❓ Frequently Asked Questions

What GIS or other background knowledge/experience should I have to get the most from these mini-tutorials?

These mini-tutorials are intended for those who are familiar with the essential concepts of geographic information systems and have basic experience with GPS units, GIS software, and GIS data management, but who would like some hands-on practice with the technical steps and knowledge needed to become an effective GIS user.

Ideally, before using these mini-tutorials you will have taken one of MEASURE Evaluation's GIS-related online courses (links below), attended a MEASURE Evaluation face-to-face workshop, or completed some other formal GIS training, and thus understand both the value of GIS and the need for some basic training and hands-on practice with the tools used in GIS.

For more information, please see:

https://www.globalhealthlearning.org/course/geographic-approaches-global-health

https://www.globalhealthlearning.org/course/gis-techniques-m-e-hiv-aids-and-related-programs

What tools will I be learning?

These mini-tutorials focus specifically on the use of a Garmin hand-held GPS receiver, QGIS software, and Excel spreadsheets. However, beginning users of other types of GPS, GIS, and spreadsheet software will find much information here that will be useful.

What other GIS training and related resources are available through MEASURE Evaluation?

MEASURE Evaluation offers two online courses that are available through USAID's Global Health eLearning Center:

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"Geographic Approaches to Global Health," which is available online at:
http://www.globalhealthlearning.org/course/geographic-approaches-global-health

"GIS Techniques for M&E of HIV/AIDS and Associated Programs," which is available online at:
http://www.globalhealthlearning.org/course/gis-techniques-m-e-hiv-aids-and-related-programs

These courses are also available for download in pdf, Kindle, and e-pub format on the MEASURE Evaluation website .

In addition, the MEASURE Evaluation website also has training modules on Linking Data Using GIS, Spatial Data Fundamentals, Tools and Tips, and Hands-On Mapping Exercises available for download.

What equipment and software will I need to independently use the skills I learn after practicing with the mini-tutorials?

- Laptop or desktop computer running Windows 7, 8, or 10
- QGIS 2.x (free from **QGIS.org**)
- MSExcel (any recent version – 2003 or later)
- (Optional) A GPS receiver (Garmin, Magellan, Trimble, iPhone with GPS app, or Android phone with GPS app) and a cable to connect the GPS receiver with the computer

What is included in each mini-tutorial?

- Learning objectives
- Scenarios for real-world use
- A step-wise demo to successfully complete a task or series of tasks
- Guided hands-on practice (let me try it)
- Assessment (a chance to self-check your mastery of more complex tasks)

I have heard that ArcGIS is the largest and most established GIS software company. Why use QGIS?

QGIS is free and open source. QGIS is a user-friendly Open Source Geographic Information System (GIS) licensed under the GNU General Public License. It is available for free, with no private licensing obligations. QGIS is an official project of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo), which is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to support the collaborative development of open source geospatial software and promote its widespread use. The foundation provides financial, organizational, and legal support to the broader open source geospatial community.

QGIS is flexible. It runs on Linux, Unix, Mac OSX, Windows, and Android and supports numerous vector, raster, and database formats and functionalities. The latest release is QGIS 2.12. It is available in 44 languages (at last count) and its users span the globe, though it is managed out of Switzerland and is particularly popular in Europe.

QGIS is dynamic and ever-expanding. Its user base continues to expand as GIS becomes more integrated as an important tool for analyzing and visualizing data.

Products like ESRI's ArcGIS require licensing and registration fees. If you have an ArcGIS license, you should already have access to many of ESRI's own excellent training materials, as well as support from both the company and the large global user community (http://support.esri.com/en/). However, you may still find many of the concepts in these videos relevant and worthwhile, no matter which GIS platform you are using.

Where do I download QGIS?

QGIS is available for download from its website here: http://qgis.org/en/site/.

Where can I get more help using QGIS?

The documentation page on the QGIS website provides excellent information for both basic and advanced QGIS users. In addition, the Geographic Information Systems Stack Exchange is a particularly useful GIS online forum. It is a question-and-answer site for cartographers, geographers, and GIS professionals. It's 100-percent free—no registration required.

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