



Good Practice in TIP Data Collection

Recommendations for Donors and Funders



2019

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Foreword

Very little focused attention has been paid to the role of funders in the successful development and implementation of projects to collect and analyze data about human trafficking. In the past, too many data collection projects on human trafficking issues were not designed in ways to maximize the resources invested, which has, unfortunately, hindered the pace of progress in understanding and responding to human trafficking in our communities and around the world. Consequently, for many foundations, impact investors, bilateral donors and other funders, answers to the question of how they can achieve more significant positive results with the money they contribute to human trafficking data collection projects have been elusive.

Funders have a unique opportunity to ensure that TIP data collection projects are started off on the right foot and that good practice continues through and following data collection. This requires that funders have a solid understanding of what good practices can be applied to the TIP data collection projects that they support, to ensure that these good practices lead to achieving more meaningful results. This brief identifies and recommends a number of good practices for funders supporting TIP research or data collection projects, including before, during and after data collection takes place. It offers funders help to guide their efforts and improve the quality of their engagements in data collection projects. As a result, it is hoped that funders, armed with greater insights about good practice on TIP data collection, can work with recipients of their funds to ensure meaningful and long-lasting contributions to the field, with the ultimate beneficiaries being those who have survived human trafficking.

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Introduction

Donors and funders play a critical role in building the knowledge base on trafficking in persons. By funding specific TIP data collection projects and research studies, funders (governmental, philanthropic and other civil society funders as well as non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and entities) are central in determining the issues and topics that may be studied and also those that may be overlooked. They also make decisions about how data collection itself takes place, playing a pivotal role in determining the quality of data collected about human trafficking and the value of its use. Funders influence whether or not effective use is made of research findings – how data collection results are disseminated and used, including how they may inform the development of anti-trafficking funding priorities.

As key anti-trafficking stakeholders, it is important to think carefully about the roles and responsibilities of funders at each stage of a TIP data collection project or research study, including how funders can support and foster improved TIP data collection. To maximize the value and positive impact of investments by funders, there are key issues that funders should integrate into each data collection initiative – before, during and after a project is implemented. This brief offers recommendations to donors and funders on how they may, through their work, support improved TIP data collection and analysis.

By adopting these recommendations, funders will achieve marked improvement in the quality of TIP data collection projects that they support and, in doing so, improve the prospects of attaining meaningful program goals and objectives in addressing human trafficking.

This brief is part of a NEXUS Institute series on data collection in the field of trafficking in persons. 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*, it offers guidance to governments, international organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on what constitutes good practice in the field of TIP data collection and how to operationalize good practice (and to avoid risks and pitfalls). 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 *On the Frontlines: Operationalizing Good Practice in TIP Data Collection*. The project was generously funded by the United States Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP).

What is trafficking in persons (TIP)?

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.¹

¹ 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”. Moreover, “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]”.

Who are donor and funders of TIP data collection?

There is a range of different stakeholders which may be involved in funding TIP data collection and research. Donors and funders (hereinafter “funders”) may include private donors like foundations. They may also be bilateral or multilateral donors. In some instances, a national government may fund TIP research and data collection conducted by, for example, a local NGO, a research institute or a university. Some data collectors are funded by UN agencies or international organizations. A university or a national research council may also fund data collection. This wide variation means that there are different types of relationships between funders and funding recipients conducting data collection.

Who are funders?

- Bilateral and multilateral donors
- National governments
- Foundations
- UN agencies
- International organizations (IOs)
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Universities
- Research councils
- Private donors

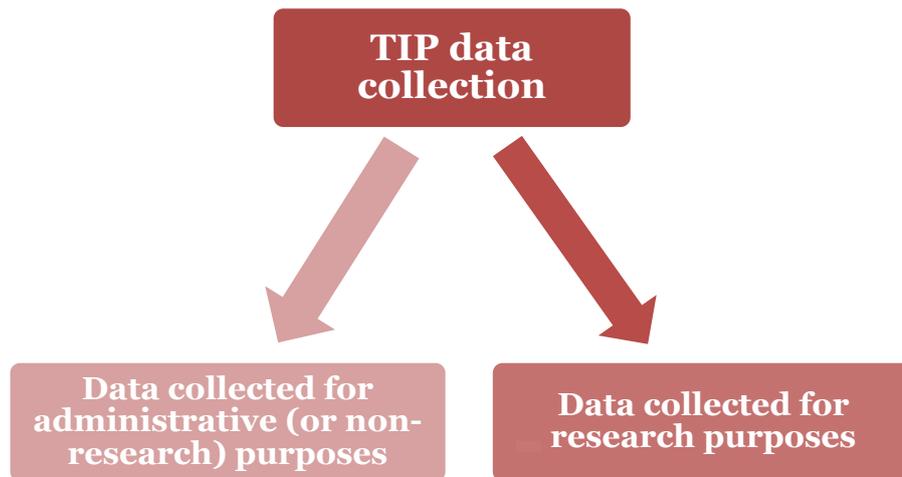
There will also be differences in terms of the institutional framework in which funders operate. Regardless, when designing projects and selecting and working with funding recipients, funders have a unique opportunity to provide leadership to ensure that TIP data collection is undertaken in ways that maximize benefits, mitigate risks, are ethically robust, build capacity and contribute to the knowledge base on trafficking in persons. As such, funders need to be careful, deliberate and creative in how they support TIP data collection, to attain more meaningful results from their funding and engagement. Developing meaningful relationships with funding recipients and engaging in these complex discussions and challenges may be one important technique, among others. This is particularly important when engaging with and funding data collection and research in lower-capacity and lower-resourced countries and communities.

What is TIP data collection?

TIP data collection is the overarching practice of gathering data on various aspects of trafficking in persons. It includes a wide range of data collection initiatives by various organizations and institutions, including governments, international organizations, NGOs, and businesses. Some data collection may constitute a discrete research project. Other data collection may be the targeted collection of administrative data as part of specific TIP data collection efforts, such as that conducted by offices of National Rapporteurs and equivalent mechanisms. In still other cases, data collection may involve administrative data (that is, data for non-research purposes) collected as part of a project or an institution’s on-going operational work, such as criminal justice case files. TIP data collection differs substantially in scope and nature. It may, for instance, be global and collated in a large and technically complex database. It may also be targeted data collected by a single organization or person to answer a very specific TIP-related data collection question. As such, it is important that funders recognize that TIP data collection is not just one thing – one approach, one method, one topic – and that this work necessitates expertise in conducting quality research, as well as knowledge of the different types and sources of TIP data and how that affects the prospects for success or failure.

This document refers to two distinct categories of data collected about trafficking in persons: 1) data collected for administrative (or non-research) purposes and 2) data collected for research purposes.

Diagram #1. Different types of TIP data collection



Data collected for administrative (or non-research) purposes refers to information collected primarily for administrative purposes. This type of data 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 is the deliberate and discrete collection of data 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.

Data collected for both research purposes and for administrative (non-research) purposes plays an important role in informing and building the evidence base about trafficking in persons. An improved evidence base on human trafficking is central to our ability to combat this crime, both in terms of programmatic and policy responses.

Criteria for 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.²

“Good practice refers to a high gold standard... What are the characteristics? ...What you’re looking for is the characteristics of good practice when it comes to research and [data collection] topics”.

TIP expert

There is no one model that entirely constitutes good practice. Each individual model of TIP data collection has its strengths and limitations. Like all anti-trafficking efforts, TIP data collection involves complexities, challenges and complications, which require adaptation and adjustment over time. That being said, we have identified a number of good practices for funders supporting TIP research or data collection projects, including before, during and after

data collection takes place that, when implemented, contribute to good practice.

Funders play a vital role in any TIP data collection effort, not least in ensuring that data collection meets good practice criteria, as outlined below.



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.



Relevance and usefulness. TIP data 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).



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. This 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

Good practice criteria in TIP data collection

- Data quality
- Relevance and usefulness
- Accessibility
- Timeliness
- Cost appropriateness
- Legal and ethical

² The good practice criteria presented here are based on interviews with more than 120 with TIP researchers, TIP experts, TIP data collection staff and National Rapporteurs, as well as interviews with trafficking victims and a review of relevant literature on TIP research and data collection. These criteria represent the combined learning, knowledge and experience of these individuals from different countries and fields of work engaged in TIP data collection over many years. For an in-depth discussion of the methodology for this project and development of these criteria, please see the main study from this project: *The Science (and Art) of Understanding Trafficking in Persons: Good Practice in TIP Data Collection*.

contributed to the data collection (for example, trafficking victims, practitioners and policymakers).



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 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. 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.



Cost appropriateness. This refers to whether the human and financial costs of the TIP data collection effort are appropriate. 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. Cost appropriateness is not only about robust data collection with finite resources, but also about the responsible management and implementation of data collection when resources are sufficient. Another consideration is sustainability (that is, whether a data collection initiative, once resourced, can be maintained over a long period).



Legal and ethical. 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. There is also a need to adhere to the highest possible ethical standards, particularly in countries where the threshold of legal protections may be inadequate.

In general, thoughtful and informed application of the above-mentioned criteria provides a useful starting point to guide funders in supporting good practice in TIP data collection. However, different criteria will be of varying relevance for different funders and in relation to different projects and topics conducted in different situations and contexts. What constitutes good practice for one project in one country or setting will not necessarily be considered good practice for 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, funders need pay attention and adjust to the wider context and dynamics of any given data collection process that is supported.

There are also a number of **external factors and considerations** that may come into play when funders are 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.



Different fields of work. An understanding 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. Funders then will need to consider what may constitute good practice in relation to the field(s) of work involved in any project being funded.



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. Some TIP data collection needs to be done quickly and inexpensively, to respond to an urgent issue or answer a pressing question. While perhaps not the highest quality data, it can nonetheless provide useful and relevant information to respond to an issue or design an intervention in a timely fashion. Similarly, National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms will need collect relevant and useful harmonized TIP data while aligning this requirement with available time and resources of different data providers. By contrast, academic research will collect high quality data and respond 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. Funders will need to weigh good practice criteria in relation to the specific purpose and goal of the individual data collection effort.



The perspective of different stakeholders. Depending on the nature of the TIP 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. Assessing when data collection constitutes good practice will depend on which stakeholders are making this assessment and in response to what factors. 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. Further, assessing data quality 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. In assessing possible data collection or research projects, funders may need to weigh up the perspectives of different stakeholders in terms of how best to conduct this work.

“The external factors are numerous, unpredictable, country-specific and impossible to avoid... We have to acknowledge the contexts in which so many of our partners are operating are so challenging...”

TIP expert from one UN agency



Different situations and contexts.

Different contexts and situations influence if, when and how good practice can be applied to TIP data collection. According to the political and social context, considerations of good practice play out in markedly different ways and some criteria may need to be given different weight. 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. In other settings, available infrastructure and human resources may not be able to support what might elsewhere be considered good practice. 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. 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. Funders then must pay due attention to not only the nature of any TIP data collection or research that may be funded, but also the appropriateness and viability of data collection or research in different contexts and settings.

A discussion of these external factors and considerations however should not lead funders to accept poor data nor to support data collection that is not ethical. Rather, this discussion highlights the wide variation in TIP data collection globally and the different dynamics that come into play in this complex and varied arena. Moreover, while it is important to recognize these limitations and adjust a project to fit what is possible, it is not always suitable to compromise on some issues simply to fit what is easiest rather than what is most needed. Funders are uniquely positioned to prevent or mitigate compromises that could undermine ethical and robust data collection.

Applying good practice criteria – Avoiding harm

Without good practice criteria, otherwise well-intentioned TIP data collection supported by funders may unintentionally cause harm in different ways including:

- **Inaccurate or poor data**, which skews or distorts our understanding of human trafficking and is used to develop ill-informed, ill-conceived and potentially ineffective or even dangerous interventions, as well as funding policies.
- **Wasted time and resources** for funders and funding recipients when data collection does not contribute to our understanding of TIP or toward effective anti-trafficking interventions.
- **Data collection that is done unethically, insensitively and unsafely** and causes harm to respondents, such as trafficking victims or anti-trafficking professionals.
- **Inaccurate data and publishing**, which can lead to inadequate or harmful anti-trafficking responses or compromise the credibility of the anti-trafficking field more broadly.

“[Poor data] is dangerous in different ways, [such as] if you are hyper-inflating the scale of the problem or underestimating the scale of the problem because the data you’re collecting is not rigorously collected”.

TIP expert from one UN agency

“...having bad data is worse than having no data, because once we have bad data we’re going to make decisions based on that information”.

TIP researcher

“...one of the big [ethical principles] is the “do no harm” concept. These are [human subjects] that may either be vulnerable, may actually be already in exploitative and abusive situations or may be recovering from abusive and exploitative situations. So, making sure that they are not re-traumatized, re-victimized...”

TIP researcher

Recommendations for funders

The following recommendations are offered to funders based on the experiences and suggestions of TIP researchers, TIP experts, TIP data collection staff, National Rapporteurs and interviews with trafficking victims. Recommendations are divided according to different stages of the process – before, during and after data collection. Recommendations aim to maximize the positive contribution that funders are already making to the field of TIP data collection.

Recommendations for funders in TIP data collection



Recommendations for funders *before* TIP data collection



Recommendations funders *during* TIP data collection



Recommendations funders *after* TIP data collection



Recommendations for funders *before* data collection

These recommendations are for funders before a data collection project commences, during the design and planning stage. Funders are uniquely positioned to support and contribute to the design and planning of TIP data collection that is ethical and robust.

Coordinate with other funders and experts to assess data collection needs and gaps.

Before initiating funding opportunities, assess what has already been done on the specific data collection topic and what is currently being done, to identify what gaps exist and to avoid duplication. This requires reviewing past and on-going data collection projects and research, coordinating with other funders and consulting with experts about gaps and needs. Review different approaches and models used in previous TIP data collection efforts and draw lessons from successes and challenges faced.

“... there’s this big gap between the program level, people on the ground who have direct access to... trafficking victims, vulnerable communities... and the policy level that have access to funding. They create and sustain the conversation on trafficking and exploitation. But they often are removed from the actual communities that they’re funding and have an indirect knowledge of those groups”.

TIP researcher

Fill knowledge gaps and avoid duplication.

In designing and planning funding opportunities, funders should know what has already been done or what work is on-going and build on existing TIP data collection work and efforts. This may involve assessing the need for the specific type of data

collection being proposed. It is helpful to consider the following questions: Who needs this data? 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?

“...there is a lot of research done and then the same research is done again... If you gather information and you use it for a good purpose...to change things and to better things, I agree [with this] ... I think too much money sometimes is gone to make research that is not used afterwards”.

TIP expert from NGO

Develop clear guidance and parameters for the TIP data collection effort to be funded.

Develop clear parameters for the TIP data collection project to be funded, including the purpose, topic and scope. Know what questions need to be answered through the data collection effort and be clear about the data collection goals to be realized. In all funding opportunities funders should include clear definitions and terms to ensure a common understanding and agreement of the data collection project (among funders and funding recipients). Align the scope of the data collection project with the available resources (both human and financial) and with available time. How broad and/or comprehensive the data collection will be? Will the available resources be sufficient for the scope and purpose? Is the proposed scope of data collection possible within the available time frame? When setting up databases, is the approach sustainable?

“Instead of thinking, ‘We need data’, it’s really important for us to ask, ‘What questions are we trying to answer? How do we best answer those questions? ...We need to focus on what questions are we hoping to answer or what problems we are hoping to solve and then figure out what kind of data that [requires]”.

TIP researcher

“...[E]very situation is different. And that’s why the planning is very important when you do such data collection initiatives because you have to have very clear from the beginning what is the overall purpose”.

TIP expert from international organization

Explain the purpose of the funding and the wider programmatic and/or policy context.

Funders should clearly communicate to funding recipients the purposes of funding the TIP data collection effort, including the programmatic and/or the policy context in which it is commissioned and the agendas of any funding contributors involved. Any conflicts of interest on the part of funders should be disclosed upfront so that funding recipients can make informed choices when pursuing funding opportunities. Regardless of the specific purpose, good practice in TIP data collection means that the information gathered should be relevant and useful – that is, it should add something to the existing body of knowledge on human trafficking or to the daily work of practitioners and policy-makers in ways that can inform policy and/or practice.

“You need to get your planning right. It’s the front end of the research and we need to invest much more into the planning processes. And that could be around making sure that you’ve got enough budget and your timeline is appropriate, making sure that a good research protocol is developed so that that becomes the roadmap for the study”.

TIP researcher

 **Provide technical guidance to funding recipients on legal and ethical requirements.** Legal and ethical frameworks for data collection will differ depending on who is collecting data, what data is being collected, for what purpose and so on. This requires identifying and anticipating legal and ethical questions

specific to the proposed data collection and establishing guidelines and data protection protocols to ensure legal and ethical adherence. Funders should prepare technical guidance for funding recipients on legal and ethical frameworks with which funding recipients must comply. Technical guidance should provide appropriate and clear information about how to adhere to these requirements and may be helpfully supplemented with practical tools like contract templates and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). In preparing technical guidance, consider requirements not only for the jurisdiction in which the funder is based, but also the jurisdiction of operation (where data collection will take place) as well as when data is crossing jurisdictions.

Set ethical standards and requirements for funding recipients.

Good practice is for funders to set ethical standards and requirements to guide the work that they support. This may mean going beyond what is required by the relevant legal framework to ensure the highest ethical standards for data collection, such as developing an ethics statement or a Code of Conduct for funding recipients undertaking TIP data collection. Set minimum ethical standards for any data collection project that is funded and avoid imposing requirements that breach legal or ethical rules, such as data ownership or data sharing without necessary protections in place. Funders should require that proposals identify potential ethical and legal issues that may arise in data collection and explain how these will be addressed.

“... the harm that can be done doing research unethically is not only to that population that you do the research with, although that’s significant enough. But you are potentially burning bridges and ruining the opportunity for any researcher to do research in that area or with that community for however long. The ripple effect will be really significant”.

TIP researcher

 **Ensure adequate funding and realistic timelines.** Meaningful and appropriate data collection in the TIP field that adheres to ethical and legal principles can be costly. Funders should allocate adequate funding for all stages of the data collection process including design and planning of data collection; the undertaking of data collection; storage, maintenance and management of collected data; data analysis; and data use, presentation and dissemination. Be open to adjustments and course correction during project implementation, including the allocation of additional funds as needed. Set realistic timelines for implementation. Build sufficient time into the duration of all projects so that a thoughtful and deliberate approach is possible and so work won't be rushed. Ensure that timelines and funding take into account steps and activities involved in legal and ethical adherence including, when relevant, ethics review processes.

“...why is the knowledge base of trafficking so poor? Part of the reason is that donors don't want to pay for grownup research. They want to pay for quick and dirty [data collection]. They also don't have the concept of professional people doing professional jobs. [...] And then there's always the “Oh, we don't have time to wait””.

TIP researcher

“Acknowledge the resources necessary to do better quality research. [...] More spending is a key need if we're going to get better data on anti-trafficking work”.

TIP expert

 **Clarify expectations between funders and funding recipients.** Have an open dialogue with funding recipients about what are (and are not) realistic goals and what is possible to do within the framework of a given project, budget and time frame. Explore the most appropriate methods and approaches for the specific project as well as the associated legal and ethical issues. It is important to understand the limitations and biases implicit in different methods and data sources; exploring these limitations and biases will be an important part of

communication with funding recipients at this stage. Work with funding recipients to develop a realistic and feasible work plan for the data collection effort.

 **Require that funding recipients have the necessary skills and expertise.** Funders should ensure that data collection projects are managed and staffed by individuals with the required skills and knowledge for the specific data collection initiative. Require, as part of funding, that the project is overseen by those with sufficient technical capacity and expertise and ensure that adequate funds are available for this component. It is also important for data collectors to have knowledge about human trafficking as well as the specific topic to be addressed (for example, victim assistance efforts, criminal justice procedures, victim identification and so on). This is particularly important when the aim of the TIP data collection effort is to inform policy and practice.

“...if you're going to do data collection and research with respect to human trafficking in the criminal justice system, it is important that the people collecting and analyzing the data have a good deal of knowledge of the criminal justice system, how it works. ...it allows them to ask the right questions. ...they are less likely be fooled or [deceived]. ...they'll do a more sophisticated report, they'll go into the detail of how things are being done”.

TIP expert

 **Explore ways to build capacity and technical skills.** Consider ways that funding TIP data collection can increase the capacity of local researchers, organizations and institutions. This might include supporting partnerships that build research and data collection capacity of institutions and organizations, particularly in lower-capacity and lower-resourced countries. It might also require supporting the funding recipients to identify technical experts who can work with and train data collectors and funding training and capacity building within the wider data collection effort. This not only

enhances the capacity of individual data collectors and partners but also contributes to the sustainability of data collection efforts in the longer term.

“...if there were more easily accessible ways to link up those who were undertaking data collection with those who had expertise in the area and interest in those kinds of partnerships”.

TIP expert from UN agency

“... it’s about ensuring that we’ve got the right skill sets and the right organizations... And if we are going to enhance the ability of NGOs to collect data or bring in monitoring data or even...go out to the field and do some research then let’s make sure they’ve got the right skill set to do that and they understand the ethical implications”.

Funder of TIP data collection

 **Explore options for technology and innovation.** Consider ways that technology may be used to enhance and support TIP data collection efforts. It is good practice to make funds available to funding recipients to access these solutions when it will enhance the data collection effort. Take into account any legal considerations in the use of technology and ensure that the solution aligns with these requirements (for example, in terms of data protection requirements and privacy laws). Require that any proposed use of technology by funding recipients includes a thorough assessment of risk and explanation of how legal protections will be assured and ethical protocols put into place. Conduct an independent risk assessment of the use of technology specific to the data collection approach as part of the proposal review process.

“... you need to build in the safety and encryption that protects it from hacking. ...paper and pen has its own risks but the fact that you glued into an electronic format doesn’t necessarily mean everything is safer. In fact, it could be, somebody hacks in or a phone or a device that has a lot of data is lost or stolen, or seized, you could be looking at other risks”.

TIP researcher

 **Consider longer-term issues and objectives.** Funders may have significant immediate and short-term interests in particular TIP data collection. However, decisions about what to fund, the conditions that are attached to funding and the relationships they build along the way can have significant long-term impact on data collection capacity in project countries as well as on the quality of the knowledge base. Long-term data collection that commits adequate time and resources may prove far more efficient and effective and should be part of a funder’s thinking and planning process. Consider how data collection may be sustainable in the long-term and work toward this objective.

“...the two data collection initiatives I mentioned ...are they still referred to? Are those handbooks still used? [...] ...donors are funding a lot of duplicative efforts”.

TIP expert from a UN agency

 **Offer guidance and technical advice when funding is not provided.** When a proposal is rejected, wherever possible funders should provide feedback to the applicant as to why so that these considerations can be addressed in the design of future efforts.



Recommendations for funders *during* data collection

These recommendations relate to the data collection stage (when data is gathered and all of the processes that link up with this operational task) as well as data storage, maintenance and management. There are many different types of TIP data collection projects that may be funded and the parameters of data collection activities will vary (for example, in approach and method, in the type of data collected and according to external factors that affect data collection). Nonetheless, it is important during data collection for funders to maintain clear and focused on-going communication with funding recipients to support good practice in data collection.



Ensure that projects engage professionals with expertise in data collection. As part of oversight, funders should ensure that those implementing the project have sufficient technical capacity and expertise, including in terms of ethical standards and procedures. Require that data collection is undertaken by those with the training and capacity to do so as well as the requisite sensitivity. When the capacity does not exist from the outset, ensure that the project has the plans, time and resources to include training and capacity building of all involved in data collection, storage, maintenance and management. Mentoring and supervision of data collectors should also be encouraged.



Allocate adequate time and resources for implementation. Ensure that time and resources are available to undertake the project properly. Allow sufficient time and allocate sufficient funds for adequate recruitment and training of professionals to undertake data collection, including researchers, interpreters,

translators, administrative and logistical staff where needed. Allow time to ensure data collection is conducted safely and securely and does not pose risk to anyone involved. Time and resources are also needed for the processing of all data (that is, data storage, maintenance and management) as well as the analysis of the data.

“What I found as a pressure is that researchers were really rushed into the fieldwork phase by the [organization] commissioning the research. They ended up with poor data, because they didn’t have sufficient time to work on the methodology or to do literature review”.

TIP expert

“The problem was that the timeline of the project was so short that as we started to fill in the information [in the database] and we started to have problems but we had no technical support because [the database expert’s] contract had ended”.

NGO collecting case management data

“...make sure that you really count the total costs of implementing a system. It’s not just purchasing the software or the system, it’s the personnel hours, it’s the amount of organization that’s got to take place...”

NGO collecting case management data



Anticipate and budget for the unexpected. Funders should budget for the possibility that the data collection project will need adjustments and course corrections due to practical, legal, ethical or methodological issues. Be prepared to adjust data collection efforts; be open to suggestions from funding recipients.



Support capacity building efforts. To the extent possible and especially when funding lower-capacity organizations or institutions, make technical support available to data collectors and researchers, including by facilitating contact between researchers and data collectors and ethics or subject

matter experts known to the funder. Training and capacity building should ideally not only focus on data collection itself, but also on data storage, maintenance and management (and data analysis). When supporting a database, it is important to ensure that training is available over time and also in response to staff rotation. Support the development of written manuals and guidelines to compliment training. These manuals should be made publicly available to other organizations and institutions.

“... It goes inside the package of training that we do – how to use the study instrument, how to conduct the interviews... feedback, we have a whole training package that we do for researchers. Our team is very committed to that...we know that if your interviewers are bad, you’ll get bad answers. Regardless of how good your study instrument is”.

TIP researcher

“There were a series of trainings for database users ... But then we had to do follow-up trainings, also because one focal points in these offices were changing very quickly. Sometimes you have trained two database users and in three months they’re both gone. There is no institutional memory [...] ...the people leaving were not able to properly hand over their work to their colleagues”

Project manager for data collection project

 **Be open to inconvenient findings.** Funders may have a specific agenda and interests, which may be contradicted by data collection results. For example, data collection may indicate that current or past anti-trafficking interventions supported by the funder are not effective or are in need of adjusting, revising or even abandoning. Funders should be open to potentially uncomfortable and inconvenient findings that TIP data collection may reveal. This will require funders to balance their own agendas and interests with the value to be obtained in achieving high quality data,

including when this data collection may yield findings that are contrary to those interests.

“[Good practice is] that you go into the research with a very clear thesis that you’re questioning. That you don’t go in to bolster a particular position, but that it’s a genuine inquiry. I get the feeling with a lot of research that they already know from the beginning what they think”

TIP expert

 **Ensure that data collection is legal and ethical.** Require, as part of funding, that data collection adhere to legal and ethical requirements and the funder’s ethical standards. Monitor funding recipients for compliance. The underlying principle in all instances must be to “do no harm”. Ensure that funding recipients have plans in place for the safe and secure collection of data, based on informed consent, and that these are implemented in practice. Legal and ethical issues should be considered and reconsidered over the course of data collection and as issues arise. It is during data collection that “real world” issues will be faced and this will likely require reviewing, revisiting and revising legal requirements and ethical guidelines. Maintain open lines of communication with funding recipients to bring forward ethical and legal issues that may arise in data collection and support the resolution of these issues (for example, with technical expertise, funds or revisions to the work plan or contract).

“... there’s always ethical issues in any kind of research where you’re dealing with activities that are illegal or on the borderline. What are your responsibilities [in different scenarios]? It’s complicated. It [what you do] generally comes down to the particularities of it... But a lot of these things are really easy when you are sitting around a seminar table”.

TIP Researcher



Require safe and legal data storage, maintenance and management.

Funders should ensure that data collection efforts fulfill all requirements with regard to the safe, secure and legal storage, maintenance and management of data. Require all data to be stored and managed in line with national legislation and/or international standards for data protection (as well as ethical considerations). Agree with data collectors how data can be stored and shared by secured means, and ensure sharing serves an appropriate and legitimate purpose. Ensure that data is deleted, destroyed or archived as planned and is not used for purposes other than which it was collected. Actions vis-à-vis a project's data do not end at completion of a project. Proper treatment of data must be designed to outlive the life of a project.

“... [good practice is] finding a database system that's right for you, that's encrypted, that's password protected, that is accessible only to those who need access and is anonymized for others if it's important that that information is shared across the organization. And taking advantage of different technological tools to secure the data”.

TIP researcher



Put the risk of harm above all other considerations.

Ensure that data collectors are under no pressure to continue with data collection if risks are raised and allow for approaches to be altered and adapted to changing risks. As a last resort, be prepared to terminate funding where significant adverse events suggest that continued implementation of the data collection would result in serious harm to individuals. Where any decision is made to terminate funding for data collection and/or to bar data collectors and researchers for applying for future funding, be sure to convey reasons for these decisions to any affected stakeholders.

“I think being aware up front that things don't always work as you want them to work... You have to be flexible in terms of thinking about what you can achieve in a certain timeframe. And I think you have to be willing to stop and pull out if there's concerns that you can't manage and risks that you can't manage”.

TIP researcher



Support technological solutions, when appropriate.

Encourage the use of technological solutions for data collection as well as storage and maintenance, when legal, ethical and appropriate. Be aware that different contexts may not support advanced technical solutions and align technological solutions with the realities on the ground (including access to internet, technical support, adequate hardware computers and so on). Funders should ensure that staff are adequately trained and skilled in the use of any technological tools and have access to on-going technical assistance as needed over a reasonable period of time. Be open to the possibility that technological options may not be feasible in some settings.

“We had challenges with access to internet and basic capacity to use the phones for filling out the forms. We had caseworkers who had never used a computer before. And we were asking them to fill in forms on a little smart phone, which was not realistic. And it quickly became clear that we either had to provide a lot more training ... or figure out a way to do paper forms in addition or to complement the online forms”.

Project manager for data collection project

“Ultimately start with ‘Why?’ ‘Why are you doing it?’ To make sure that you have the right rationale for doing it. Just doing it to do it, you may be too small to do it. It may be that hard-analog files are the way to go and manage your information”.

NGO director on case management data



Foster an open and supportive relationship with funding recipients.

Funders should foster an open and supportive relationship with funding recipients that acknowledges the distinct challenges involved in trafficking-related research and data collection, particularly in lower-resourced settings.



Learn from challenges and failures.

Build relationships of trust and rapport to encourage frank and open dialogue with data collectors to candidly air their concerns and challenges in undertaking TIP data collection. Discuss ways that risks have been and could be addressed and any funder support that can be offered to those ends. Require funding recipients to record and report on failures, without penalty. Discuss ways that both funders and funding recipients can learn from mistakes and challenges.

“...this is a message that we’ve advocated with our government partners, even before the database has been rolled out. [There] has to be appropriate resources, appropriate staffing assigned to the management of this database”.

TIP researcher

“The whole project – the way it was designed with the timeline, no on-going technical expertise [...] we ended up with this database that we can’t use. [...] The project ended and there was no follow-up. It’s a dead database; it’s of no use to us”.

NGO staff involved in data collection project



Ensure sustainability of data collection efforts.

Data collection projects must align with available resources and technical capacities, which requires assessing these from the outset, including the availability of resources over time (for example, beyond the duration of a funded project). Work with funding recipients toward the sustainability of data collection efforts and make adjustments when needed including in terms of an extended timeline, additional funding, technical expertise, advocacy with

relevant partners and so on. Be prepared for unexpected challenges and obstacles that may undermine sustainability and be open to exploring how sustainability can be assured.



Support procedures for peer review.

Peer review can serve to augment the quality of data collection, bringing ideas and expertise from different stakeholders to strengthen data analysis and presentation. Funders should encourage peer review processes where feasible and allocate both time and funding toward a peer review process for any data collection efforts funded. Consider different models of peer review, which may be suitable for different projects.



Monitor and support the data collection process.

Require monitoring and implementation reports that address critical issues in the implementation phase, including practical constraints, technical issues as well as legal and ethical compliance and issues faced. Work with funding recipients to ensure that challenges are satisfactorily addressed.



Set clear and feasible reporting requirements.

Establish clear mechanisms for open and honest communication, coordination and reporting over the course of project implementation. Be clear about any expectations of communication and coordination throughout the data collection phase. Be realistic about the time available for reporting and how this may take needed time from project implementation activities.



Recommendations for funders *after* data collection

These recommendations are for the stages at which data is analyzed and research findings are used, presented and disseminated to various interested persons, organizations and/or institutions. Funders can play a particularly important role in ensuring that findings and lessons learned are shared, promoted and widely disseminated to various audiences, in different formats and in multiple languages. Funders are also uniquely positioned to reflect on and learn from each data collection project in ways that can improve future efforts.

“[Data collectors] also may not be as transparent about the challenges that they’ve experienced...if we’re going to understand or identify what works and what doesn’t, we really need to fully understand the challenges to using certain methods or analytic techniques in conducting the research itself. But I do think that in an increasingly high-pressure world to produce research ...that sometimes being transparent about limitations could get put aside”.

TIP researcher



Document and share lessons learned. Funders should capture and document lessons learned from supporting the particular TIP data collection effort, including methodological considerations, practical constraints and ethical and legal issues. Be open and honest about whether the evidence proves or disproves any initial assumptions and about any “failures” of the data collection effort. Consider how these lessons can be shared for the benefit of both the funding recipient and any future projects.

Invite inputs into those lessons by data collectors and data collection participants through a process of debriefing and ensure that findings are shared with appropriate stakeholders so that they can benefit from them in designing future data collection activities and applying for funding.

“...we need to work closer with communications teams. ...our expertise isn’t how to communicate this to an audience. But I think the biggest pitfall is that we lose accuracy when we don’t care about the nuance.”

TIP researcher



Ensure that results are accessible. Encourage open access to results and findings, even when funding academic research and outputs. This might involve requiring a practice- or policy-oriented output (for example, practitioners guide, policy brief and guidelines) alongside the academic output (for example, journal articles and book chapters). Ensure free access to data and findings for all relevant stakeholders. Consider how wide dissemination of results can maximize benefits for participants and practitioners, even where such strategies were not initially envisaged in the data collection proposal.

“It’s good to tailor it as much as well. To reach the right people. To write proper accompanying letters and that. These may be obvious things, but they are not necessarily obvious in practice”.

TIP expert



Disseminate widely and to a wide audience. Require widespread dissemination of results as a component of any funding. Consider and reach specific (and possibly different) audiences through considering a wide range of outputs (repackaging findings as appropriate) and a wide range of avenues for dissemination, including the use of graphics and other visual

or audio presentations of information. Link professional communications experts with data collectors and analysts to enhance how to disseminate findings. Allocate adequate funding for dissemination. Make adjustments if adequate funding was not foreseen for dissemination. Be prepared to fund changed dissemination strategies where risks and negative impact are identified (for example, if breaches of confidentiality or anonymity result), even if such risks were not initially identified.

“... there’s so much good work going on out there and not so much good dissemination going on. So, for instance, I’ve worked for many years with [this agency] and I love [its] mandate. I think what it does is so valuable and I think that its dissemination strategies are...absolutely terrible... I’m not sure anyone knows how this data is being used”.

TIP expert

“We have the feeling that in other countries... there are other kinds of research that could be useful for us and it is difficult for us to get to the methodology of that. [...] There must be a way of exchanging more easily the experiences and research on that from different countries”.

NGO working on TIP

 **Support mechanisms for feedback to data sources.** Data and results should, as much as possible, be fed back to the data sources who contributed to and participated in the project. This may be trafficking victims or different stakeholders from government and NGOs, such as social workers, lawyers, law enforcement and psychologists. Support this feedback process to ensure that lessons and findings reach those who need this information in their work. Identify the most suitable process and format for the different target audiences and end users including adjusting to how they may consume information. Allocate time and funding for this process. Ensure that this process does not pose any ethical or safety for data collectors or data sources.

“... what is important is that you bring back to the people who have contributed to your report the results of your research”.

TIP researcher



Translate to as many languages as possible. Allocate funds for the translation of all results and findings in the national language(s) where data collection has taken place as well as in other major languages. When findings are relevant and useful more widely (for example, across a wider region), consider translating the results (in part or in full) for this wider audience. Do not let language barriers inhibit access to important results or data collection models.

“Certainly in some of the countries that we work in, translation is hugely expensive. And yet you’re unlikely to have take-outs from policymakers if they can’t read what you’ve produced”.

TIP researcher



Require a comprehensive and strategic dissemination plan. Funders should require that funding recipients develop a comprehensive and strategic dissemination plan and budget accordingly, in terms of funds and time. Encourage cooperation with communications experts as much as possible, including offering technical assistance and support. Require that dissemination plans fit with the way in which the target audiences and end users consume information. For some audiences, this might be through social media and similar platforms. For other audiences, dissemination will be more traditional, formal and analog.

“I’m not sure anyone knows how this data is being used. ... we’re putting it online and patting ourselves on the back, but are we really doing a massive landscape of analysis of who is doing what? Who needs to get what? Sending the manual packages saying, ‘This is something that you need, here it is in your language’”.

TIP expert



Promote the findings (and data collection model) beyond the dissemination by funding

recipients. Promote research and data collection findings through in house communication experts. Display and disseminate findings on websites and through various online platforms. Make hard copies available and consider reprinting materials when the demand for the results and findings outstrips the original publication plans.

“It’s good to follow up and see whether they found it interesting and whether they have any feedback for you”.

TIP expert



Measure the impact. In measuring the effectiveness of funding, consider not only the outputs and outcomes but also the impact of building evidence towards informing policy and programming. This is likely to fall outside the timeline and framework of the project itself but should be an activity prioritized by funders as part of internal procedures.

“The dissemination of research needs to be [enhanced]. This is the field where many government bodies and NGOs have a need for research-based knowledge. I think it’s important to disseminate research in the way that makes it available to broad audiences. At the same time, there’s a need for dedicated scholarships. Scholarly investment in trafficking which might be more theoretical, therefore, not as easily accessible for policymakers or social workers throughout the world. But I think that a two-fold, dissemination strategy is necessary”.

TIP researcher

“It’s good to have publications that are really accessible. [One organization] has produced in the past couple of years different formats of sharing data and that is great because people can access different formats and quantity and quality of information. It’s good to have a very clear idea about the target group and tailor research reports or whatever you produce accordingly...to reach the right people”.

TIP expert



Promote other research and models.

Be open to promoting and disseminating other research and data collection models that have been funded by other funders. When good practice in TIP data collection is identified, consider promoting it and disseminating it through existing networks and on various platforms. Consider funding the repackaging of the work (to different formats for different target audiences) and/or the translation of the results into other languages.