SELECTING A SAMPLE SIZE

A valid sample for quantitative data is fundamental to data quality.If a sample is not designed well, the data will not represent clients, and the data analysis will therefore be less useful. When selectinga sample size, there is no universal rule (such as "5% of the population"), because it depends on the *degree of variation in thepopulation* (e.g., rural/urban, or different economic levels, or social groups, or business sectors). However, there is a universal rule for aminimum sample size from which you can draw percentages (e.g., "15% of clients are dissatisfied with their insurance product"), andthat number is 30 people. It is best to collect data on a minimum of 35 people, to allow for wastage.

If you are interested in analyzing results for different segments (e.g., rural clients, urban clients), then you need a minimum samplesize for *each segment*. Additionally, while a larger sample size may *statistically* reduce the margin of error, the quality of field work iscritical, and may be better controlled in a smaller sample. Consider consulting an experienced researcher to design your sample, especially when you are new to data collection.

Resources for choosing the appropriate sampling strategy include Grameen Foundation's *Confirming the Sampling Strategy* (written for the PPI but applicable to any social data), also available in Spanishand French.