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A Harmonized Data Quality Framework for International HIV/AIDS Programs

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The work of the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan) is predicated on obtaining high quality information on program results. The Emergency Plan has set ambitious goals of providing treatment to two million HIV-infected people, preventing seven million new HIV infections and providing care to ten million people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children, in 15 focus countries. The success of GFATM's system of performance-based funding and of the Emergency Plan's results reporting rests on the quality of the programmatic data reported by programs.

While donors do not attempt to attribute program outcomes and impact (e.g HIV prevalence) to their individual investments, donors do require the measurement of program-level outputs or results (e.g. people served/reached with ARV, PMTCT, VCT, etc). Furthermore program-level data from countries are aggregated to measure the global response to HIV/AIDS. For example, in a statement released on June 13, 2005, the Emergency Plan noted that, "As of March 31, 2005, the President's Emergency Plan has supported anti-retroviral treatment for approximately 235,000 men, women, and children through bilateral programs in 15 of the most afflicted countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean..." Given that Global Fund and Emergency Plan programs work across countries and aggregate numbers globally, it is crucial to have data that are robust, comparable cross nationally and longitudinally.

This paper describes a model of harmonized data quality embraced by the Global Fund and the Emergency Plan. We describe a process undertaken to by the Global Fund and the Emergency Plan, with technical input from the MEASURE Evaluation Project, to develop and implement a global harmonized data quality framework and associated systems and tools. The three integrated tools include a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) self-assessment checklist, to be used at project initiation; data quality guidelines for measuring indicators, to be used by organizations reporting on program results; and a data quality audit tool to be used by external evaluators for periodic data quality auditing purposes. Challenges in conceptualization, development and implementation of the harmonized data quality framework and tools will be discussed.