



**INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON PROGRAM
TASK FORCES TO SUPPORT THE RESEARCH AGENDA**

March 2018

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I. Background

The 47th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), held in March 2016, discussed the future of the International Comparison Program (ICP), in light of the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair (FOC) group based on their evaluation of the 2011 round of the ICP.

The UNSC instituted the ICP as a permanent element of the global statistical work program. Starting from 2017, the program will be conducted at more frequent intervals. The aspiration is to work towards implementing the ICP based on a “rolling survey approach”. Rolling surveys over a cycle decreases the burden on national implementing agencies and allows flexibility in conducting the surveys according to the specific conditions of participating countries.

The ICP Governing Board, in its inaugural meeting in November 2016, adopted the ICP Governance Framework and established a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to guide the program’s research and methodological developments.

The ICP TAG is a technical body, which:

- a. assures methodological soundness and overall quality of the PPP estimates;
- b. ensures transparency of the PPP estimation process; and
- c. facilitates the establishment of a permanent and more frequent ICP rounds.

The TAG, in collaboration with the ICP Inter-Agency Coordination Group (IACG), sets forth a technical research agenda to inform future ICP comparisons. Consistent with the UNSC recommendations, the short-term technical research agenda will focus on methodological aspects related to building PPP time series and fine-tuning established methods and procedures to improve the quality of the estimates. Innovation is a cross-cutting theme across all research agenda topics, to ensure that new approaches, technologies, and data sources are utilized to the extent possible in the production of PPPs.

Consistent with the Governance Framework approved by the Governing Board, the TAG forms Task Forces on specific topics and invites recognized experts on the practical application of index numbers, PPPs, price statistics and national accounts to take part in them, as needed, to develop concrete proposals to address the various research agenda items and support the computation of ICP results.

As encouraged by the UNSC, the IACG and TAG also work closely with the standing international working groups on price statistics and national accounts, both to widen the consultation on methodological development and to broaden country participation and engagement in the process.

The Global ICP Unit at the World Bank supports the work of the Task Forces, and provides the link between the ICP governance bodies and the standing working groups on price statistics and national accounts.

II. Task Forces Functions, Membership and Work Modality

The TAG will establish Task Forces to undertake research into specific technical issues identified in the ICP research agenda and support the computation of ICP results. Each Task Force will focus on a specific problem and it will be provided with a set of terms of reference covering:

- a. Background to the problem;
- b. Clear statement of the technical issues to be considered by the Task Force;
- c. List of deliverables in the form of a report, recommendations and operational guidelines; and
- d. Timeframe for the completion of the work by the Task Force.

Membership

- a. The Task Forces are formed of experts and/or practitioners in the field of index numbers, PPPs, price statistics and national accounts. The size of each Task Force will depend on the complexity of the problem.
- b. Membership of the Task Forces is proposed by the Global ICP Unit for consideration and endorsement by the TAG. It is the responsibility of the Global ICP Unit to enlist the members endorsed by the TAG.
- c. One of the members of the Task Force will be designated to coordinate the work of the Task Force.
- d. Each Task Force will include an expert from the Global ICP Unit.
- e. It is desirable but not necessary to have a TAG member included in the Task Force.

Tenure and Work Modality

- a. Each Task Force will have a fixed tenure in line with the timeframe of the assigned research topics.
- b. The Task Forces will meet as needed physically or virtually. They may also join the meetings of the IACG to discuss the operational implications and feasibility of their proposals, and the meetings of the TAG to present their findings and recommendations for the TAG's consideration.
- c. The Global ICP Unit will provide access to necessary data and materials to facilitate the work of the Task Forces. Standard ICP confidentiality provisions apply.

Expected Deliverables

- a. Presenting findings to the TAG.
- b. Drafting a discussion paper for circulation among TAG members.
- c. Fine-tuning and undertaking further research and computations, if deemed necessary by the TAG.
- d. Preparing a final report with recommendations.

III. Proposed Task Forces

The following Task Forces are proposed, along with their relevant topics and timeframe. The Annex to this document provides the implementation timetable for these Task Forces.

As the technical research agenda evolves, additional Task Forces may be formed to look into other research areas and methodological improvements.

Task Forces to establish in 2017

TF1. PPP Compilation and Computation

- Linking interim regional updates into a global comparison: 2017-2019
- Building PPP time series for the interim period: 2017-2019
- Fine tuning global linking procedures: 2017-2019
- Productivity adjustment for government and construction labor: 2017-2019

TF2. Housing

- PPPs and real expenditures for dwelling services: 2017-2019

TF3. Country Operational Guidelines and Procedures

- Moving towards rolling price surveys: 2017-2019
- CPI-ICP synergies to improve spatial and temporal price consistency: 2017-2019
- Sub-national PPPs: 2017-2019

Task Forces to establish in 2018

TF4. PPP Uses

- Uses of PPPs and ICP data for national and international policy making: 2018-2019

TF5. PPPs and Poverty

- ICP PPPs and global poverty measurement – Post Atkinson Commission: 2018-2020

Task Forces to establish in 2019-2020

TF6. PPP Quality and Reliability

- Quality of data and results: 2019
- Reliability measures for PPPs: 2020-2021

TF7. New Data Sources

- Exploring innovations in technology and data sources for PPP measurement: 2020-2021

TF8. Exports and Imports

- PPPs for exports and imports: 2020-2021

TF9. Non-Market Services

- PPPs for health and education: 2020-2021

TF10. Construction

- PPPs for construction: 2020-2021

Annex: Implementation Timetable for ICP Task Forces

	2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021								
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4					
TF1. PPP Compilation and Computation.																													
Linking interim regional updates into a global comparison											R					R								F					
Building PPP time series for the interim period	Preliminary research										R					R								F					
Fine tuning global linking procedures											R					R								F					
Productivity adjustment for government and construction labor											R					R								F					
TF2. Housing. PPPs and real expenditures for dwelling services											R					R								F					
TF3. Country Operational Guidelines and Procedures.																													
Moving towards rolling price surveys											R					R								F					
CPI-ICP synergies to improve spatial and temporal price consistency	Preliminary research										R					R							F						
Sub-national PPPs	Preliminary research										R					R							F						
TF4. PPP Uses. Uses of PPPs and ICP data for national and international policy making	Preliminary research														R								F						
TF5. PPPs and Poverty Measurement. ICP PPPs and global poverty measurement	Preliminary research														R					R			F						
TF6. PPP Quality and Reliability.																													
Quality of data and results																R								F					
Reliability measures for PPPs	Preliminary research																	R						R				F	
TF7. New Data Sources. Exploring innovations in technology and data sources for PPP measurement	Preliminary research																	R							R				F
TF8. Exports and Imports. PPPs for exports and imports																													
TF9. Non-Market Services. PPPs for health and education																													
TF10. Construction. PPPs for construction																													

Acronyms: [R] Report to TAG, [I] Interim output, [F] Final output