

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 selecting a sample size, there is no universal rule (such as “5% of the population”), because it depends on the *degree of variation in the population* (e.g., rural/urban, or different economic levels, or social groups, or business sectors). However, there is a universal rule for a minimum sample size from which you can draw percentages (e.g., “15% of clients are dissatisfied with their insurance product”), and that 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 sample size for *each segment*. Additionally, while a larger sample size may *statistically* reduce the margin of error, the quality of field work is critical, 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 [Spanish and French](#).