

CHISU Results in Action

Collectively mobilizing health information system stakeholders for data quality assurance plan development in Niger

January 2024

Background

In Niger, the latest reform of the health information system (HIS) began in the early 2010s with the development of a Strategic Plan 2012–2022. Key activities were identified and implemented through this strategic plan, leading to the establishment of the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) as the platform for managing the country's health data. But a major challenge around data quality persisted in Niger, so a process to improve data quality was launched in 2019 and included the revision of data collection tools, configuration in DHIS2, and stakeholders' training.



Workshop : Result of the SNIS strategic plan assessment
Bravia Hôtel, Niamey-Niger, 02/13/2023

Since 2021, Niger's Department of Statistics (DS)—with CHISU support—has begun the process of developing a new HIS strategic plan. This was preceded by the previous HIS strategic plan and a few assessments, including an assessment of the country's HIS using the HIS Stages of Continuous Improvement (SOCI) tool and an assessment of the national information and communication technology (ICT) system using the ICT assessment tool. These assessments highlighted the persistence of data quality issues in the country. Greater data quality assurance has thus become a requirement for Niger's MOH—and this has been identified as a priority action for the country's new HIS strategic plan 2023–2026. The vision of the new HIS strategic plan stipulates that in looking ahead to 2026, the MOH aims to build an HIS that meets national and international standards for data quality assurance.

On the basis of the HIS SOCI and ICT assessments, and in order to find a sustainable solution to the main data quality problems affecting the use of health data, Niger's Ministry of Health (MOH) proceeded to develop and implement a data quality assurance plan (DQAP)—which drawn up under the leadership of Dr. Ibrahim Souley, Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs, and the Director of Statistics, Dr. Aida Mounkaila.

Steps Taken



Opening ceremony of the workshop for developing the quality assurance plan 2023–2025 of the HIS, which took place in Hotel Aliya from February 27 to March 2023.
Credit: CHISU Niger



Data accuracy verification work (desk review) being done by Mme Sarifatou Adamou and M Idrissa Katahi, executives in Niger's DS/MSP from August 29 to September 3, 2023.
Credit: CHISU Niger

A workshop was organized to develop Niger's DQAP. The workshop was attended by all those involved in the routine health information system (RHIS) management.

A participatory approach was used by CHISU's Head of Governance during the workshop and took place in two stages. The first was a training session for participants on the basics of quality assurance, the distinction between quality assurance and quality control, and the four pillars of data quality assurance. The second part consisted of five phases that elaborated the DQAP and took the form of group work.

This group work, led by CHISU experts based in the four CHISU-supported regions in Niger, was participative and rich in discussion. These experts acted as facilitators and secretaries for each group. The various phases were as follows:

- Vision formulation
- Objectives formulation
- Intervention priorities
- Activities formulation
- Task formulation and activity planning

Each phase was followed by plenary validation. All working groups within the workshop worked on each phase, which ensured that everyone was involved and that a consensus was reached within each phase. At the end of this workshop, participants produced both a draft quality assurance plan and the plan's intervention matrix.

The draft DQAP is articulated by a vision that extends through 2025 with:

- Four objectives
- 15 axes of intervention
- 53 activities to be implemented
- A schedule of activities
- A proposed budget for implementing the plan

Expected Results

The DQAP is expected to assure health data quality in Niger, which will produce:

- Reinforced trust in HIS data
- Strengthened culture around data use for decision making
- Strengthened governance and leadership around data quality at all levels
- Strengthened technical capacities of data managers in terms of quality assurance
- Effective implementation of written data management guidelines (standard operating procedures)
- Reinforced compliance with existing HIS guidelines at all levels
- Greater assurance of continuity in HIS services
- Guaranteed monitoring, evaluation, research, learning, and experience sharing of the DQAP implementation

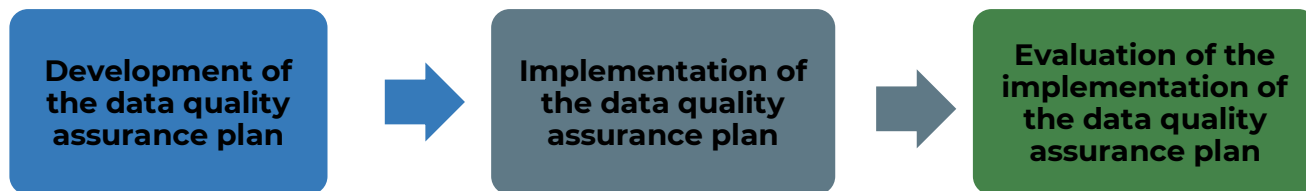
At the close of the workshop, participants were appreciative of both the methodology and the quality of the work. As Dr. Kairou Garba, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the Department of Mother and Child Health, commented: “This is the first time I’ve taken part in a workshop where I’ve been an active participant, where my proposals have been valued and taken into account, and where I’ve left with the feeling that I’ve contributed something positive and learned a great deal. Well done CHISU.”

Next Steps

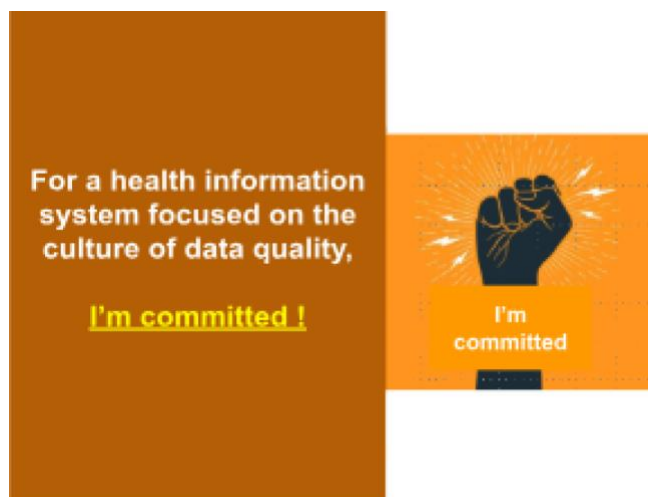
The DQAP workshop was well-timed since it took place after the various HIS assessments and real issues around health data quality could be taken into account. Additionally, the document was available before the end of the HIS strategic plan 2023–2027, which made it possible to integrate all DQAP activities into this plan.

The next steps will be to regularly monitor the implementation of the HIS strategic plan and (in collaboration with the DS) ensure that DQAP-related activities are integrated into the

various work plans of HIS partners. For example, in CHISU Niger’s work plan for FY 24, all planned activities come from the DQAP.



However, the implementation of the DQAP depends on technical and financial support and monitoring and evaluation of the actions to be taken by the relevant HIS actors. Another major challenge is stakeholders’ ownership of these documents that are developed to facilitate effective implementation of activities. Data managers will need to be mobilized around the culture of data quality, embodied by the slogan below formulated by the DS.



Slogan formulated by the Statistics Directorate to mobilize data managers around the culture of data quality.



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