

***HOW TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMME***

Facilitator Guide (FG4)

SUMMARYOF MODULE AT A GLANCE

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| **Purpose of module:** | To provide participants with an introduction to the essential activities of a quality assurance (QA) programme. The module introduces participants to the concept of continuous quality improvement (CQI) and the roles and responsibilities for implementing QA diagnostics. The module also provides guidance on planning, implementing and monitoring a QA programme a central level | |
| **Total time of module** | 3 hours 25 minutes | |
| **CONTENT OUTLINE** | | |
| **PowerPoint: How to plan and implement a quality assurance programme** | At the end of the module, participants should:   1. Understand essential activities of a QA programme 2. Understand the concept of CQI and how to apply it to TB diagnostic network strengthening 3. Understand important components to consider when planning, implementing and monitoring a QA programme 4. Conduct a situational analysis to determine the gaps in your QA programme 5. Develop an action plan for improving quality of diagnostic testing for your country | 2 hours |
| **Discussion Questions** | 1. Give three reasons why quality diagnostic results are important? 2. List six activities areas which should be considered when developing a QA programme? 3. List five activities that should be conducted when implementing the following at the central level:    1. Equipment maintenance & servicing    2. Training    3. Supply chain management | 15 minutes |
| **Exercise: QA activities** | Aim: to identify current practices and gaps and propose activities and challenges to implement QA activities | 70 minutes |
| **Handout and exercise/prac­ticals in module:** | 1. Worksheet (W1:PM4) 2. Handout (H1:PM4) |  |
| **Additional resources or references:** | * WHO. Laboratory Quality Management System: Handbook. 2011. Access from <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/44665/1/9789241548274_eng.pdf>. * Ensuring Quality of the Xpert MTB/RIF test- A practical guide (Part 1: Managing Xpert MTB/RIF Quality Assurance). Pre-publication 2016. |  |

Module notes

**Slides 4-7** Introduce the participants to what quality assurance (QA) is.

**Slides 8-13** Emphasize that the QA programme is functioning at two levels- at the **central level** (often called the programmatic level) general guidance and tools for standardized QA activities, as well as supervision of the QA activities and monitoring of the adherence to the procedures is provided to the testing site level. At the **testing site level,** there are additional responsibilities as well as reporting data to the central level.

QA activities at the central level include:

* Standardize policies & documentation
* Maintain & service equipment
* Conduct training
* Coordinate on-site supervisory visits
* Implement PT
* Strengthen the supply chain
* Monitoring quality indicators

There an additional three activities that are specific to the testing sites:

* Making the testing site safe and functional
* Testing quality samples
* Reporting accurate results

**Slides 17-41** Introduce the participants to structure of the remaining slides. Each activity in the ‘Plan’ and ‘Implement’ are discussed in detail. It’s important to emphasize that the situational analysis is conducted at both central & testing site (slide 23-25) level and that the objective is to identify gaps in the activities that are to be addressed in an action plan.

**Slides 42-47** M&E is dealt with in detail in a separate module and the concept are only introduced here. It is important to emphasize that in addition to routine monitoring of indicators, the progress of implementing the recommendations from the situational analysis should be measured (Slide 44).

**Slides 45- 47** give examples of quality standards (countries need to develop their own standards, and there may be numerous for each QA activity). The performance indicators in these examples are matched to the standard. Depending on what standards countries adopt, the indicators would be adjusted to measure these.

EXERCISE: QA ACTIVITIES

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| **Purpose of exercise:** | To identify current practises and gaps and propose activities and challenges to implement QA activities |
| **Preparation:** | * Work in groups of three * On the worksheet provided, for each QA component, list the QA activities that are currently being conducted in your country * What are the gaps in implementing these activities in your country? * Recommend activities to fill these gaps, and suggest what challenges may be encountered? * Who would you need to engage (stakeholders) to address implementation of the QA activities in your country? * Share your findings with the group |
| **Materials required:** | Full list of materials participant’s need   * Pens * Flipcharts * Worksheet P06 / one per group |
| **Total time of exercise:** | 70 minutes |
| **Feedback expected:** | Share your findings with the group |
| **Debrief:** | During the debrief ask the participants the questions below |

CONDUCTING THE EXERCISE

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| --- | --- |
| Read out instructions (shown above in “preparation”) | 2 minutes |
| Break into groups, give paper/marker to each group, and then groups should allot roles of note taker and presenter for end of exercise | 2 minutes |
| Discussion in small groups | 30 minutes |
| Report back to full group using flip charts | 20 minutes |
| Discussion questions posed to the group | 20 minutes |

Debriefing exercise/practical

As the participants to answer the following questions:

* Do you think some QA components are easier to implement than others? Give examples?
* What would be next the steps to implementation of the QA activities discussed in this module?
* Can you suggest mechanisms to involve stakeholders in the process?

Encourage participants to develop detailed plans with timelines to address the gaps identified during the exercise. Participants can also suggest which activities require funding, and where that funding may be sourced.

WORKSHEET P06: GROUP 1

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| **QA COMPONENT** | **QA ACTIVITIES** | **IDENTIFY GAPS** | **ACTIVITIES TO FILL GAPS** | **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING** | **STAKEHOLDERS** |
| **Standardized documentation** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Equipment maintenance & servicing** |  |  |  |  |  |

WORKSHEET P06: GROUP 2

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **QA COMPONENT** | **QA ACTIVITIES** | **IDENTIFY GAPS** | **ACTIVITIES TO FILL GAPS** | **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING** | **STAKEHOLDERS** |
| **Training & certification** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **On-site supervisory visits** |  |  |  |  |  |

WORKSHEET P06: GROUP 3

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **QA COMPONENT** | **QA ACTIVITIES** | **IDENTIFY GAPS** | **ACTIVITIES TO FILL GAPS** | **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING** | **STAKEHOLDERS** |
| **Procurement & supply chain** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Implement PT** |  |  |  |  |  |

MODULE ANSWERS

1. **Give three reasons why quality diagnostic results are important?**
   1. So that good quality results may be obtained which are accurate, appropriate and are not delayed
   2. To avoid dire significant consequences such as:
      1. Unnecessary treatment
      2. Treatment complications
      3. Failure to provide the proper treatment
      4. Delay in correct diagnosis
      5. Unnecessary diagnostic testing
   3. So that there is no increased cost in time and personnel effort and adverse patient outcomes
2. **List six activities for developing a QA programme?**
   1. Standardize policies & documentation
   2. Maintain & service equipment
   3. Conduct training
   4. Coordinate on-site supervisory visits
   5. Implement PT
   6. Strengthen the supply chain
3. **List five activities that should be conducted when implementing the following at the central level:**
   1. Equipment maintenance & servicing (any one of the following):
      1. Develop a list of all equipment at the testing sites
      2. Develop a maintenance schedule for equipment
      3. Select authorized providers to service equipment based on defined criteria
      4. Estimate budget needs and timing
      5. Identify who from the testing site is responsible for communicating with authorized providers and the central level
      6. Establish communication procedures in case of equipment failure
      7. Monitor testing sites to ensure maintenance & servicing is performed as per schedule
4. Training (any one of the following):
   * 1. Select appropriate staff to attend trainings
     2. Only use trainers who have been certified as competent
     3. Keep a register of certified users, advanced users and trainers
     4. Define and document the criteria for competency. Only training participants who meet the criteria should be certified as competent
     5. Perform competency assessments after training, and periodically (*e.g.* annually) thereafter
     6. Retrain staff periodically according to pre-defined intervals
   1. Supply chain management:
      1. Forecast reagent needs based on testing site consumption data
      2. Ensure sufficient budget for procuring reagents
      3. Select suppliers based on defined criteria
      4. Ensure integrity of reagents during distribution to testing sites
      5. Ensure quality of supplies received prior to distribution to testing sites (*e.g*. new lot testing)