



5th ICP 2011 Technical Advisory Group Meeting
April 18-19, 2011, Washington DC
Minutes of the Meeting

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I. Introduction

1. The Fifth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was held on April 18-19, 2011, at the World Bank in Washington DC. The aim of the meeting was to present the latest Executive Board decisions, discuss the proposals for pricing construction and education, and determine the approaches to be adopted for productivity adjustments, aggregation and linking between regions, etc, as per the agenda presented in Annex 1. In attendance were TAG members (see Annex 2: List of Participants), and ICP Regional Coordinators as observers. The meeting was chaired by Paul McCarthy, TAG chair.

II. Meeting Objectives

A. Objectives and Board's Requests

2. Grant Cameron, Manager, World Bank Development Data Group, introduced himself to TAG members, welcomed all participants and congratulated the new TAG member from the Peoples' Republic of China, Prof. Qui Dong.
3. Michel Mouyelo-Katoula, ICP Global Manager, highlighted the objectives of the meeting and explained decisions made at the last Executive Board meeting including the Board's requests to the TAG. More specifically, the Board requested the TAG to submit a technical note on the regional and/or global PPP impact, if any, of a country/economy's additional pricing of items from the Global Core list. Also, the global linking method to be applied in the current round should be presented to the Board for decision. The outcome of the above related TAG consideration, as well as TAG's view on the policy issues related to National Accounts, will be forwarded to the Executive Board in May 2011.
4. More generally, any other TAG recommendations on major methodological innovations should first be referred to the Board for decision before being relayed to the countries for implementation. Finally, regarding the ICP book, it should include an executive summary for policy and non-technical audiences and its table of contents should be submitted for Board review before the end of June.

B. Report from ICP National Accounts Working Group (INAG)

5. Chairman Paul McCarthy briefed the meeting about issues raised at the first INAG meeting in February 2011. The Global Office was directed by the Board to submit a report and had requested TAG members to consider the impact of GDP exhaustiveness and SNA-compliant approaches of treating some expenditure areas on countries' GDP levels, given that the ICP 2005 requirement of using exclusively official GDP figures should be carried over for ICP 2011.

Major Outcomes

6. The TAG was informed that three regions (Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean) have instituted formal programs to improve their member countries' national accounts as a result of the problems revealed by the 2005 ICP. These programs had two broad aims – to improve the accuracy (completeness) of GDP and to provide a firmer basis for estimating the basic heading expenditures required for the ICP. Independently of these initiatives, the process of revising countries' national accounts is ongoing and so countries regularly revise their accounts as they introduce improved methods and data sources. The TAG concluded it is impossible to isolate the effects of the different

influences on changes in countries' national accounts without a detailed survey of the countries to determine why their national accounts have been revised. The Global Manager undertook to inform the Executive Board of this outcome.

7. The meeting reaffirmed that:
 - Only official GDP estimates will be used for the ICP purpose as agreed at the first TAG meeting;
 - GDP estimates submitted by countries for the 2011 ICP should be checked against the official estimates in international organizations' databases;
 - No special adjustment for ICP purposes will be made;
 - Necessary assistance to countries should be provided within the framework of the official national accounts systems of countries, so that any improvements made would be an official improvement within their national accounts framework;
 - Any recommendation made in line with SNA requirements but not be implemented by a particular country, for whatever reason, should be documented in the metadata report in as much detail as possible.
8. In light of the significant revisions made to some countries' national accounts for 2005 since the 2005 ICP results were published, the TAG briefly discussed the need to revise the 2005 ICP results. The TAG agreed that aspects related to revising GDP after the ICP results are published will be addressed at the next meeting in October 2011.

III. Discussions and Conclusions

A. Construction

9. Jim Meikle, Global Office Consultant, presented the new approach for construction PPPs, laying emphasis on latest developments since the previous TAG meeting, including informal construction.
10. The TAG had before it examples of the price collection worksheets showing the specifications for pricing 38 different kinds of materials, 7 types of labor, and 5 types of equipment that would be used for the data collection for construction. The TAG also was provided results from some pilot work in several countries. These results suggested that each country should provide weights for the relative contribution of materials, labor, and equipment for each of the three basic headings (residential, non-residential, and civil engineering works). Discussions focused on the relevance of "model projects" and the use of mark-ups. Regarding the model projects, TAG members expressed their concern about how to select model projects and how weights could be obtained for items under the three types of inputs. The estimation of average percentage of inputs weights for 5 clusters of countries in each region based on real expenditure per capita was proposed as a fallback solution since it could be difficult for experts in countries to provide such weights accurately for individual countries.

Major Outcomes

- Basic heading PPPs for construction should be based on a simple combination of three groups of inputs (i.e. materials, labor and equipment) rather than allocating each input to model projects, or weighting each input in any other way.

- An unweighted CPD should be used to estimate PPPs within each of the three product groups for each basic heading. Each basic heading will have three PPPs—one each for materials, labor, and equipment. These will be combined using the respective weights.
- Basic Headings PPPs will be computed as weighted averages of the PPPs for each of materials, labor and equipment, with the weights being centrally determined for five clusters of countries in each region (although countries can provide their own specific weights, if available, rather than having a cluster-based weight applied).
- It may be necessary to adjust for different levels of labor productivity in the different groups of countries and some testing will be carried out by the Global Office.
- Prices are to be collected for 38 material inputs, 7 categories of labor and the hire rates for 5 types of equipment.
- Countries will be requested to confirm which resources are relevant for each basic heading;
- Information on mark-ups (profits, VAT, project overheads etc.), which will enable the PPPs for each basic heading to be adjusted to account for mark-ups, will be collected from construction experts. Ideally, mark-ups would be specific to each country but it may be necessary in some cases to estimate mark-ups for a group of similar countries.
- Regarding informal construction, a separate estimate has to be included in a country's national accounts to provide the value (this could be treated as an additional basic heading) and the PPPs would be based on prices for the major materials (unweighted) in the list presented to the TAG.

B. Data Validation

11. Fred Vogel, Deputy Chair of TAG, made a presentation on the lessons learned from analysis of the ICP 2005 Ring prices and made 6 major recommendations for validating the ICP 2011 Global Core prices. The recommendations are as follows:
- (i) Input to the global validation process will be the regional basic heading PPPs as well as global core prices classified as “important” or “less important” from the regional validation”;
 - (ii) Global core price validation should be in two parts - one using the global matrix of all countries, and another for global core prices validated by region;
 - (iii) After the global core prices are deflated into prices of regional currencies using regional basic heading PPPs, validation should be done within region and globally again;
 - (iv) Between-region BH PPPs should be computed and validated;
 - (v) After the global aggregation, for each level of aggregation, the Paasche-Laspeyres Spreads and indirect/direct PPPs from the GEKS aggregation should be reviewed;
 - (vi) Regional review and global review should be coordinated, with regional basic heading and aggregated PPPs being open for review until global validation ends.

Major Outcomes

- The regional basic heading PPPs should be a part of the global validation because the within region PPPs are used to deflate the core prices to a regional numeraire.

- Core prices that are outliers may be deleted in the global validation process if necessary and after review and consultation with regional coordinators (countries will be informed of any of their products whose prices are not used).
- No region should publish their final results before the global validation is completed, although this does not preclude preliminary results being released provided it is made clear that they are subject to revision following the global data validation process.
- A global validation task force will be established to review the prices and PPPs involved in the global computation with a view to ensuring the consistency of the global and regional comparisons. It would consist of staff from the Global Office, the Regional Coordinators and some TAG members.

C. Productivity Adjustment and Implications for Linking

12. Alan Heston's paper from the October 2010 TAG meeting on productivity adjustment, which was not discussed adequately because of lack of time, was presented again for TAG's consideration. The main issue was how to link the government compensation basic headings where productivity adjustments are made in some but not all regions. The method proposed in the paper is the "Country-Aggregation with Redistribution (CAR) method" that incorporates productivity adjustments for all countries in all regions using a global aggregation. Instead of the two stage method used to link basic heading PPPs whereby within-region PPPs (linking factors) are first estimated then multiplied times the within-region PPPs, estimates of global PPPs would be estimated directly in one global CPD of compensation by all countries other than singleton countries and those participating in the Pacific Islands comparison. Productivity adjustments would be applied to all countries in all regions. In order to maintain fixity, real expenditures would be summed by region and distributed to the countries to maintain the volume comparisons from the regional estimation. This process allows regions to retain whatever method they choose for the regional exercise while at the same time linking the regions in a way to improve comparability. It preserves fixity in the regions and would be applied after modifying the effects of using different methodologies in different regions, particularly adjusting wages for productivity differences between countries.
13. After he summarized the method presented in the last meeting, Alan Heston presented a table, in which a productivity adjustment is applied for all the regions, showing estimated effects of the adjustment on each region's share of global GDP. The data showed that the shares of each region are substantially affected. He recommended the Global Office further develop the method of productivity adjustment by determining the additional data needed to make the adjustments.
14. The regions could either use the global aggregation directly for these basic headings; or they could do their own regional estimation and use the CAR (global aggregation) results to link with the rest of the world. It was pointed out that the global aggregation could also be used for other basic headings where a set of global specifications is priced or measured. This includes housing (quantities), machinery, and construction.

Major Outcomes

- A global aggregation should be used for government compensation that incorporates productivity adjustments for all countries in all regions (even if a region's results were not adjusted.)

- Data to be used for the productivity adjustments should be derived or obtained by the global office with input from the regions.

D. Education

15. Alan Heston made a presentation on the estimation of education volume and data collection responsibility. He explained his analysis of volume indices constructed with a 2005 data set of African countries prepared by the Education Policy and Data Center, in comparison with 2005 ICP results. Estimation was for 30 African Countries that distinguished registration and attendance of primary level students; 29 EU countries were added where attendance and registration were assumed equal and then comparisons were made with 2005 ICP education volumes. In the analysis, he applied a CPD approach weighting by expenditures at different levels of education as a solution for existing data gaps.
16. The ensuing discussions focused on the impact and relevance of using PISA scores, the feasibility of activity-based index, the effect of differences in demography, and the attendance adjustment, etc.

Major Outcomes

- Adjustment for improvement needs to be confirmed with regression analyses.
- The impact of the volume method on GDP 2005 needs to be analyzed.
- Preliminary estimates indicate that the impact on GDP in Africa could be very large. Further testing is required and this issue will be considered again at the next TAG meeting.

E. Within region basic heading PPPs

17. Fred Vogel made a presentation on estimating within region basic heading PPPs. At the October 2010 meeting the TAG recommended the CPD method to compute within basic heading PPPs as in the 2005 round, but this needs to be refined to reflect the categorization of “important” or “less important.” The choices would be CPID where “importance” enters as a dummy variable or a weighted-CPD where different weights are assigned to important/less important products’ prices.
18. During the discussion, it was pointed out that since the notion of importance is based on the expected expenditure share of a product within a basic heading, using weights would be more appropriate. The weights of 3:1 were suggested for important and less important products respectively. However, some TAG members were concerned about the potential sensitivity of the results to the weights chosen and so suggested sensitivity testing based on 3 sets of weights (2:1, 5:1, 10:1) once prices from the global core list become available. The CPRD method should be used to test the validity of the data, based on the assumption that the products classified by a country as “important” within a basic heading should have lower relative prices than those classified as “less important”. The TAG may need to reconsider the methodology based on the outcomes of the sensitivity testing based on the global core list prices.

Major Outcomes

19. The TAG concluded that:
 - A weighted CPD should be used for computing Basic Heading PPPs within a region, with products weighted to reflect their classification as “important” or “less important”.

- The “importance”-based weights are 3:1 for “important” and “less important” respectively although some sensitivity tests will be run on a range of different weights (e.g. 2:1, 5:1 and 10:1).
- At the data validation stage, CPRD could be used in order to check how well the importance criterion works.
- If importance is not reported very well, CPD would be the fall back solution.
- Regional Coordinators’ should emphasize to their member countries the criticality of the “important/less important” classification.

F. Linking Basic Heading PPPs across regions

20. Fred Vogel made a presentation on linking basic heading across regions. He first mentioned issues observed in the 2005 round and the expected issues for the 2011 round, including sparse matrices, criteria for inclusion/exclusion of products, non-plausible linking factors, possibility of not all countries being used for linking in some basic headings, how to link singleton countries, and differences in the methods used to estimate within-region PPPs.
21. He explained four alternative methods that are potentially available:
 - (i) the method used to link basic heading PPPs in the 2005 ICP (although the link will involve all countries in 2011 rather than just the “ring countries” as in 2005);
 - (ii) a variant of the 2005 method using the geo-mean of product prices across the countries, proposed by Sergey Sergeev, to deal with the difference in the impact of regions caused by differences in the number of countries in each region;
 - (iii) the Eurostat-OECD-Hill method that is a more “global” (one-stage) calculation than the 2005 two-stage calculation;
 - (iv) a method (the CAR method) proposed by Alan Heston to deal with the comparability problem when not all regions use productivity adjustments (or use other methods that differ across regions).
22. Discussions and comments were mainly about the symmetry of regions (whether regional averages or all-the-country prices are used in the linking), treatment of importance indicators and the impact of importance indicators in the symmetry of countries/regions. The main issue is whether the price matrix for estimating the linking factors should include the deflated prices for each country or whether the geo mean of the deflated prices be used. If all prices are included individually, the use of the important/less important classification is straightforward; this is not so if geo means are used. Also, if geo means are used a product priced by only two countries is treated equally with a product priced by every country.

Major Outcomes

- The TAG recommended to retain the same method as that used to link basic heading PPPs in the 2005 ICP. The price matrix will include prices by country.
- The linking process will involve all countries in 2011 rather than just the “ring countries” as in 2005 (although singleton countries and the Pacific Islands will be linked separately using a “bridge country(ies) approach”.

G. Impact of pricing more Global Core items than other countries in the same region

23. Michel Mouyelo-Katoula explained the Executive Board’s request regarding pricing of more items from the global core list than other countries in the same region. Possible cases would include:
- (i) an economy may decide to price more global core items than those in the regional list;
 - (ii) a particular global core list item in a regional list may end up being priced by only one economy.
24. He also summarized the implications of this extra pricing at the national, regional and global level. First, the extra core prices submitted by one country in a region will have no effect on the within-region results because at least two countries must price a product.
25. One country (A) with significantly more core item prices than other countries within its region (B and C) could raise/lower the region in the linking process if the additional core prices are generally higher/lower than price levels for the corresponding products priced by other countries. This would affect the relationship between A and B and between A and C and also between B and C because of the multilateral process used to ensure transitivity and base country invariance. Simulations suggest this effect would be small in the case of a region containing a large number of countries.
26. It was pointed out that in view of the expected small effects, utilizing all price data available may be better than excluding the prices for any products priced by only one country. While more is usually better, in the ICP computations it is also desirable that the price matrix be balanced which means all countries should have submitted the same number of prices and with some equality of the number that are labeled as important. The data validation step will be crucial to ensure core prices are consistent with regional price levels.

Major Outcomes

27. The consensus amongst TAG members was that it is impossible at present to assess the impact of an economy pricing more global core products than other economies in the same region, because it depends on the deviation of those prices from the economy’s general price level as well as that of the prices for corresponding products submitted by other economies. The meeting further concluded that:
- The extra products priced must also be classified correctly as “important/less important”.
 - Any unjustifiable outliers identified by a statistical analysis should be discarded from the inter-region linking after review by the regional coordinators.
 - The Global Office would validate the extra items on behalf of Regional Coordinators; however, their impact and potential outliers will be provided to the regions.

H. Linking PPPs above the Basic Heading

28. Fred Vogel briefly summarized the two-stage method used to aggregate linked basic heading PPPs to higher levels up to the GDP. The input file was a matrix of 5 regional basic heading linking factors and the total regional expenditures in the currency of the regional numeraire. The aggregated linking factors times the within-region aggregated PPPs calibrated them to the global numeraire. The problem is that the results depended on the choice of the regional numeraire. Sergeev provided two methods to average the within-region expenditure shares to ensure base country invariance. However, a note from Diewert suggested the first method has additive features that create a “large-country effect”. There were no comments or questions about the second

method proposed by Sergeev and the TAG decided to move from a two-stage aggregation to a global aggregation.

29. For these reasons, the discussion moved on to consider two possible methods for the 2011 round: the Country-Approach with Redistribution (CAR) Method described above, and the Eurostat-OECD-Hill (EOH) method. Robert Hill, University of Graz, made a short presentation on the EOH method with an algebraic explanation. A paper from Erwin Diewert, who was unable to attend this meeting, was mentioned by the Chair. Both methods are very similar, differing only by how fixity is achieved. The CAR maintains fixity of volumes while the EOH keeps fixity of the PPPs.

Major Outcomes

30. Following the comparative discussion of the two methods, the TAG concluded that:
- The country-approach with redistribution, or CAR approach, should be recommended for linking regions above the basic heading level to give priority to the fixity of volumes.
 - Singleton countries (Georgia and Iran) will be linked using a bridge-country approach (Armenia and Turkey, respectively) at the basic heading and each level of aggregation so that they have no effect on the comparisons of the rest of the countries.
 - The Pacific Islands will be linked into the global results using a bridge-country (or perhaps multiple countries) approach.
 - The OECD-Eurostat method will be used for result validation.

I. Net Expenditures Abroad

31. At the end of the session, the Chair briefly explained the Global Office estimation of the impact of net expenditures abroad on PPPs. The key issue is that, given the current method of using exchange rates as a reference PPP for exports and imports, asymmetric treatments will arise somewhere in the expenditures on GDP. In general, the impact is relatively small but it is significant in a small number of countries, for example, where tourism has large expenditure shares. For improvements in the next round, specific domestic prices should be applied to imports and a special collection of prices for exports would need to be examined to remove the current inconsistency.

J. Urban-rural price differentials

32. Angus Deaton, Princeton University, and Olivier Dupriez, Development Economics Data Group, World Bank, have used data from surveys of households' expenditures in India and Brazil to derive unit values for many common household goods and services and tabulate them according to whether the households concerned are in urban or rural regions of their country. Angus Deaton made a presentation on their analysis of how much of the differences in unit values for similar products is attributable to differences in quality driven by differences in incomes, and how much comes from genuine differences in prices. They found that an important part of the urban/rural price difference comes from home-produced items and more developed countries will have urban/rural price differences in both directions.
33. The conclusion was that unit values contain useful information about prices, and that urban unit values are higher than rural unit values in large, lower-income countries, and that the difference is reduced but not eliminated by a simple income correction. The implication is that ICP price collections need to cover a sample of both urban and rural regions in participating countries considering the observed substantial price differential. In addition, it is important that "own

consumption” be included in the national accounts and the underlying prices included in the estimation of the national annual average prices.

K. Reference PPPs

34. Derek Blades presented details of some work on reference PPPs for a chapter of the ICP Book. The decision about when to use reference PPPs rather than collecting prices for a Basic Heading must be made by the countries in each region in consultation with the Regional Coordinators. It depends on the resources available for price collection and on the importance of the BHs.
35. It was recommended that regions should collect prices for certain basic headings that are currently deflated using reference PPPs, and that reference PPPs for services and goods should not be mixed. “Specific” reference PPPs should be a better choice than “neutral” ones, reference PPPs should be avoided for dwellings, and validation should be required for reference PPPs.

Major Outcomes

36. The global office recommends regional coordinators review tables of concordance in terms of applying existing PPPs to basic headings currently deflated by reference PPPs, from the viewpoint of neutrality and also from the viewpoint of distinguishing between goods and services. The TAG further noted that:
 - In principle, reference PPPs need to be harmonized across regions, since there is no shared mapping among regions. If it is not possible in any specific case, the reason needs to be examined.
 - A validation process for reference PPPs needs to be discussed.

L. Issues in presenting and linking two comparisons

37. Yuri Dhikanov made a presentation on comparing two sets of PPP-based data from different reference years, using the case of the Asia-Pacific PPP results of 2005 and 2009. One possible method of comparing such datasets across time would be to express all real expenditures in both years in terms of one year’s (e.g. 2005) regional average. In this way, consistency would be maintained within a year and also across time. The difficult issue is choosing a link between the regional average for each of the two years so that they can be expressed on a consistent basis.
38. Andrey Kosarev, CISSTAT, made a short presentation on obtaining interim PPP Estimates, taking into consideration the rising demands from countries for interim estimates. He explained his suggested formula and its limitations, and concluded that the extrapolation of the PPPs basing on the GDP deflators ratio method is flawed because of the very restrictive assumptions underlying this method. He stressed the need for quick replacement of such extrapolations by official benchmark data once they become available.

M. Closing

39. The Chair reiterated the key issues to be reported to the ICP Executive Board, the construction PPP method, productivity adjustment, the methods for basic heading PPPs within region and across regions, the method for linking PPPs above basic heading, as well as the validation task force to be established to edit the initial global results.

40. The “eScoop” system, an online discussion group through the World Bank’s external social network services, was presented by Virginia Romand. It will henceforth be used to facilitate active discussion between TAG members.
41. The next TAG meeting is proposed to be held on October 3-4, 2011 with its agenda including the revision policy, presenting time series of ICP data and the expected difference between ICP 2011 and World Development Indicator extrapolations. The method to impute for missing countries needs to be considered.

IV. Annex 1: Agenda

Day 1: April 18th, 2011

Room C2-100	Sessions
08:30 – 09:00	Check-in and breakfast
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome comments and meeting objectives Reports from working groups
09:30 – 11:00	Construction Informal Construction Grossing up factors Linking the ICP with the Eurostat – OECD region
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee
11:15 – 12:15	Education
12:15 – 12:45	Health
12:45 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:45	Data Validation
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee
16:00 – 18:00	PPP Computation Working Group Meeting

Day 2: April 19th, 2011

Room C8-150	Sessions
09:00 – 10:30	Linking Basic Heading PPPs across regions
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee
10:45 – 12:30	Linking Basic Heading PPPs above the Basic Heading Two vs. one stage aggregation
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Productivity Adjustment
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee
15:45 – 14:30	Intra-country price variation/ Urban- Rural differentials
14:30 – 17:00	Reference PPPs
17:00 – 18:00	Closing Remarks

V. Annex 2: List of Participants

#	Name	Organization
TAG Members and Consultants		
1	McCarthy, Paul	Chair
2	Vogel, Frederic A.	Deputy Chair
3	Cameron, Grant James	Manager, World Bank DECDG
4	Mouyelo-Katoula, Michel	ICP Global Manager
5	Biggeri, Luigi	University of Florence
6	Blades, Derek	World Bank Consultant
7	Deaton, Angus	Princeton University
8	Dibley, Richard	World Bank Consultant
9	Dikhanov, Yuri	Senior Statistician, World Bank DECDG
10	Douglas, May Julian	University of KwaZulu-Natal
11	Heston, Alan	University of Pennsylvania
12	Hill, Robert	University of Graz
13	Koechlin, Francette	OECD
14	Konijn, Paulus	Eurostat
15	Meikle, Jim	World Bank Consultant
16	Rao, Prasada	University of Queensland
17	Roberts, David	World Bank Consultant
18	Sergeev, Sergey	Statistics Austria
19	Timmer, Marcel	University of Groningen
Observers		
20	Aten, Bettina	Bureau of Economic Analysis
21	Dong, Qui	Beijing Normal University
22	Dorin, Federico	UN-ECLAC
23	Gonzalez, Luis	UN-ECLAC
24	Kosarev, Andrey	CIS-STAT
25	Kouakou, Koffi Marc	African Development Bank

#	Name	Organization
26	Kumar, Sanjay	India Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
27	Kuznetsov, Vasily	ROSSTAT
28	Maritz, Athol	Australian Bureau of Statistics
29	Mead, Dave	United States Bureau of Labour Statistics
30	Nshimyumuremyi, Adalbert	African Development Bank
31	Palanyandy, Chellam	Asian Development Bank
32	Perez, Ernestina	UN-ECLAC
33	Savio, Giovanni	UN-ESCWA
34	Skaini, Majed	UN-ESCWA
35	Ting, Shi	ICP Division, International Statistical Information Center, National Bureau of Statistics of China
ICP Global Office		
36	Abels, Miglena	
37	Djayeola, Biokou Mathieu	
38	Jerbi, Imededdine	
39	Lee, Min Ji	
40	Min, Kyung Sam	
41	Rissanen, Marko Olavi	
42	Romand, Virginia	
43	Yamanaka, Mizuki	