

8. After selecting the country or countries of interest, click the **Next** button at the bottom of the screen or the tab at the top of the screen to move on to the **Select File Types and Variables** section. Here you can choose the file types for merging and the variables you want included in the merged data file. The selections on this screen will vary depending on the study files with which you will be working. Select the file types for merging by ticking the corresponding boxes and then proceed to select the corresponding variables by moving them to the **Selected Variables** section of the interface. For our example we will select all file types.
9. Select your variables of interest from the list of background variables using the arrow buttons in the middle of the screen, moving the variables from the **Available Variables** list on the left side to the **Selected Variables** list on the right. All identification, sampling variables, and plausible values, when available in the data file type, are selected automatically by the IDB Analyzer. The program will always select all plausible values at once. If you want to select all available variables, click on the arrow-bar button and all the variables will be copied over to the panel on the right of your screen. When you want to combine background variables from different file types, you will need to select each file type individually as well as the corresponding variables. The selected variables will appear in the **Selected Variables** list. For our example we will select all variables from all file types.
10. When selecting the variables, you can search variables by variable name, or by variable label using the filter boxes (blue space between column header and list of variables) in the **Available Variables** list and **Selected Variables** list. You can also sort the variable list by name or location in the file. By default the variables appear sorted by location within the file.
11. Specify the name and the path of your syntax and merged data file under **Output Files**, clicking the **Define** button (this will change to **Modify** after you have selected a file destination for the first time). The file name can contain only alphanumeric characters (a-z, A-Z, 0-9) and underscores. It cannot contain any special characters and spaces. To avoid overwriting any of the original files, we recommend you save the merged file in a different directory from where the original files are located. We also recommend using a different convention for naming your merged file, although this is not mandatory.
12. Click on the **Start SPSS** button to create the SPSS syntax file and open it in an SPSS syntax window ready for execution. The IDB Analyzer will give a warning if it is about to overwrite an existing file in the specified folder. The syntax file must then be run by going to the **Run** menu of the SPSS syntax window and selecting the **All** menu option. Alternatively you can also submit the code for processing with the keystrokes **Ctrl+A** (to select all), followed by **Ctrl+R** (to run the selection). Figure 8 shows the selected file types, variables, and the file name specified for the merged data from PIRLS 2006.