

Terms of reference

ISWGHS Task Force on developing recommendations on a comprehensive national household survey programme

25 September 2020

Rational

Household surveys play an important role in meeting national data needs. A mapping exercise recently conducted shows that around one-third of all SDG indicators (80 out of 232 indicators), covering 13 different goals, can be sourced from household surveys.¹ Despite their crucial role in national statistical systems over the past decades, household surveys are still facing challenges in many countries. Among the identified challenges, two were particularly related to coordination - lack of coordination of international support and unpredictable funding of a short-lived and ad-hoc nature.²

Among the consequences of failing to meet these challenges can be inefficient use of the resources allocated for data collection in a country as compared with a more co-ordinated set of household surveys implemented over a period of years.

While the ultimate objective of ISWGHS is to promote a comprehensive and coordinated national household survey programme that is practical and efficient in all countries, it is important to recognize that national data needs may vary across countries and so are the level of statistical development and availability of other data sources that can fill data gap. In that context it is not feasible to define a 'one size fits all' solution. Nonetheless it will be valuable to countries to see concrete examples of a coordinated and efficient survey programme in practice, as well as being provided with guidance to support better co-ordination.

To fulfil the need for practical illustration and guidance the task force will start with a review and analysis of the national household survey programmes in selected countries and use this to draw conclusions on the practicalities involved and generate recommendations. This will touch on both internationally supported household surveys and nationally resourced/planned ones. Note that only surveys that are in the official statistics field and those that obtain samples from a reliable frame (e.g., area sampling frame and a reliable population register) will be considered. Surveys that are based on telephone frame will not be considered due to deficiency in the sample frame.

As a follow up the task force will work with a small group of selected countries to (a) derive a multi-year comprehensive and coordinated survey plan that can meet data needs for the SDG monitoring at the national level and (b) make plans and recommendations on short, medium and long-term actions to move towards the coordinated survey plan.

The task force will also work with a small group of countries that have a coordinated national household survey programme and identify key elements that the system is built on.

¹ "Out of a total of 232 SDG indicators, 80 indicators were identified as obtainable from household surveys", even if currently not all of them are collected using this data source. Achieving the Full Potential of Household Surveys in the SDG Era, Background document, Statistical Commission item 4c, 2019

² Report of the World Bank on improving household surveys in the post-2015 development era: issues and recommendations for a shared agenda. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc15/2015-10-HouseholdSurveys-E.pdf>

Such work will inform the formulation of a set of broader guidance notes on how to build a comprehensive survey programme that caters to different needs of national statistical offices. The work will also empower national statistical offices on formulating a coordinated national survey plan and foster further collaboration of various national and international players on household surveys.

Objective

The task force will work with a selected number of countries in deriving comprehensive, practical and efficient survey plans that fit various data needs and statistical capacity.

Output

Outputs of the Task Force include:

- A set of required information for a comprehensive and efficient survey plan, to be collected from the focus countries (e.g., data needs from household surveys (Including needs for disaggregation), regular and ad-hoc surveys being carried out in the selected countries including the topics collected and disseminated, definitions and questions used for key concepts within the survey, sample size, frame, precision requirement, dissemination of microdata, frequency of data collection, partners supporting the surveys, cost).
- leading the work with countries in assessing their data needs and household survey programmes.
- Assisting the drafting of a comprehensive, efficient and practical multi-year survey plan for each of the participating country, led by participation of national statistical offices, based on:
 - o National data needs and international reporting requirements guided by the SDG indicators framework
 - o Resources available at the national and international level (within members of the ISWGHS)
 - o Technological innovations that are feasible to implementThe plan should strive for harmonized methodologies such as concepts and definitions, reference period, and population coverage across surveys.
- Providing recommendations on steps for the focus countries to move towards a coordinated household survey programmes

Output of the Task Force will be presented to ISWGHS for their input and approval.

Duration/time frame of the Task Force

6 months, starting 1 October 2020

Membership

FAO, ILO, UIS, UNICEF, UNODC, UNSD, WHO, WB