect; and it is more universally understood without requiring knowledge of language. Of critical importance is how to present data visually, suggestions for which include:

- Be clear and uncomplicated. A visual display should balance important information and minimum detail, avoiding unnecessary off-topic information. It should avoid excessive and irrelevant data, which inhibits the audience’s ability to find the essential and meaningful information.
- Show data variation, not design variation. The focus should be on showing the data, not showing skills in design.
- Information should be self-explanatory (that is, understandable without the need to read the text to which it refers).

Visualization methods include:

- graphs (for example, pie charts, box plots, histograms, bar graphs, line graphs, pyramids, radar charts, scatter plots and function plots);
- tables (for example, numerical, textual, frequency distributions, or analyses of variance);
- maps, both static and interactive;
- photographs, bearing in mind the importance of informed consent and not using images which reveal the identity or location of data sources;
- audio and video clips, again while ensuring informed consent and that the identity or location of data sources is not disclosed;
- illustrations;
Display formats and visualization types may vary considerably and are usually adjusted to the type of data being displayed (for example, quantitative versus qualitative). Whereas some visual displays may require an accompanying narrative text (such as a caption) to support their understanding, others may be more quickly understood without additional explanation. The number of different relationships and concepts depicted increases the relative complexity of the display.

When and how to use visual presentations will depend on the nature of the data itself. While quantitative data may lend itself more obviously to visuals and graphics, qualitative data can also be conveyed visually. Decisions around data display will also depend on the target audience(s) and what approaches to presentation and visualization are more suitable. Data display may be particularly important in reaching some end users (for example, relative to levels of education or literacy or in contexts where visual presentations are privileged over written texts.) It may also be particularly important for some types of formats (for example, when sharing data through presentations and lectures to engage the audience.)

Carefully consider how results are visualized, including through the use of photographs, illustrations and other visual displays. Avoid sensationalist or salacious victimizing imagery may contribute to the objectification of trafficking victims.

Incorporating graphic and visual presentations of data into the range of outputs of a data collection effort requires certain skills and expertise. Train staff in how to design tables and graphs as well as more dynamic data visualizations for effective and efficient communication of research results. Contemporary software supports some innovative means of data display and makes it easier to transform the way data is viewed. However, this involves an allocation of time and resources, including training data analysts, which may not be available. At the same time, the current information climate necessitates some inclusion of visualizations and organizations/institutions may opt to invest in these technological tools and skills development.

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**Checklist. Consider data display and visual presentation**

- Use visual presentation without complicating or confusing the interpretation of the data.
- Be clear and uncomplicated, balancing important information and minimum detail.
- Avoid excessive and irrelevant data in any visual presentation.
- Avoid sensationalist or salacious imagery.
- Visual presentation should be self-explanatory.
- Consider visual displays for both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Train analysts in how to present data visually.
- Use software when it offers good options to display the data.
Tailor and target recommendations

Tailor and target recommendations when TIP data collection is oriented toward action (either in terms of policy or program responses). Recommendations may be directed at any number of end users, including policymakers, practitioners or researchers. Recommendations must be sound, realistic and, ideally, specific. Target different audiences and end users with specific recommendations, possibly in different formats. For example, the recommendation to “improve victim identification” is too general to be helpful or effective. More helpful would be to identify specific measures that can and should be taken to improve victim identification including in identifying different profiles of trafficking victims (that is, male and female, adult and children, foreign and country national) and/or in offering guidance to different frontline responders engaged in victim identification (that is, social workers, police, prosecutors, medical staff, immigration officers, labor inspectors and so on).

Work with data providers and end users in the formulation and validation of recommendations to ensure that they are specific, relevant, useful and targeted and are adopted by these end users (that is, practitioners and policymakers working on the issue). Involve data sources (for example, trafficking victims or practitioners) in the formulation of recommendations to ensure they are responsive to their needs and interests. This requires, however, that there is a sufficiently open environment (social, political, institutional) to engage in drafting recommendations. When this process involves engaging trafficking victims, this also requires attention to and strategies to address practical and ethical issues that may arise. Key ethical considerations would include informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, guarding the “best interests of the child”.

Checklist. Tailor and target recommendations

- Prioritize the formulation of useful recommendations when data collection informs policy and programs.
- Ensure that recommendations are sound, realistic and specific and, where appropriate, time-bound.
- Target specific recommendations to different target audiences, possibly in different formats.
- Engage data sources, data providers and end users in formulating recommendations when appropriate.

Ensure findings are accessible in multiple languages

Make findings available in as many languages as possible, to reach as wide of an audience as possible. If it is not possible to translate the full set of outputs from a data collection effort (due to time and costs, for instance), translate the executive summary and conclusions or other summary materials into major world languages.

Ensure that national research is available outside of a country. Make results and findings accessible internationally to build the knowledge base around TIP among a wider number of target groups and end users including practitioners, policymakers, researchers, the media and the general public.
Making findings available in multiple languages presents a logistical and resource challenge, particularly when working on multi-country or regional data collection efforts. Ensure that adequate funds are allocated for the translation of data collection findings and lessons from TIP data collection efforts, including for multi-lingual translation when relevant and useful. Translate findings into the national languages of the country where the data collection took place.

An additional issue is that much peer reviewed literature is published only in major world languages, and in particular the English language, which not everyone can read and understand. Moreover, peer reviewed journals may be written in a language in which researchers are not able to write fluently, compromising their ability to effectively present and disseminate their research results. Few journals offer language support to researchers who are not fluent in the journal language, essentially blocking access to these publications as well as opportunities for end users to learn about this research.

Regardless of language, ensure that translations are of high quality to effectively convey the results. Check and double-check translations (for example, with translators and native speakers).

Checklist. Ensure findings are accessible in multiple languages

☑️ Make results and findings accessible to as many target audiences and end users as possible.
☑️ Present findings in as many relevant languages as possible.
☑️ Always translate findings into the language of the countries where the data is collected.
☑️ Translate executive summaries and conclusions into as many languages as possible.
☑️ Ensure high quality translation to effectively convey results and findings.

Identify different media and platforms to maximize impact and reach

The rise of technology has various information platforms and media (including social media websites and applications), offering countless ways that data may be presented and disseminated. Available options for dissemination include but are not limited to:

- organizational or institutional websites;
- blogs;
- virtual libraries;
- social media (for example, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram);
- email notifications, listservs and mailing lists;
- workshops, conferences, seminars and roundtable discussions;
- forums, meetings and networks;
- journals and books; and
- lectures and presentations (in person, webinars, video lectures or short videos for distribution, such as on YouTube).
With ever-expanding platforms to share data and findings, determine the most appropriate, effective and ethical use and presentation of data. Finding a platform that fits a project, to most effectively present the data, findings and conclusions and ensuring that all elements of data use are in line with commitments to data sources and data providers and ethical protocols (including informed consent) and the nature of the data itself. For example, while the main output of a data collection effort may be a written report, consider how these findings can be shared through other media (for example, presentations at conferences or meetings, sharing key findings on social media, a short video or blog to present main results or findings or preparing photo essays), while also guarding anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent, the “best interests of the child” and so on.

Different platforms and media may serve very different purposes in terms of the target audience, nature of use and the processes and requirements for usage. For example, an international academic journal and a report from an anti-trafficking NGO target different groups in different ways and for different purposes. Each will work differently and will be used for different reasons. Where data and findings can be presented on an organization’s website in various formats, social media and listservs may allow data and findings to be disseminated to a wider audience and perhaps also with a more targeted message (or set of messages). For some results and findings, it may be advisable to send an announcement letter directly to relevant institutions that are part of the intended target audience. Identify the best media and platforms for findings by assessing the different options including their respective constraints and ensuring there are sufficient resources and capacity. Each of these points is discussed below:

- Identify relevant media and platforms
- Assess and address constraints in dissemination media
- Consider resources and capacity for effective communication

Identify relevant media and platforms
Assess and identify the most relevant and useful media and platforms for dissemination including how these may vary from one target audience to another. Presentation and dissemination will vary according to the specific data collection effort. Using different media to reach different audiences needs to be considered in the design of the data collection project, to ensure that adequate resources are available to most effectively convey results to end users.

Checklist. Identify relevant media and platforms
- Identify the most relevant and useful media and platforms for dissemination.
- Tailor dissemination to different target audiences.
- Consider different avenues for dissemination.

Assess and address constraints in dissemination media
Media and platforms vary in terms of being accessible and manageable. Options to leverage different media and platforms will depend on the media itself as well as staff time and capacity
in working with this media. Training may be needed in how to utilize different platforms and media. Some platforms may involve costs for dissemination (for instance, membership or registration fees, the purchase of programs or software or fees charged by journals for publishing), have specific access requirements (for instance, membership or payment requirements) or imply different time frames (for example, different publication timelines and processes for peer reviewed books, journals and grey literature). Some constraints may be a function of how and where research is published. Some media and platforms are more accessible and immediate and, as such, more relevant for some forms of dissemination and target audiences.

Consider different media and platforms including who is (and is not) reached and who, in turn, can (and cannot) access and then use the information. Another consideration is that certain media are not necessarily well equipped to present complex findings and results. Risks are associated with findings being inadequately presented and nuanced. Lack of contextualization has the potential to misrepresent findings and, thus, misinform end users. Some media, therefore, may not fit such dissemination of TIP research and findings.

Checklist. Assess and address constraints in dissemination media
- Consider media and platforms that are more accessible and immediate.
- Identify barriers to access and address them.

Consider resources and capacity for effective dissemination
Effective dissemination of findings requires skills, time and resources. Engage communication experts for this task or train in house staff for this work including drawing on available resources (such as handbooks and other guidance on how to disseminate research results). Some media and platforms may require specific skills and expertise as well as an articulated strategy. For example, using social media as a dissemination platform, requires skills and knowledge in the effective use of social media as well as a clear, specific and well-articulated goal and strategy for the social media effort (for example, to raise awareness or to conduct advocacy for a specific policy change.)

While it is important to leverage skills and expertise in dissemination, data analysts need to remain engaged in this process to ensure that the findings being communicated are correct and include the necessary caveats and nuances to appropriately and accurately represent what the data does (and does not) mean. Efforts to develop concise and strong advocacy messages may risk losing nuance, undermining and even distorting findings.

Checklist. Consider resources and capacity for effective dissemination
- Allocate time and resources to communicate results and findings.
- Assess in house skills and capacity for communication.
- Identify external communications resources or expertise, as needed.
Ensure access to outputs

Having identified one’s target audiences and end users, ensure that these individuals and groups have access to the various outputs produced. Consider how the outputs from data collection efforts can be accessed and used by various end users. This, then, requires attention to what facilitates and limits a target group’s ability to access research and data collection results.

At a basic level this might be about users having access to reliable internet or one’s own computer to be able to search for and access research and data online. It may also be about the amount of bandwidth available (and affordable) for downloading files, one solution being to offer lower resolution versions of online reports and materials. Provide hard copies of research especially in lower resource countries (and lower resource areas within countries), where computer use and internet connectivity are lower and where many organizations and institutions are unable to print research studies due to the high costs of paper and printer cartridges.

Some types of outputs and formats may not be accessible to some audiences. Peer reviewed journal articles and books are largely inaccessible to practitioners and policymakers. Few people outside of academic circles have access to peer reviewed literature, which is typically only available for purchase, written in an academic style and often only in major languages. The pace of much academic publishing may also mean that data is unavailable in a timely fashion, to inform policy and programs. This is particularly a concern when research topics are time sensitive. This raises questions about formats that reach broader audiences and inform stakeholders’ thinking and action on TIP.

Access may also be about how outputs are presented and shared in different countries and in relation to different target audiences. Certain formalities and procedures should be followed in different settings. In some settings, publications should be printed in hard copy format and sent with a formal announcement letter. Different procedures may apply when sharing research with government institutions as compared to civil society where less formality may be required. With some target audiences, it may be possible to engage in a discussion of the research. It is, therefore, important to think about and make plans in relation to these more practical aspects of dissemination.

Make research available in multiple languages is important in terms of enhancing access to results and findings. Doing so requires time and resources.

An important audience for research outputs is data sources and data providers themselves (those who have participated in and contribute to data collection and those who will make use of this information). Data sources may be respondents (such as trafficking victims, their families, migrant workers and so on) or key informants including service providers, law enforcement and so on. Data providers might include the organizations or institutions that provided information or facilitated access to respondents and key informants. Ideally, those who participated in a data collection effort should have access to the final output(s),

There may be a range of barriers to disseminating research findings to data sources and data providers. For example, dissemination may be constrained by limited resources and short time frames as well as low prioritization on the part of funders or the data collection team.
Dissemination to respondents may be complicated by contact after data collection (for example, not having addresses, phone numbers or other contact information). One way that this can potentially be alleviated is to provide details during data collection regarding where results can be accessed and to distribute results through gatekeepers or community members. At the same time, not all victims will be in contact with service providers in the longer-term. It also may not be safe or advisable to follow-up with some respondents after data collection (for example, when a victim has returned to live with their family and the family does not know about their trafficking experience or involvement in research or data collection). Decisions around such dissemination need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the project’s resources and capacity.

**Checklist. Ensure access to outputs**

- Identify constraints in access results among different target audiences.
- Enhance access to all outputs for all target audiences.
- Identify and address barriers to access such as medium and language.
- Share research results with data sources, data providers and end users.

**Consider ethics in data use, presentation and dissemination**

The use, presentation and dissemination of data and research must be done ethically. Ethical issues that arise at this stage include:

- Assess the ethics of sharing and not sharing research
- Consider ethics of representation and misrepresentation
- Ensure anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and safety
- Determine just attribution of contribution
- Guard the “best interests of the child” in data use, presentation and dissemination

**Assess the ethics of sharing and not sharing results**

Consider how data findings and research will be shared during design and planning in Stage #1, as it has implications for the data collection process as a whole. This includes whether findings are to be shared publicly or internally and with which organizations or institutions. For instance, when conducting primary data collection, part of informed consent procedures is informing research participants (whether trafficking victims, service providers, law enforcement, or other stakeholders), data providers and gatekeepers about the purpose and process of data collection, including plans for use and dissemination. Decisions around consent to participate are likely to be directly linked to these parameters and data sources, data providers and gatekeepers should be informed about the full intentions before deciding about participation.

The decision of when (and when not) to share research and data needs to be very carefully considered and should not merely be a matter of concern about sharing or publishing results.
that may be undesirable to some parties, create negative findings or complicate program implementation. Researchers have a responsibility to share results and findings, even when they are sensitive or uncomfortable. External pressure should not lead results to be quashed. Research sponsors, for example, should not influence the sharing of results unless they pose risks that outweigh the value of the research. Governments should not stifle the publication of findings that identify sensitive issues (for example, corruption, complicity of authorities in human trafficking or failure to respond effectively to TIP in the country) or refuse to release studies that generally reflect badly on the country or the government.

That being said, it may not be ethical for some findings to be publicly shared or published. This may when data collection is part of an internal process to inform specific work and is, therefore, not appropriate to share publicly. It may also occur when research results may have negative or unintended consequences that can cause harm. Sharing the results of some data collection may pose risks to data sources data providers as well as researchers/data collectors. Risks may arise, for example, when authorities participating in data collection as key informants disclose sensitive information. It may also not be ethical to release studies when data collection was poorly done, resulting in poor data, because of the enormous potential to distort and compromise the knowledge base on TIP and lead to ungrounded interventions.

Checklist. Assess the ethics of sharing and not sharing research

- Consider whether sharing findings poses any risks to data sources, data providers or researchers.
- Assess the context in deciding whether it is safe to share results.
- Do not allow research sponsors or funders to influence reporting of results.
- Do not release inaccurate data, given the potential for harm.

Consider ethics of representation and misrepresentation

Data collection involves an ethical obligation to present findings accurately and fairly, which includes not overstating conclusions or findings and being transparent about limitations and biases. This applies to one’s own data as well as when referencing data from secondary sources. This also includes ethical obligations in how results are presented and promoted publicly (for example, avoiding the inflation of research results for and by the media as well as in one’s own communications strategy). Researchers are responsible for ensuring the accurate and contextualized promotion of TIP research results and findings. Work closely with communication teams and experts, including in pushing back against pressure to sensationalize results. When use and dissemination involve a peer review process reviewers, editors and publishers share the burden of responsibility for the dissemination of accurate and relevant research data. Recognition of potentially inaccurate data reporting methods is an important part of the peer review process.

Ethical questions also arise in terms of fairness and representation of data sources. The voice and experiences of research participants (data sources) must be fairly represented. This is relevant in the case of trafficking victims as well as various types of key informants as well as data providers. Take care when speaking for others and how others’ experiences are presented.
Checklist. Consider ethics of representation and misrepresentation

- Present findings accurately and fairly.
- Do not overstate conclusions or findings.
- Be transparent about limitations.
- Consider risks of harm in terms of fairness and representation of persons.
- Preserve dignity and integrity of research participants in the presentation of findings.

Ensure anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and safety

Guard anonymity, confidentiality and privacy in the presentation of research findings. This goes beyond considering personal identifiers to also consider whether information may pose risk to an individual in the victim’s family or community. For example, geographically mapping areas of origin of trafficking victims (“trafficking hotspots”) in a country or region may be identifying and pose risks, particularly in more politically constrained environments or ones with weak rule of law. It may also be the case that risk may be posed to a wider population of trafficking victims or irregular migrants.

Protections are also important in terms of data collected from service providers and authorities who may be disclosing information that could compromise their professional positions or even, in some cases, their safety and well-being. This is particularly relevant in politically constrained settings, including with limited space for civil society or freedom of expression. This may also be an issue in countries where there is weak rule of law and high levels of criminality. The presentation of some data and results may pose a risk to researchers and/or the organizations or institutions engaged in data collection or research.

That being said, some research participants may not wish to be anonymous. This, then, introduces a raft of other challenges in terms of balancing respect for what research participants request in how their data is presented with unforeseen risks, as well as how to appropriately support decision-making around these issues.

In terms of protecting anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and safety, the use of some media – like audio and visual formats – may require additional care and attention. While this is most obviously the case for trafficking victims, it also merits consideration in terms of key informants like government authorities, activists, community leaders and so on.

Checklist. Ensure anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and safety

- Ensure the confidentiality and privacy of research participants.
- Ensure that information is sufficiently anonymized.
- Anonymize data from all data sources.

Determine just attribution of contribution

Just attribution refers to a fair and equitable attribution of the contributions made to a data collection or research project, whether by institutional partners, data collectors or individual
authors. Ensure a fair and equitable attribution of any contribution made to a data collection project. Published research should include clear credit and acknowledgement of the work done by the range of contributors and partners, with recognition in line with the nature and extent of that contribution. This would include acknowledging contributions from data collectors, data providers, data sources as well as those involved in respondent recruitment and other related tasks (for example, in a foreword or acknowledgments section). Attribution of authorship, however, implies a more substantial contribution to the research or results. Co-authorship, for instance, implies having been engaged in the process overall (design, data collection, analysis and drafting) and would not extend to all of those involved in data collection alone. Consider if the acknowledgments section may be a more appropriate place to identify colleagues who did contribute to the study but were not analysts or authors.

**Checklist. Determine just attribution of contribution**

- Credit and acknowledge the work done by various contributors and partners.
- Do not credit persons for work that they did not do.

**Guard the “best interests of the child” in data use, presentation and dissemination**

Guarding the “best interests of the child” means that the needs and interests of the child supersede any needs of the data collection effort. Of particular concern at this stage is if and how children may be harmed from the use, presentation or dissemination of data that they have shared. Key in this determination is that the use of research results does not contribute to a worsened situation for children. This particularly includes questions of anonymity and confidentiality. It is also critically important that the child and their guardian have provided informed consent to how the data will be used and presented in any outputs.

**Checklist. Guard the “best interests of the child” in data use, presentation and dissemination**

- Assess if and how children may be harmed from the use, presentation or dissemination of data.
- Ensure that the results do not contribute to a worsened situation for children.
- Guard anonymity and confidentiality of child respondents in data presentation.
- Ensure informed consent from the child and parent/guardian in the use and presentation of the data.

**Measure reach and impact**

Dissemination ultimately aims to enhance the wider knowledge base on human trafficking and to influence anti-trafficking professionals. This requires measuring the impact of research and data collection on either knowledge or action. But measuring the reach and impact of disseminated materials is often not part of this final stage in many data collection efforts, not least because of the costs involved. More attention, time and resources are needed to measure
the impact and reach of the data being collected and shared. How to measure research impact and reach needs to be part of the overall project design and implementation and costs need to be taken into account as part of the design and planning and prioritized as an integral part of the overall project.

Traditionally, the impact of academic and peer published research has been measured by citation counts. An alternative metric similar to counting references in journal articles is measuring the topicality of the dataset on social media platforms. However, many of the tools available for measuring the impact of data vary widely in what and how they measure. In addition, these measures focus largely on the impact of research and findings to the knowledge base around TIP. As important is measuring the impact of research and data collection on policy and programmatic interventions. It is also important to consider the nature of the impact (for example, whether for individual victims, communities, institutions, or society).

Impact and reach are not solely in the hands of those engaged in research and data collection. Research uptake, use, influence and impact depend on the interaction of multiple actors, agencies and socio-political circumstances. Practitioners and policymakers should be equipped with the skills and knowledge to leverage findings for programmatic and policy change. To do so requires the development and implementation of effective tools and processes for measuring the impact and reach of the data being collected. This, in turn, requires that adequate resources, both human and financial, are available to undertake this measurement and that this element of measurement is included and prioritized by funders and implementers in the design and planning of the data collection project.

Checklist. Measure reach and impact

- Disseminate results in ways that will reach and impact the knowledge or work of the target audience.
- Identify different methods to assess impact and reach.
- Ensure adequate resources (human and financial) are available to undertake this measurement.
- Include the measurement of impact and reach in the design of the project.
Annex #1. Research methodology and limitations

These guidelines are a companion document to the main publication: *The Science (and Art) of Understanding Trafficking in Persons: Good Practice in TIP Data Collection*. A more detailed discussion of the methodology is found there. Below is a brief overview of the research methodology. Data sources for this project included:

- Interviews with 128 key informants
  - Interviews with TIP researchers and TIP experts
  - Interviews with TIP data collection staff
  - Interviews with National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms
- Reanalysis of interviews with 473 trafficking victims
- Desk research

**Interviews with key informants**

NEXUS conducted 163 interviews with 128 key informants representing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research projects, academic institutions, international organizations (IOs), private sector actors and government. This included: TIP researchers and TIP experts (95 interviews), TIP data collection staff (55 interviews), National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms (13 interviews). Key informants worked in different countries globally, as shown on the map below. Some regions were more represented than others, a bias offset through the literature review and desk research. While criteria differed somewhat by category of respondent, a central aspect was diversity in sampling with regards to: 1) the types of TIP data collection being considered (for example, on protection or prosecution); 2) the approaches and methods used; 3) geographic scope or coverage; and 4) professional specialty or discipline.

*Map #1. Geographic representation of research and data collection by key informants*

Interviews were conducted using standardized research instruments. Interviews were conducted in English with the exception of one interview. Each interview began with a process of informed consent. Interviews were either in person or remote (via Skype or telephone) and

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19 Most key informants work or conduct research in more than one country or even region, accounting for the discrepancy between the 128 respondents interviewed and the representation by region on this map.
were audio recorded, with the consent of the key informant. Interviews were typically 75-90 minutes in length. Once completed, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. All interviews were treated confidentially; transcripts were shared only within the research team and secured according to NEXUS Institute’s data protection policies. Information shared in this publication has been anonymized.

Reanalysis of interviews with trafficking victims
We reanalyzed 473 interviews with trafficking victims conducted for past research in Europe, the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Asia between 2006 and 2016 and which included questions about their experiences and perspectives as research respondents. Some were interviewed specifically about their experiences of participating in administrative TIP data collection and research and their advice on how this could be improved. Of these 473 trafficking victims, 96 were trafficking victims from Europe and the former Soviet Union and 377 were from different countries in Asia (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam). Two thirds (299) were females and one third (174) were males, trafficked for various forms of labor exploitation, sexual exploitation and begging.

Desk research
This study benefits from an extensive review of literature and resources on TIP research and data collection. Some was specific to trafficking in persons, while some was broader in scope and included general research methods and administrative data collection. This included:

- papers and articles on different research methodologies and data collection approaches, including strengths and limitations;
- project documents about TIP data collection efforts, including methods, procedures and outputs;
- handbooks, guidelines and manuals about TIP data collection;
- media reports or op-eds on TIP data collection including reviews and critiques of research methodology or data collection approaches, including the use of technology in TIP data collection;
- websites about specific TIP data collection projects or research projects;
- ethical guidelines and protocols for research and data collection (for TIP and more generally); and
- national and international legislation on data collection and data protection issues.
## Annex #2. Glossary

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accuracy</td>
<td>the degree to which data correctly estimates or describes the quantities or characteristics it is designed to measure</td>
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<tr>
<td>administrative data</td>
<td>information collected primarily for administrative purposes (for example, for registration, transaction and record keeping in the context of operational work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anonymity</td>
<td>the condition of being anonymous (when an individual cannot be identified)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“best interests of the child”</td>
<td>when all actions concerning children take, as a primary consideration, needs and interests of the child</td>
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<tr>
<td>bias</td>
<td>an error or influence that provides a distortion in the results of a study; bias can occur at any stage of research or data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child protection</td>
<td>the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or to stop children being abused or ill-treated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
confidentiality  
protecting an individual’s privacy by restricting access to information about that individual

confirmation bias  
the tendency to look for patterns in data that confirm preconceived notions about connections and explanations

conflict of interest  
when an individual, organization or institution has multiple interests and serving one interest will influence (or even work against) another interest, impacting the ability to be impartial

convenience sampling  
a sampling strategy when cases are selected primarily because they are available and accessible

cross-sectional research  
research with one sample at a single point in time

data  
information on variables of interest

data analysis  
the search for understanding and meaning through patterns, trends, ideas, themes and even contradictions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>data archiving</td>
<td>the retention of data that needs to be kept for a long period of time, but that is not necessarily important for current activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data cleaning</td>
<td>the one-off process of detecting and addressing the errors within a dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data collection</td>
<td>the process of systematically gathering and measuring information on variables of interest to answer a data collection question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data collection approach</td>
<td>the overarching framework or strategy for data collection, which includes different data collection methods (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data collection method</td>
<td>the specific technique or procedure used to collect data within a data collection approach (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data collector</td>
<td>an individual who gathers and measures data in relation to a specific data collection project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data disposal</td>
<td>erasing and/or destroying data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
data editing  reviewing data for consistency, detecting errors and outliers and ensuring accuracy and adequacy of the data

data entry  the act of entering information into data collection formats and addressing errors

data handling  the process of ensuring that data is stored, archived or disposed of in a safe and secure manner

data maintenance  on-going correction and verification of data

data management  control, protection, delivery and enhancement of data

data ownership  possession of and responsibility for data

data provider  individuals, organizations or institutions who provide data to a data collection effort
data quality  whether data is able to serve its purpose in a given context

data reduction  condensing data by organizing and summarizing it

data sharing  making data available to others

data source  source of the information being collected

data storage  recording (storage) of data in a storage medium

data subject  any person whose personal data is being collected, held or processed

data transfer  transmission of data from one entity (individual, organization or institution) to another
**data validation**
process by which invalid data is rejected

**database**
collection of data that is organized to provide efficient retrieval

**dataset**
collection of data on a specific topic

**deductive analysis**
analysis that sets out to confirm or disprove a general hypothesis

**double counting**
when a unit or case is counted more than once in a sample

**duplicate cases**
when the same case is accidentally entered more than once in a dataset

**end user**
the individual or entity that ultimately uses the outputs of the data collection effort
gatekeeper  
a person who facilitates or arbitrates access to data sources

geo-data  
computerized geographical data stored in a format usable with a geographic information system (GIS) for spatial data visualization

good practice  
a process, technique or methodology that has been shown to meet a set of criteria

inductive analysis  
finding patterns, themes and categories in the data

information bias  
when information is measured, collected or interpreted inaccurately (also called observation bias or measurement bias)

informed consent  
the process by which individuals, organizations and/or institutions are fully informed about and voluntarily agree to take part in data collection

key informant  
an individual who provides in-depth information based on unique knowledge of a topic and/or professional expertise
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<tr>
<td>longitudinal research</td>
<td>data collection from the same sample repeatedly over a period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metadata</td>
<td>data providing information about one or more aspects of the data itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misrepresentation</td>
<td>failure to faithfully reflect the nature and range of findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed methods data collection</td>
<td>data collection that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonprobability sampling</td>
<td>a method of sampling wherein it is not known which individual from the population will be selected as a sample (examples include convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overrepresentation</td>
<td>when some individuals have a greater probability than others of being included in a sample or when disproportionate attention is paid to an issue or topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participant (respondent) bias</td>
<td>when a participant responds in ways that influence the data (for example, what they think is the right answer, what is socially acceptable, to please the researcher) or when the participant does not remember or recall things correctly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
personal data  any information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify an individual

pilot testing  a small-scale trial where a few respondents are engaged to test the research instrument and comment on the mechanics of the research tool

pre-testing  a process that evaluates whether those from whom data is collected interpret questions in a consistent manner, as intended by the data collector, and judges the appropriateness of each question

precision  the depth of knowledge encoded by the data

prevention  efforts to prevent trafficking in persons from occurring

primary data  data collected directly by the researcher or data collector

privacy  the right of an individual not have personal information revealed to others
probability sampling

A method of sampling in which the subjects of the population have an equal opportunity to be selected as a representative sample (examples include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified random sampling).

prosecution

The overarching legal response to human trafficking including, but not limited to, criminal justice prosecution of traffickers.

prosecution-related data

Data that supports the efforts of policymakers and practitioners in their prosecutorial efforts as well as to assess the impact of the criminal justice response.

protection

The various stages and steps involved in protecting a victim of human trafficking, including identification, assistance and reintegration.

protection-related data

Data related to trafficking victims and their trafficking experiences as well as their protection needs and experiences.

purposeful sampling

The cases in the sample are selected based on specific criteria that will help illuminate the issue being analyzed.

qualitative data collection

Data collection that gathers non-numerical data and that aims to explore, describe, or explain.
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<tr>
<td>quality control activities</td>
<td>activities that serve to preserve data integrity and ensure the validity of data collection results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quantitative data collection</td>
<td>data collection that measures and assess different variables and tests relationships between variables in order to reveal patterns, correlations, or causal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliability</td>
<td>the repeatability of data collection findings and their accessibility to other data collectors (that is, whether another data collector under the same circumstances would make the same observation leading to the same conclusions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representative</td>
<td>the distribution of different variables (for example, age, gender, trafficking experiences or other relevant points) observed in the sample are the same as would be observed in the population of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research data</td>
<td>the deliberate and discrete collection of data on a specific issue in order to answer a specific question or address a specific hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research participant</td>
<td>an individual who participates in a particular study (also referred to as a respondent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researcher bias</td>
<td>when the researcher influences the data in the way it is collected (what the researcher observes, what questions are asked and how) as well as how data is analyzed, interpreted and presented</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>respondent</td>
<td>an individual who participates in a particular study (also referred to as a research participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respondent bias</td>
<td>the effect of non-responses on data collection estimates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respondent burden</td>
<td>the degree to which respondents experience their participation as too stressful and/or time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respondent driven sampling (RDS)</td>
<td>a series of methods that are used in data collection with “hard-to-reach” populations where network links from sampled members of the target population are followed (traced) to select subsequent population members to add to the sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response bias</td>
<td>different cognitive effects that can lead to less accurate or less truthful disclosure from respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response rates</td>
<td>the number of individuals approached as potential respondents who declined (actively or passively) to participate in data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sample</td>
<td>a sub-set or sub-group from the population that is to be examined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>sampling frame</td>
<td>a list of the total population of interest from which a random sample can be drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary data</td>
<td>data that has already been collected and can be used for analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selection bias</td>
<td>when the process of sampling (the selection of individuals, groups or data for analysis) introduces bias into the study, linked to what is included and omitted (also called selection effect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive data</td>
<td>personal data that may be used in a discriminatory way against an individual and as such should be treated with greater care and be subject to more stringent restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snowball sampling</td>
<td>a sampling method used in data collection in which respondents refer those they know, these individuals in turn refer those they know and so on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social desirability response bias</td>
<td>the tendency of some respondents to answer questions in a manner that they deem to be more socially acceptable than their “true” answer in order to project a favorable image of themselves and to avoid receiving negative evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spatially randomized sampling</td>
<td>a form of sampling used to survey a random sample of a population when up-to-date and accurate geographic or census data is not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
street-involved children

children for whom the street is a habitual abode and/or source of livelihood

target audience

a particular group at which research or data collection is aimed

thick description

the detailed account of human behavior in which the researcher describes the behavior as well as patterns of cultural and social relationships

TIP data

a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables on the topic of trafficking in persons

TIP data collection

the overarching process of gathering and assigning meaning to data on various aspects of trafficking in persons

TIP expert

a professional with expertise in TIP (for example, as prosecutors, police, social workers, medical personnel and so on)

TIP

trafficking in persons

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation
triangulation a process to validate data, such as methods triangulation (using different research methods to collect data on one topic to ensure validity), triangulation of data sources (using multiple data sources within the same method and approach to address the same question) and analyst triangulation (engaging different analysts or different teams of analysts in analyzing the data)

undercounting recording fewer units of analysis (for example, a trafficking victim or a trafficking case) than actually exist

unit (or case) the individual or group that the data collection effort is interested in studying (for example, a trafficking victim, a human trafficker, a trafficking case, a criminal investigation, an assistance pathway)

validity the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data and findings and the extent to which they possess the quality of being sound or true, as far as can be judged