



Policy on counting people who benefit from our programmes

July 2019

Rationale

Integrity Action's mission is to help build societies in which all citizens can - and do - successfully demand integrity from the institutions they rely on. A clear and robust approach towards counting people who benefit from our programmes is crucial to ensure we:

- understand our progress towards achieving impact at scale;
- understand whether the benefits from our programmes are shared by all citizens, including people who are marginalised; and
- learn lessons from our programmes so that we can continually improve.

This policy covers both (1) how we count people, and (2) how the resulting numbers are presented and described.

Our approach

Overall principles

We have identified three key principles which guide our approach:

- **Accuracy and clarity:** we are accurate when reporting numbers, and clear when describing groups of people and the link they have with our programme/s
- **Openness:** we are open about any assumptions we make in generating numbers, and about any weaknesses in our methodology
- **Avoidance of jargon or generic categories:** we avoid using terms that are inaccessible or lack precise meaning and, instead of putting people into generic categories (such as "indirect beneficiary"), we say exactly what we mean (for example, "students attending the school where monitoring took place")

Our approach will also be in line with Integrity Action's **gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy**. This requires us to understand whether, and how, our programmes benefit different types of citizen, particularly people who are marginalised.

We have identified the three most important groups of people who benefit from our programmes. The approach to counting each of these groups is distinct. They are:

- Adult monitors (18 or over)
- Young monitors (under 18)
- People who benefit from the results of monitoring

It is also possible that in specific projects, other groups will be taking part and benefitting (such as government officials). In these cases the overall principles should be applied, together with the project's specific needs.

Counting adult monitors (18 or over)

Because monitors are the people we work with most directly, it is important that we count them in a verifiable way.

For every person who takes part as a monitor, when informed consent is given, we will aim to collect the following:

- full name
- contact details (most likely an email address or phone number, if available)
- gender
- disability
- age

We will also record when they began participating, and track their participation so that we know when they stop participating.

This information will be stored securely in accordance with relevant laws including GDPR.

Verifying each individual who participates should minimise the risk of double counting. To further minimise this risk, we may ask people who join our projects whether they have taken part in a monitoring project before with Integrity Action (and its relevant partner/s).

We will refer to monitors accurately and clearly. For example, we would **not** say, “this project had 100 direct beneficiaries”, or even “this project had 100 monitors” in the absence of other information.

Instead we might say “in this project, 100 citizens living in South Kivu, DR Congo, acted as citizen monitors”. Depending on the context, we might also expand on the gender balance in this group, etc.

Counting young monitors (under 18)

Some of our programmes involve young monitors who are engaged via their school. Here, we do **not** collect information for each young monitor in the same way as for adult monitors. Instead, we collect the following information for each **school**:

- the number of students acting as monitors in the school
- the gender split within this number
- potentially other project-specific measures, such as the number of students with a disability

This means **no** personalised information is collected. This approach will lead to numbers that are less accurate and verifiable than for adult monitors, and therefore it is important we are open about how these numbers are obtained.

People who benefit from the results of monitoring

If citizen monitors manage to “fix” problems they have identified, and secure improvements to public services, these improvements have the potential to benefit the wider community of people who access those services.

It is important that we estimate the number of people benefitting in this way, but it is equally important to be open about how we are calculating such numbers because they are vulnerable to significant inaccuracies.

We will apply the following approach:

- **We will be accurate and clear about who we are referring to, and the link between them and the programme itself.** For example, “students at the school where monitoring took place; they benefitted from improvements that were brought about by monitoring”. We must be mindful that effects from a programme may not always be positive.
- **We prefer the term “reach” to indicate benefits accruing in a wider population.** For example, “The programme’s reach was 550 students at the school where monitoring took place; they benefitted from improvements that were brought about by monitoring”.
- **We will be open about how the number is sourced or calculated and any weaknesses therein.** For example, the 550 students cited above may be according to the school’s official attendance records – but this could be an overestimate of the number of students who actually attend each day.
- **When feasible, we will seek to collect information on the distribution of gender, disability, and age among any wider group of people benefitting.** Such information may not be available. If it is, we will be open about how it is calculated.
- **We will avoid aggregating numbers of people reached unless there is a clear rationale for doing so.** This is to avoid the risk of double counting. For example, contracts for infrastructure projects often specify the number of people that the project is intended to benefit, and we ask monitors to report this number in DevelopmentCheck. However if we add the numbers from two projects happening in the same area, there is a strong possibility that at least some of the same people will benefit from both projects. (A more valid aggregation would be to add the student numbers of different schools, if we are confident that students are not registered to attend more than one school in that location.)

While aggregation is usually not possible, we can still represent scale in other ways, for example by calculating the *average* number of people reached per infrastructure project, alongside the number of infrastructure projects, and clearly explaining why these numbers cannot be aggregated.

Resources permitting, we may be able to commission a study that more accurately estimates the number of people who benefit from the results of monitoring in one location – however the findings of such a study would only apply to that location.

Responsible staff member for this policy

Head of Programme Development

Related policies and other documents

Data Protection Policy

Gender equality and social inclusion strategy