

**ICP REGIONAL COORDINATORS' MEETING**  
**ICP Asia Pacific: Regional Report**

Washington, D.C., U.S.A

**I. Introduction**

This report covers accomplishments of ICP Asia Pacific since the last Regional Coordinators' Meeting held in Washington, D.C. on 17-21 May 2004.

**II. Recent Developments**

a) *Election of new ICP Asia Pacific RAB Chair and acceptance of Philippines as new RAB member*

Mr. Frederick Ho, Commissioner of the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, was unanimously elected as the new RAB chair, which had remained vacant following the resignation of Mr. Paul Cheung, Chief Statistician of the Department of Statistics, Singapore.

The RAB unanimously approved the membership of the Philippines to the RAB of ICP Asia Pacific, substituting for Singapore, which had opted out of the RAB. The Administrator of its National Statistics Office represents the Philippines.

b) *Finalization and completion of the Regional Product List for Household Consumption*

The regional product lists for household consumption for phase 1 (food, clothing and footwear) containing 310 products; and for phase 2 (housing; electricity, gas & water; education, health, transport services, etc.) with 340 products have been finalized in January and July, respectively. The household consumption list with a total of 650 products was based on the submission of the countries and was reviewed by Jinsook Lee and Sultan Ahmad. Any deviations from the list will have to be reported by the countries based on the results of the initial round of the ICP price surveys.

c) *Preparation for ICP Price Surveys*

*In-country training for price surveys and ToolPack Installation*

The countries have started to conduct their in-country training for price collectors for the ICP price surveys that will commence in October. PRC and Vietnam have already conducted their local trainings with the assistance of the ADB and the World Bank for the ToolPack training.

As of September 24, this is the status of the ToolPack training.

Countries that have been given specialized ToolPack training from WorldBank	India, PRC & the Philippines
Countries that have been given ToolPack training by ADB	Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal & Vietnam
Countries scheduled for ToolPack training in September/October	Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR and Maldives

Countries still undecided	Taipei and Thailand
Countries for which no assistance is requested for ToolPack training	Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Iran & Macao

The Regional Coordinator will be sending out computers (CPUs only) to 17 countries and which will already be installed with the latest version of the ToolPack. The computers were delivered to ADB on 22 September.

A number of countries were also translating the product list into their national language. This, however, implies that some countries will not be using ToolPack to print their price collection forms since the English version of ToolPack will not be compatible with the localized (translated) versions of the product list.

#### Submission of Sampling Plans for Price Surveys

Seventeen of the twenty-three participating countries have submitted their sampling plans for the price surveys including the frequency of their price surveys, which, however, covers only items for food, clothing and footwear. The rest of the household consumption product list was not yet available at the time that the countries were requested to send their sampling plans. These sampling plans are being reviewed and the countries will be advised by the end of September. Reminders to the other six countries have been sent.

Most of the countries planned to do monthly price collection for food and quarterly price collection for clothing and footwear.

#### Level of details for the submission of price data

The GO had earlier suggested a minimum requirement for countries, to submit average prices, minimum and maximum prices including standard deviations. However, the RAB recognized that submission of average prices would eliminate the possibility of matching locations and outlets, which are useful for poverty studies.

Since it was noted that individual prices would be extremely useful in understanding price variations, it was agreed that countries would submit individual prices, except when one or only two quotations are available, to preserve confidentiality. It was also noted that the countries would have to trust the regional coordinator. Related to this, the regional coordinator needs to work out a data access procedure with the countries especially for those where data confidentiality is an issue.

#### Preparation of the "Practical Guidebook for Conducting ICP Price Surveys"

The Regional Coordinator has prepared the first draft of the "Practical Guidebook for Conducting ICP Price Surveys". Comments received from the ABS Product Development Group indicated that the document needed to be shorter. It was further suggested that a document on "Frequently Asked Questions on the ICP" (FAQs) would be very useful. The Regional Coordinator has also prepared the first draft of the FAQs. Both of these documents are now being reviewed by the ADB consultant.

#### d) *GDP weights*

In preparation for the computation of preliminary PPPs, the Regional Coordinator has requested national accounts experts in the participating countries to send 2003 GDP

expenditure weights by October 2004. In its third meeting held in July, the ICP Asia Pacific RAB recommended that the countries will still be requested to submit 2003 GDP Expenditure weights as originally planned, in spite of the TAG's recommendation to move the reference year from 2004 to 2005. The availability of 2003 GDP weights will allow for preliminary calculations and identifying problems/issues as early as possible in 2005. The estimation of 2003 weights was also deemed to be a useful exercise for the countries in providing the 2004 and 2005 weights. It is also anticipated that 2004 weights will be available yet in 2006 for a number of countries, and therefore, no preliminary PPP computations could be made in 2005 without the 2003 weights.

The Regional Coordinator expects to do some preliminary PPP estimates by the first semester of 2005 using two quarters of price data from the countries and 2003 GDP weights.

A number of countries have already responded that they can provide the 2003 weights within the year. In addition, four countries have sent at least 2000 GDP weights.

e) *Approval of the methodology for the computation of Poverty PPPs*

The RAB strongly endorsed the proposed framework for the estimation of poverty PPPs while noting that item specifications as well as markets for the poor would be different from those in the regular ICP. As such, integration of poverty PPPs with the regular ICP is not desirable and should not be attempted.

f) *Advocacy workshop and activities*

The RAB agreed to have more serious discussions on what to present; who to invite; and other relevant matters for the advocacy workshop to reach the desired target audience (high-level officials in planning and finance ministries) and create the impact that the workshop seeks to achieve.

g) *Preparation of the product list for pharmaceutical products*

The countries have been requested to provide their comments on the list provided by the GO. The seven countries that have sent their comments reported on the other types and dosage of pharmaceutical products available and the products that are not available in their countries. Vietnam reported that it could only price 16 out of 30 pharmaceutical products (Annex 1). Artesunate, Indinavir and Nevirapine were among those commonly unavailable in the countries that have sent their comments.

Bhutan, meanwhile, has informed us that medicines are given free by the government and would, therefore, find it difficult to give transaction prices of pharmaceuticals as required by ICP.

#### **IV. Issues and Concerns**

a) *Need for a conversion program between standardized Excel-based survey forms and ToolPack*

The feedback received by the Regional Coordinator from the countries points to their need for a standardized survey form (Excel) which can be converted into ToolPack and vice versa. The countries which will not be using ToolPack survey forms in English will be required to print survey forms from PCM, then translate survey forms into their local language and print with Excel. This process requires a conversion program from

Excel to ToolPack and which would facilitate price data inputting in English as required by ToolPack.

b) *Inability to print translated product lists from the PCM of ToolPack*

For countries that need to translate the product list into their local language, they will have to design their own system for printing the price survey forms to reflect their translated product lists since the English version of the ToolPack will not print the translated product list particularly for those countries with their local alphabets. After data collection has been completed, the national coordinator will be required to centralize data input using ToolPack.

b) *Completeness of the product images*

Product images for the household consumption product list have not been completed.

Requests for product images were made to the countries. Unfortunately, not all of the countries were able to provide images and some of the images which were provided were not clear enough. The Regional Coordinator decided to withhold releasing the images to the countries until a thorough review would have been made by the ICP Asia Pacific staff, to avoid misleading price collectors.

c) *Errors in the bridge output file*

Errors have been found in the bridge output files by the ABS Product Development Team. The errors were related to mapping between product characteristic names and product characteristic values. The bridge output files have been sent for correction to Jinsook Lee. The Regional Coordinator is awaiting the corrections for the ToolPack upload before the price surveys can start in October.

d) *Product list upload to ToolPack*

The Regional Coordinator will be installing and testing ToolPack for the 17 countries which will be given CPUs. The ADB hopes to receive the corrected ToolPack upload files to be pre-uploaded into the computers before being sent to the countries. However, for the countries which will not be receiving computers from ADB, they will be required to upload the corrected files on their own.

During the training exercises, problems have been found in the upload process in spite of the computers meeting all the technical requirements for ToolPack installation. In some computers the problem was not encountered in the upload process but in the data management process in PAM. These have been reported to the Global Office.

e) *Data transmission*

There has been no training and documentation on data transmission between country to Regional Coordinator and between Regional Coordinator to the GO. What is the process of data transmission and how should it be done? We believe further ToolPack training is required in this aspect.

f) *Second component of ToolPack*

The data processing, validating, editing, analysis and aggregation functions of ToolPack are not yet available. When will these components be available and have they been adequately tested? When will training and materials be provided? How will these be installed?

## Annex 1

Core List of Medicines	Fiji		Iran		Maldives		Vietnam		Sri Lanka	
	Availability	Dosage	Availability	Dosage	Availability	Dosage	Availability	Dosage		
<b>Generic name</b>										
Aciclovir							no			
Amitriptyline		25mg					Ampicillin			
Amoxicillin		250 mg					no			
Artesunate	no		no		no			100 mg	no	
Atenolol		50mg					no			
Beclometasone		100 mcg					no			
Captopril								25 mg		
Carbamazepine		200 mg					no			
Ceftriaxone		1 g					no			
Ciprofloxacin		500 mg					no			
Co-trimoxazole								8+40 mg		
Diazepam		5 mg					no			
Diclofenac			Diclofenac Soduim	25 mg				25 mg		
Fluconazole				50 - 500 mg			Chlorphen			
Fluoxetine								20 mg		
Fluphenazine decanoate		25 mg/ml						25 mg		
Glibenclamide		5 mg						5 mg		
Hydrochlorothiazide		25 mg					Nitrimet			
Indinavir			no		no			400 mg	no	
Losartan			Losartan potassium	50 mg				50 mg		
Lovastatin								20 mg	no	
Metformin		500 mg						500 mg		
Nevirapine			no		no		no		no	
Nifedipine retard		20 mg	Nifedipine	10 or 30 mg				20 mg		
Omeprazole								20 mg		
Phenytoin		100 mg	no				no			
Pyrimethamine with sulfadoxine	no		Pyrimethamin	25 mg				500+25 m		
Ranitidine		300 mg						150 mg		
Salbutamol		100 mcg					no			
Zidovudine		100 mg			no			100 mg	no	