Goal of the Quality Assurance (QA) process at KHI

To assure that documents released by KHI maintain the desired level of quality, have scientific integrity and are free of material and methodological errors. This is done through control and observation activities at multiple stages of the production process.

Entry points

The following are typical project stages in which QA checkpoint are required:

- Project development (form P)
- Prior to data collection
- Prior to data analysis
- During and after data analysis
- Report outline
- Report final draft

In addition, the QATM will be consulted at key decision points or if there are changes in methodology or analysis plans.

Responsibilities

While the entire project team ultimately shares responsibility for a successful implementation of the QA process, some team members have specific tasks, which are described in this document. Team members with specific QA tasks include:

1. The project director (PD)
2. The analyst(s) involved in the data analysis (ANLS)
3. The QATM

Checklist

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
Project Stage: Project Development	
1. The project is based on a competent understanding of the subject-matter issues	QATM
2. The analysts on the project team have adequate statistical and subject-matter expertise	PD, QATM
3. The project's goal, research questions and hypotheses are clearly described	QATM
4. Research questions and analytic strategies are clearly specified	QATM
5. Policy questions are addressed with an analytic strategy that identifies the questions, data and information sources, and analytic methods	QATM
6. An analysis plan has been developed that is adequate to address the project's goals and research questions with the desired level of validity	QATM
7. For projects involving human subjects (or identifiable information about human subjects): a. Each analyst has completed human subjects research certification within the past 3 years b. Appropriate IRB authorization will be secured c. A plan to protect the privacy and confidentiality of research subjects and data concerning them is in place	PD
Project Stage: Prior to data collection	
1. For primary data collection (surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, etc.): a. The data collection tools include questions that are accurate, clear and unambiguous, and that have been validated whenever possible in other projects b. A pilot test of the data collection instruments is planned before data collection starts	QATM
2. For secondary data analysis: a. The data sources are credible b. The data sources contain information that can help answer the research questions	QATM

Project Stage: Prior to data analysis	
1. The data set's completeness and quality are adequate for the planned analysis	QATM
2. Data coding has been completed and documented, when applicable	QATM, ANLS
3. Clean-up procedures for the records will be implemented, if necessary, before analysis starts	QATM, ANLS
Project Stage: During and at the end of data analysis	
1. There is a clean, easy to follow, annotated statistical programming syntax or code that is fully executable	QATM, ANLS
2. There is a codebook for the data set used in the analysis	QATM, ANLS
3. The data entry, coding, programming and results have been spot-checked by a peer analyst	ANLS
Project Stage: Report outline	
1. The conclusions are supported by the results of the analysis	QATM, PD
2. Alternative conclusions, including possible confounding factors and reverse causality, been adequately considered	QATM
Project Stage: Report final draft	
Authorship	
1. The document includes a title and lists the authors	QATM
2. Authorship order is based on the degree of intellectual contribution to the study and material to be published	QATM
3. All funders are acknowledged using exact language required by grant/contract. Other acknowledgments reflect KHI practice.	QATM
4. Conflicts of interest, financial and otherwise, are disclosed	QATM
5. Protocols for the protection of human subjects, if applicable, are explained in the report	QATM
Text	
1. Terminology is consistent throughout the document	QATM
2. Discrepancies with previous reports from KHI or other external sources are adequately explained	QATM
3. All numbers in text are consistent with those in both charts and tables (if they do not match exactly, will need to adjust or explain)	QATM
4. Any calculations in the report (percentages, totals, etc.) that can be computed from other numbers presented in the document must match exactly; if not, make sure to include explanatory footnotes	QATM
5. Web links listed are valid	QATM
6. All references are listed and roughly formatted according to the KHI style guide	QATM
7. Heading structure is clear and consistent	QATM
Methods	

1. Methods are fully described	QATM
2. Statistical software to implement the analytic methods is identified	QATM
3. Results of statistical significance tests, when appropriate, are reported	QATM
Charts and tables	
1. All charts have titles that fully describe the content of the chart, as well as the time, place and persons that each chart refers to	QATM
2. All charts have sources	QATM
3. All titles, sources and notes are consistent across the document	QATM
4. The appropriate type of chart is used for the data being displayed (e.g., line graph for a time trend)	QATM
5. All pie charts in the document add to 100%; if not, make sure to include explanatory footnotes	QATM
6. All axes are labeled	QATM
7. The Y-axis includes zero	QATM