

BEST PRACTICE

Data Quality: The Foundation of Effective Screening

RegBridge Africa Advisory | Thought Leadership Series

The Screening Effectiveness Equation

Your screening system is only as good as your data. A sophisticated screening engine working with incomplete or inaccurate customer data will produce unreliable results—missing genuine matches while generating excessive false positives.

Reality Check: An institution with 30% missing name data effectively has a 30% screening gap—regardless of how advanced the screening technology.

Quantifying the Impact

Data quality issues impact screening in measurable ways:

- **Missing names:** Cannot be screened at all
- **Missing dates of birth:** Reduced matching precision, more false positives
- **Incomplete addresses:** Geographic risk assessment compromised
- **Missing nationality:** Sanctions screening gaps

Building the Evidence Base

Supervisors expect institutions to understand their data quality position:

- What percentage of customers have complete screening data?
- Which segments have the highest data gaps?
- What is the trend—improving or deteriorating?
- What remediation programme is in place?

Prioritising Remediation

Data remediation should be risk-based:

- **Priority 1:** High-risk customer segments with data gaps
- **Priority 2:** Fields critical for sanctions screening (name, DOB, nationality)
- **Priority 3:** Fields supporting PEP identification
- **Priority 4:** General data quality improvements

Quick Wins

Before embarking on large-scale remediation:

- Fix onboarding processes to prevent new gaps
- Address highest-risk segments first
- Leverage periodic review touchpoints for data collection
- Implement data quality metrics in MI reporting