GOAL

Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners

GOAL Data Monitoring Instrument:

Codebook and guidelines for local evaluators and guidance counsellors

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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1. Data Monitoring: Conceptual Framework

1.1 Introduction

The GOAL project has shown that guidance services can benefit from using a data monitoring tool such as the data monitoring instrument that provides structure to the guidance sessions and facilitates the collection of contextual and specific data. Such data help counsellors learn more about clients and address their needs with greater precision. A data monitoring tools also provides evidence for programme monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The data monitoring instrument created by the IOE evaluation team gathered detailed information about the clients on the GOAL programmes, enabling evaluators to track a range of programme processes and service user outcomes. The instrument was used each time a client had a guidance session, although not all fields were completed at every session, as some were relevant to first sessions only and others designed to collect exit data. Each client was assigned a unique identifier by the counsellor, allowing evaluators to link data for clients who participate in multiple sessions.

The sections below outline the conceptual issues addressed in the collection of monitoring data, and the means of addressing them. Note that not all concepts are addressed in all countries: the list below is comprehensive, and may thus include concepts not included in any particular country's data monitoring template. Please also note that some questions include routing, which means that a particular question may or may not be asked, depending on a client's answer to an earlier question. Concepts are numbered in accordance with the relevant sections and variable labels in the data monitoring instrument.

1.2 Section 1: Client demographics

AQ1: Client unique ID

Concept definition:

The counsellor will allocate to each client a unique, site-specific ID number. This ID number, which will be input by the counsellor, will stay with the client at all subsequent counselling sessions. This six-character ID consists of a two-letter country identifier, followed by a one-letter site identifier, followed by a three digit number determined by the order in which clients come to the service (see section 4.4 below for further details. All client data retrieved by local evaluators and used for research processes will be linked to these ID numbers rather than being linked to identifying details such as client name or birthdate.

Each visit by a client must have its own row in the data template. Therefore clients who visit more than once will have more than one row.

Concept rationale:

Unique client identification numbers will allow client data to be shared anonymously. Neither local evaluators nor project evaluators will be able to link client ID numbers to identifying information such as client name or birthdate.

Question type:

Counsellor input

AQ2: Follow-up contact

Concept definition:

This variable indicates whether or not clients may be contacted in the future so that they can be asked to participate in a follow-up survey or qualitative interview/focus group.

Concept rationale:

A follow-up survey or qualitative interview/focus group increases analytic potential by affording a longitudinal perspective on programme outcomes. Informed consent is required before clients may be contacted and asked to participate in a follow-up.

Question type:

Multiple choice, Unicode

AQ2a: Preferred method of contact

Concept definition:

This variable captures the client’s preferred method of contact for follow-up study. Client contact details should not be interviewed into the data template.

Concept rationale:

Survey response is typically increased if clients can be contacted via their preferred method.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

AQ3: Gender

Concept definition:

Gender is related to sex, but whereas the latter concept refers to human biology, gender refers primarily to socially constructed identities, roles, behaviours, activities and attributes.

Concept rationale:

Gender is a standard parameter in survey data analysis. Client gender may be systematically associated with response to survey questions.

Question type:

Counsellor input

AQ4: Age

Concept definition:

To limit the sense of intrusiveness, clients will not be asked their date of birth. Age will be derived from the client's year of birth.

Concept rationale:

Age is a standard parameter in survey data analysis. Client age may be systematically associated with client response to survey questions.

Question type:

Open response

AQ5: Target group

Concept definition:

A number of different sub-groups within the low-skilled population are being targeted by the GOAL intervention. In some countries there is only one target group, while in others there are several. For the purposes of monitoring data, the client's "target group" can be defined as the answer to the following question: "Why does this individual fall within the remit of this intervention?" As indicated in the data monitoring protocol, only one target group should be chosen for each client. For example, if the primary purpose of your service is to provide guidance to early school leavers, and a client is both an early school leaver and a job seeker, please select early school leaver.

Concept rationale:

GOAL expressly seeks to provide high quality guidance to individuals in groups that are typically overlooked or underserved by standard adult guidance provision. While some countries may serve only one target group, other countries will serve two or more groups, and it is important to gather information on target group proportions in those countries. It is also important to gather information on target group proportions for the project overall. This data is useful for descriptive and analytic purposes.

Question type:

Counsellor input, unicode

AQ6: Type of referring organisation

Concept definition:

Clients may be referred to GOAL from different types of referring organisation, e.g. employment services, social services, et cetera. The exception to this is the Netherlands, where clients are not referred to a stand-alone guidance service but instead receive guidance services within a range of other organisation types.

Please note that the list of potential referring organisations is comprehensive – that is it includes suggestions from all six participating countries. Because of this, you may see options that are not familiar to you. Please simply ignore these options if they are not relevant to your own local context. However, these options cannot be deleted from the list, as they will be relevant in other countries, and answer value numbering needs to remain consistent across countries for analysis purposes.

Concept rationale:

Networking and partnership working are key pillars of GOAL. Referral data may be useful for descriptive and analytic purposes, for example illustrating the relative strengths of referral networks and providing background information in the analysis of client outcomes.

Question type:

Counsellor input, unicode

AQ7: Previously received guidance

Concept definition:

The client is asked if he/she has previously received any career or educational guidance during adulthood, outside of higher education. The emphasis in this question is on guidance. While the term “counselling” is frequently used as a synonym of “guidance”, it is important to emphasise that the client should not include personal or psychological counselling when answering this question. The focus is on career or educational guidance.

The client is not asked if this was *formal* guidance, as the distinction between formal and other forms of guidance may be unclear to many clients.

Concept rationale:

Research literature and practitioner experience indicate that GOAL target groups are typically underserved by standard adult guidance services. This variable can provide information (from the client’s perspective) on the proportion of clients who have previously received adult guidance. It cannot provide evidence on the perceived quality of that guidance.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

AQ8: Residence status

Concept definition:

The client’s residence status in the country where guidance is being provided.

Concept rationale:

Residence status is a potential influencing factor in guidance take-up, objectives and outcomes.

Question type:

Multiple choice, Unicode

AQ9: Home language

Concept definition:

The language(s) which the client most commonly speaks at home.

Concept rationale:

Like residence status, home language is a potential influencing factor in guidance take-up, objectives and outcomes.

Question type:

Open. Multiple answers (i.e. more than one language) are acceptable.

1.3 Section 2: Education and employment history

BQ1: Highest education level

Concept definition:

The client's highest level of education ever completed. Education is here defined as formal education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions. Education includes apprenticeships and other forms of "dual system" learning. Education level is based on ISCED criteria and includes all types of education associated with obtaining a certificate or diploma. This variable focuses on education levels that have been *completed*, not merely begun. In most cases completion is signalled by the awarding of a degree, diploma or other form of certification. In other cases it is sufficient to have completed all required coursework or similar. (This definition is based on that found in the PIAAC conceptual framework [OECD, 2009].)

Concept rationale:

There is a large body of robust research indicating that prior education is the best known predictor of engaging in additional education or training, improving skills, and achieving higher labour market outcomes. Education provides access to further opportunities, but may also serve as a marker or signifier of other important factors, such as resilience, conscientiousness, self-efficacy and motivation.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

BQ2: Current involvement in education or learning

Concept definition:

The client's current involvement in any type of education or learning, whether formal, non-formal or informal.

Concept rationale:

Current educational status may be of relevance to client choices, background, motivation, opportunities and future steps. Many clients are unlikely to distinguish accurately between formal and non-formal learning. Clients may also view informal learning as important to their interests and/or ambitions. This question therefore does not attempt to distinguish between these three types of learning.

Question type:

Multiple choice, Unicode

BQ3: Working towards qualification

Concept definition:

If clients are currently engaged in education or learning, they are asked if they are working towards a qualification. This follow-up question allows researchers to distinguish between learning that is credential oriented and learning that is not.

Concept rationale:

Current efforts to achieve a qualification may be relevant to client actions, ambitions and outcomes.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

BQ4: Current employment status

Concept definition:

This concept includes a range of statuses spanning the domains of economic activity and inactivity. Within the domain of economically active, clients may be employed (full- or part-time), self-employed or unemployed. Economically inactive statuses are retired and inactive. The latter includes individuals who not in the paid labour market and who are neither retired nor actively looking for work. This could include full-time students and stay-at-home parents.

Current employment status is determined using Labour Force Survey definitions. The **employed** are defined as those aged 16 or over, who are in employment if they did at least one hour of work in the reference week (as an employee, as self-employed, as unpaid workers in a family business, or as participants in government-supported training schemes), and those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, if they are on holiday or on maternity leave). Note that unpaid family workers (e.g. those who are doing unpaid work in a family business but who are not receiving a salary) are considered to be employed.

The **unemployed** are defined as those aged 16 or over, who are without work, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start it within the next two weeks.

The economically **inactive** are defined as those aged 16 or over who are neither in employment nor unemployed. This group includes, for example, all those who are looking after a home or family, have a long-term illness or disability which prevents them working (even if they receive welfare benefits), or are retired.

Concept rationale:

Employment status is a key factor potentially influencing client orientation to guidance, the objectives of guidance, and the outcomes of the process. Many adults seeking guidance do so in order to improve their employment status, either directly or via education/training.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

1.4 Section 3: Goals, expectations and barriers

CQ1: Reasons for seeking guidance

Concept definition:

The client’s reason(s) for seeking guidance.

Concept rationale:

The client’s reasons for seeking guidance are of clear importance for guidance objectives and potential outcomes, and may also be related to other factors, e.g. demographic variables. Identification of these reasons for seeking guidance is relevant for counselling and for research purposes.

Question type:

Multiple choice, multi-code

CQ2: Self-efficacy

Concept definition:

Self-efficacy is concerned with people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce a given attainment (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is one of the most commonly used psychological constructs (see e.g. this google scholar page), and is used in a wide range of fields, including adult education and guidance, see e.g. these three papers. Here is a short video description of self-efficacy and related concepts, highlighting the particular value of self-efficacy.

In its shortest scale (the one used in this evaluation and in papers linked to above), self-efficacy is measured by three dichotomous items. The items are summed to create an overall index in which a high score indicates a greater level of perceived efficacy.

As noted in Section 4.9, when administering the three sets of statements that comprise the self-efficacy scale (variable CQ2 in the entrance data and EQ6 in the exit data) you may **print the statements on flashcards** if you feel this will help to improve client understanding. Counsellors may also clarify the meaning of the statements to clients should clients request this. In order that the data collected are as reliable and robust as possible, it would be helpful if you discussed each statement with the programme coordinator prior to the start of data gathering to ensure standardised clarifications are used.

Concept rationale:

Self-efficacy is highly relevant to the goals of guidance. Self-efficacy is both an important input variable influencing clients' potential success in taking the next steps, and a measurable outcome of guidance. In the research literature, higher self-efficacy at intervention start is associated with better outcomes. Likewise, interventions may have a positive impact on self-efficacy, which in turn can lead to improved long-term outcomes.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

CQ3: Attitude to learning

Concept definition:

The research literature providing number of synonyms and/or concepts related to attitude to learning, including learning dispositions and readiness to learn. PIAAC

(OECD, 2013) includes a six-item scale which seeks to measure attitudes towards learning. As a scale of this length is not feasible in the data monitoring instrument, GOAL adapts a single item from this scale: “I like learning new things.” This single item is also used in Lavrijsen and Nicaise (2015). To limit cognitive demands on clients, this item is phrased as a question: “Do you like learning new things?”

Concept rationale:

An improved attitude to learning is one of the “next steps” included in the GOAL evaluation indicators. Attitudes to learning are viewed by many researchers and policymakers as central to individual outcomes and educational focuses in the 21st-century (see e.g. Allen & Velden, 2012; Carr and Claxton, 2002; Lavrijsen and Nicaise, 2015).

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

CQ4: Learning objectives

Concept definition:

Clients are asked if they have specific learning goals. These goals may include achieving a qualification of any sort, achieving a specific qualification, improving their skills in general, improving their skills in a specific area, getting training to benefit their current job, or engaging in learning to benefit their career more generally. Clients may choose multiple answers. This question is only for clients who are seeking learning-related guidance.

Concept rationale:

A client’s learning goals are of clear relevance for counselling objectives and potential outcomes.

Question type:

Multiple choice, multi-code.

CQ5: Career goals

Concept definition:

The focus of this variable is the clarity of the client’s career goals, as estimated by the counsellor. This variable does not seek to list or describe those goals. The clarity of the client’s goals are defined on an ordinal scale as: having a specific job in mind;

knowing what industry or type of work he/she wants to do; or having no specific job or career area in mind.

Concept rationale:

Just as career goals are a potentially meaningful factor in a client's orientation to guidance, education and employment, so too is the clarity of those goals. Clients with clear goals may be more focused and/or motivated. On the other hand, overly specific goals may prevent clients from being suitably flexible.

Question type:

Multiple choice, unicode

CQ6: Barriers

Concept definition:

The client identifies the main barriers that have prevented him/her from achieving the desired career or learning goals up until now (the guidance session). Barriers may exist across a number of domains, e.g. dispositional barriers such as lack of interest, or viewing oneself as too old for educational or career development; situational barriers such as lack of time, support or financial means; and institutional barriers such as lack of courses at appropriate times, or lack of on-site childcare facilities.

Note that **while questions CQ6 and EQ4 are both concerned with barriers, there is a clear distinction between the two**. CQ6 is concerned with barriers in the client's life that have prevented him/her from achieving desired career or learning goals. CQ6 thus focuses on broader life issues. EQ4 focuses specifically on barriers that have prevented the client from taking the steps he/she hoped to take as a result of counselling. For example, when answering CQ6, a client may say that the reason they have never achieved their educational goals is that they were too busy taking care of their family. However, the client may note that her children are now enrolled in school full-time, and she is looking to improve her education. The client and counsellor may agree that an important step for the client would be to complete a language course. The client may enrol on that language course but drop out halfway through. Question EQ4 would be concerned with the reasons why the client did not achieve the specific objective of completing the language course. The answer to this question might be the same as the answer to CQ6, but it might be different – e.g. the client may say that she no longer has to spend too much time taking care of her family, but may cite a lack of confidence and a lack of transport.

Concept rationale:

Many clients will potentially face a number of barriers to achieving their goals. One typical function of counselling is to help individuals identify barriers to progress, and to develop strategies for overcoming these barriers. Data on barriers is likely to be useful for descriptive and analytic purposes.

Note that because the rationales for questions CQ6 and EQ4 differ, so too do the range of answer values. While there is a good deal of overlap between the two questions' answer values, those for EQ4 or more specific to taking the next steps identified through counselling.

Question type:

Multiple choice, multi-code

1.5 Section 4: Information about the session

DQ1: Date of session

Concept definition:

Date the session took place.

Concept rationale:

The inclusion of a date for each session enables identification of different sessions for clients who attend guidance more than one time.

Question type:

Counsellor input

DQ2: Type of contact

Concept definition:

Mode of contact, e.g. face-to-face, phone, email, text, et cetera.

Concept rationale:

Data on session type is useful for description and quantification of programme processes.

Question type:

Counsellor input, unicode

DQ3: Length of session

Concept definition:

Length of the session in minutes.

Concept rationale:

Data on session length is useful for description and quantification of programme processes.

Question type:

Counsellor input

DQ4: Focus of session

Concept definition:

Counsellor records the primary focus(es) of the guidance session. Please note the difference between “focus of the session” and “results of the session”. While these may prove to be the same in some counselling sessions, they may differ in others. For example, the focus of the session may be relatively broad, such as finding a job. The result of the session may be a concrete step leading toward that objective, e.g. help with CV skills. Using an educational example, the focus of the session may be finding a suitable course. The result of the session may be the provision of contact details for local colleges, or time spent looking at colleges’ websites.

Concept rationale:

Data on the focus of session is likely to be of use for descriptive and analytic purposes. These data can be used in describing programme processes and may be linked to other variables in analysis. Clients may not have a clear understanding of the primary focus(es) of their session; therefore this variable is input by counsellors.

Question type:

Counsellor input, open code

DQ4: Results of session

Concept definition:

This variable focuses on immediate (proximal) outcomes or outputs of the session. These may include assistance with employment related matters, providing information, addressing particular issues, et cetera. Please note the difference between “focus of the session” and “results of the session”. While these may prove to be the same in some counselling sessions, they may differ in others. For example, the focus of the session may be relatively broad, such as finding a job. The result of the session may be a concrete step leading toward that objective, e.g. help with CV skills. Using an educational example, the focus of the session may be finding a suitable course. The result of the session may be the provision of contact details for local colleges, or time spent looking at colleges’ websites.

Concept rationale:

Data on individual session results provide useful information on potential progress towards the “next steps” outcomes that clients are working towards. Individual sessions are essential building blocks in this journey.

Question type:

Multiple choice, multi-code

1.6 Section 5: Exit data

EQ1: Completion of the planned guidance session

Concept definition:

In this field, data is collected on whether the client completed all the planned guidance sessions.

Concept rationale:

In some cases, clients will agree a set number of sessions. Data on completion of this number is valuable for analysing processes and outcomes.

Question type:

Counsellor input, unicode

EQ2: End reasons

Concept definition:

The client may cease attending counselling for a number of reasons. For example, the client may have completed an agreed number of sessions. Alternatively, the client may leave counselling earlier than agreed. This may be because the client achieved a desired outcome, such as moving on to a course or gaining employment, or because of less positive reasons, such as not having enough time or losing interest.

Concept rationale:

Data on this topic will be useful for describing and analysing programme processes and outcomes.

Question type:

Counsellor input

EQ3: Client guidance objectives achieved

Concept definition:

In this question, clients are asked to think back to why they came for guidance, and to assess the degree to which they have taken the step(s) they hoped to. As client objectives may change over the duration of a multi-session counselling programme, there is no attempt to refer clients back to entrance question CQ1, which asks clients why they sought guidance. The aim of question EQ3 is to get clients' general assessment of the degree to which they achieved meaningful objectives, not to determine if they achieved the specific objective(s) listed in CQ1.

Concept rationale:

Achievement of client objectives is of central importance for the outcome-focused aspects of the evaluation.

Question type:

Multiple choice, Unicode

EQ4: Barriers

Concept definition:

Clients are asked to note the barrier(s) that prevented them from achieving their guidance objectives, or that caused them to only partially achieve them.

Note that **while questions CQ6 and EQ4 are both concerned with barriers, there is a clear distinction between the two**. CQ6 is concerned with barriers in the client's life that have prevented him/her from achieving desired career or learning goals. CQ6 thus focuses on broader life issues. EQ4 focuses specifically on barriers that have prevented the client from taking the steps he/she hoped to take as a result of counselling. For example, when answering CQ6, a client may say that the reason they have never achieved their educational goals is that they were too busy taking care of their family. However, the client may note that her children are now enrolled in school full-time, and she is looking to improve her education. The client and counsellor may agree that an important step for the client would be to complete a language course. The client may enrol on that language course but drop out halfway through. Question EQ4 would be concerned with the reasons why the client did not achieve the specific objective of completing the language course. The answer to this question might be the same as the answer to CQ6, but it might be different – e.g. the client may say that she no longer has to spend too much time taking care of her family, but may cite a lack of confidence and a lack of transport.

Concept rationale:

Data on barriers to the achievement of objectives are important for understanding exogenous factors influencing programme outcomes. These data will be of use in analysing GOAL, and may also be of use for future programme developers, as responses to this question may provide useful evidence regarding exogenous issues that programmes should take account of.

Note that because the rationales for questions CQ6 and EQ4 differ, so too do the range of answer values. While there is a good deal of overlap between the two questions' answer values, those for EQ4 or more specific to taking the next steps identified through counselling.

Question type:

Counsellor input

EQ5: Outcomes

Concept definition:

This variable collects the *counsellor's assessment* of what the client achieved or changed over the duration of the counselling process.

Concept rationale:

Some clients may achieve tangible, measurable outcomes by the end of the counselling process. It is important to capture these outcomes in order to evaluate the impact of the intervention. Due to a combination of micro- and macro-level factors, other clients may not achieve tangible outcomes. However, this latter group may take small steps that can contribute to longer term outcome achievement. Collecting data on a range of outcomes enables a clearer understanding of programme impacts.

Question type:

Counsellor input

EQ6: Self-efficacy; EQ7 Attitude to learning; EQ8 Career goals; EQ9 Learning objectives

Concept definition:

See CQ2, CQ3, CQ5 and CQ6.

Concept rationale:

Data for these variables is collected at two points in time: client entrance and final client session. This longitudinal approach allows for the measurement of change over time.

Question type:

See CQ2, CQ3, CQ5 and CQ6.

2. Administering the Data Monitoring Instrument

2.1 Overview

The data monitoring instrument has been designed to gather more detailed information about the clients on the GOAL programmes, thus enabling evaluators to measure target numbers and track a range of program processes and service user outcomes. The IOE evaluation team appreciates that in most countries we are requesting data be collected on more topic areas than was previously the case. However, in determining the data collection fields, the evaluation team have sought to reduce counsellor and client burden as much as possible. The aim has been to strike a balance between limiting counsellor/client burden on the one hand and meeting the requirements of a rigorous evaluation on the other. Such a balance requires compromise on all sides.

Measuring service user numbers allows us to evaluate the fourth intervention strategy: bringing guidance to specific target groups. Measuring client outcomes is part of the evaluation of the fifth intervention strategy – the quality of guidance services: service user outcomes.

DATA COLLECTION AND RECORDING

As early as possible, local evaluators should familiarise themselves with the conceptual frameworks (see Sections 3 and 5 of this manual) and ensure that guidance counsellors understand why they are being asked to collect these data. Getting counsellor buy-in is an essential part of collecting high quality data, with limited missingness and/or mis-entry. GOAL receives substantial investment from the European Commission: €1.8 million over the life of the project. This is complemented by an additional 25% in matching national funds. Evaluations are a central component of the modern policy and programme environment, and such funding would not be available in the absence of a rigorous evaluation design. Should the GOAL evaluation struggle to collect high quality data, e.g. through lack of counsellor commitment to data collection and entry, future programmes and/or pilots in this area may be less likely to be funded.

Monitoring data on clients is ongoing and will be collected throughout the life of the GOAL project. In order to include preliminary analysis of monitoring data in Wave One reporting (June to September 2016), an interim date (8 April 2016) will be set as a point for country teams to collate all monitoring data gathered thus far for analysis.

2.2 Consent

Each country will develop its own consent form specific to its service and local/nation guidelines on consent and data collection, storage and use.

2.3 Anonymity

Counsellors should emphasise that the data they are collecting for the GOAL project is completely anonymous: evaluators gather no information that will make individual clients identifiable and answers given will not influence service provided to an individual client. No names or other personal sensitive data are collected and all the data provided will be linked to any other data gathered by the GOAL projects or by other agencies only through an anonymised client IDs.

2.4 Creating an ID for each client

It is important that each client has a unique ID that stays with them for the duration of the guidance programme. You must create a six-digit client ID using the following formula: your two letter country code (i.e. CZ, FL, IS, LT, NL, SI) followed by A or B (where A is one of your programme sites and B is the other programme site) followed by a three digit number for the client. So the third client to have a session in the programme at the Velenje site (site B) in Slovenia would have the ID: SIB003.

It is essential that the same unique ID is used for the client each time they visit the counselling service in order that their data can be linked over time.

Local evaluators can create a list of client IDs and give it to the counsellors who then will assign the IDs to individual clients. In this way the anonymity will be increased and both local evaluators and the IOE project evaluators will deal only with the anonymised data.

2.5 Item relevance

There may be questions which include answer values that are not relevant to your context. For example, the list of potential referring organisations in question AQ6 is comprehensive –i.e. it includes suggestions from all six participating countries. Because of this, you may see options that are not familiar to you. Please simply ignore these options if they are not relevant to your own local context. However, these options cannot be deleted from the list, as they will be relevant in other countries, and answer value numbering needs to remain consistent across countries for analysis purposes.

2.6 How is the data filled in?

The data monitoring instrument has been designed as a simple Excel file that can be integrated (either wholly or by field) into existing data monitoring systems. If in some countries it is not possible to integrate the GOAL data monitoring instrument into a currently existing monitoring system, it will be necessary to transfer data into the GOAL instrument. It will also be necessary to complete each field in the GOAL instrument, even if that field is not in the programme's current monitoring system. In each country, **local evaluators must ensure that counsellors provide the information required to compete the data monitoring instrument**.

Each visit by a client should have its own row in the data template. Therefore those clients who have more than visit will have more than one row. Please ensure that each row has a client ID.

Where a question is not asked because it is not applicable to that client at that time point (for example, a question about career goals where the client is receiving educational guidance, or a question used to elicit exit data where the session is an initial [entrance] guidance session) then **an answer value of N/A** should be recorded in the data template.

Where data are missing because a relevant question was not answered or was overlooked then **an answer value of 99** should be recorded in the data template.

2.7 When should this be filled in and how often?

The data monitoring instrument captures three categories of data. The first category, which is devoted to client entrance data, consists of fields that will only be completed when the client enters the guidance programme (i.e. at their first session). The second category requires data to be entered at the first session *and* at every subsequent session. In the Excel spreadsheet, this category is indicated by red text in "Stage" column. We have also included a note in the "Comments/explanations" column. The third category – exit data – is only completed when the client attends their final session, or leaves the programme.

The information collected at entrance and exit has to be entered only once and can be copied into each row or can be left blank in the data spreadsheet. Please ensure that each row has a client ID.

2.8 Question order

For the most part, there is no set order to the questions. However, question CQ6, which asks about barriers to achieving the objectives discussed in questions CQ4 and CQ5, should be asked after the latter questions. (In many cases, a client will be asked CQ4 or CQ5, but not both.)

2.9 Who provides the data for each field?

The data monitoring codebook explains for each field which data are to be entered by a counsellor from information obtained during the guidance interview and what fields require that questions are asked directly to all clients or to specific groups of clients.

2.10 Flashcards

When administering the three sets of statements that comprise the self-efficacy scale (variable CQ2 in the entrance data and EQ6 in the exit data) you may **print the statements on flashcards** if you feel this will help to improve client understanding.

Counsellors may also clarify the meaning of the statements to clients should clients request this (“conversational interviewing”). In order that the data collected are as reliable and robust as possible, it would be helpful if you discussed each statement with the programme coordinator prior to the start of data gathering to ensure standardised clarifications are used.

2.11 Can fields be completed retrospectively?

There are some fields in which it will be more appropriate to input data after the guidance session has ended, from information noted during the session itself (e.g. focus of a session; results of a session).

With reference to variables DQ4 (Focus of session) and DQ5 (Results of the session) it is important that data on DQ4 is entered promptly during the session in order that the instrument captures any differences between the initial stages and the conclusion of the guidance session. Data quality will be higher if counsellors avoid the practice of entering the result of the session first, and then selecting a session focus that matches the result.

2.12 Exit data

On some GOAL programmes it is intended that clients will attend only one guidance session. In such cases all three sets of data (entry, session and exit) have to be collected during that one session. However, some exit questions should not be asked in this case. The data monitoring instrument indicates which questions do not have to be asked for one-session clients. In the data template, these fields should be coded as not applicable (-9).

Other clients will complete a whole guidance programme and their exit from the programme will be known. In such cases they will have one row for each of their session and the exit data will be collected only during their last session.

An additional group is those who attend one or more guidance sessions but who drop out or step away from the programme. For these clients, exit data will have to be entered as possible. Counsellor input questions can be completed, but questions that require interaction with the client will not be possible to complete.

2.13 Willingness to participate in further research

The form contains one field to record whether the client would be willing to participate in further research. Please explain to clients that this would involve taking part in a short interview. The aim of this interview would be to get clients' thoughts about their experience of counselling and any impacts of the counselling on them. This would help to improve the counselling service for future clients like them.

Clients who agree to be contacted should be asked what their preferred method of being contacted is.

DATA ENTRY

2.14 Codebook

There is no separate codebook for the data monitoring variables, as the information that would typically be included in a codebook is included in the data monitoring spreadsheet. In addition to a Data Template (worksheet 2), the spreadsheet includes information on:

- Variable IDs
- Variable labels
- Questions
- Range of possible answers with their numerical values
- Question route (all, only a specific group of clients, filled in by a counsellor)
- Stage (entrance, each session, exit)
- Type of coding (open, unicode, multicode)

This information is found in worksheet 1 (Data fields and description).

2.15 Data entry

IOE has provided a template in which to enter the monitoring data so that it can be analysed. However, we expect there to be variation across countries with regard to the processes through which data gets from its starting point – the counselling session itself – into the Monitoring Data Template. Different strategies may work better in different countries. For example, some countries may choose to use the evaluation Data Template as a standalone instrument, while others may choose to integrate it into a currently existing system.

We do not seek to impose guidelines on how this is done, as we recognise that many determining factors, e.g. IT regulations, will influence processes. We expect local evaluators to work with local programme sites to choose the approach that works best. Whatever route the data take, it is imperative that high quality data be collected by counsellors, and that the data be entered into the Data template by local evaluators. One of the responsibilities in Wave 1 national reporting will be to describe the data entry process in your country.

2.16 Data missingness and quality

It is important to keep data missingness to a minimum, and quality as high as possible. If counsellors are not being sufficiently rigorous in recording data, please speak to us as soon as possible so that this may be addressed.

To ensure that missingness is low and data quality high, it will be useful to check the data periodically over the next weeks and months, rather than waiting until it is time to begin analysis.

2.17 Open response

The data monitoring form includes some open text responses. In most cases this appear as a response category “other (please specify)”, but question AQ9 is fully open response. Local evaluators should transcribe any answers submitted and also translate these into English. In the reporting data template please include both an original and an English translation; these should be in the same column of the Data Template.