

***JEP in Western Asia
Progress Report
September 2004***

***JEP Regional Coordinators Meeting
Washington DC, 27 Sept-1 Oct 2004***

Progress of work since the last RC meeting

- 1. Regional Product specifications and Product lists;***
- 2. Translations;***
- 3. Workshops, NC & EB meetings;***
- 4. Technical assistance to countries;***
- 5. Technical and administrative concerns.***

***Progress of Work on
SPDs, PSs & List of Products***

Food & Beverages	Status	Deadline
Regional SPDs		
Word Glossary	completed	
Picture Glossary	completed	
National PSs	completed	
Regional Product List-E	completed	
Regional Product List-A	completed	
Installation on Tool Pack	in progress	end Sept.
Training on Tool Pack	in progress	mid Oct.
Data Collection Form	not initiated	mid Nov.
Training of Data Collectors	not initiated	mid Nov.
Start Data collection	mid Nov.	first Dec.

Clothing & Foot-wear	Status	Deadline
Regional SPDs		
Word Glossary	completed	
Picture Glossary	completed	
National PSs	completed	
Regional Product List-E	completed	
Regional Product List-A	completed	
Installation on Tool Pack	not initiated	end Sept.
Training on Tool Pack	in progress	mid Oct.
Data Collection Form	not initiated	mid Nov.
Training of Data Collectors	not initiated	mid Nov.
Start Data collection	mid Nov.	first Dec.

Furniture & Utilities	Status	Deadline
Regional SPDs	completed	completed
Word Glossary		
Picture Glossary		
National PSs	in progress	mid Oct.
Regional Product List-E	not initiated	mid Nov.
Regional Product List-A	not initiated	end Nov.
Data Collection Form	not initiated	end Dec.
Training of Data Collectors	not initiated	end Jan. 05
Start Data collection	mid Jan. 05	mid Feb. 05

Transport & Communication	Status	Deadline
Regional SPDs	completed	completed
Word Glossary		
Picture Glossary		
National PSs	in progress	end Sept.
Regional Product List-E	not initiated	end Oct.
Regional Product List-A	not initiated	mid Nov.
Data Collection Form	not initiated	end Nov.
Training of Data Collectors	not initiated	end Jan. 05
Start Data collection	not initiated	mid Feb. 05

Recreation & Culture	Status	Deadline
Regional SPDs	completed	
Word Glossary	completed	
Picture Glossary	not initiated	end Oct.
National PSs	in progress	mid Nov.
Regional Product List-E	not initiated	end Nov.
Regional Product List-A	not initiated	mid Dec.
Data Collection Form	not initiated	end Dec.
Training of Data Collectors	not initiated	end Jan. 05
Start Data collection	not initiated	mid Feb. 05

Translations & Glossaries

ICP Hand-Book “chapter 3 through chapter 7” : translated into Arabic, sent out to countries and to be posted on the web

Tool Pack : completed, Arabic version is working

Product List (F&B and C&F): translated into Arabic, ready to upload on Tool Pack

SPDs of F&U and T&C: word & picture glossaries prepared and sent out to countries

SPDs of R&C: word glossary completed, picture glossary in progress (to be finished before end October)

Operational manual & other manuals: translation in progress (to be finished by end October)

Workshop & NE meeting: Objectives

Cairo, 26-30 June 2004

1. Discuss and Finalize the Regional Product List of Food & Beverages and Clothing & Footwear;
2. Discuss the progress of work on other groups SPD/PSs;
3. Provide training to two statisticians from each country on the Tool Pack;
4. Provide training for trainers on the Tool Pack (two ICP regional members and selected three national members);
5. Enhance the statistical capacity of participants in the areas of national accounts, price indexing and sampling;
6. Discuss and setup the time-plan of the next 3 months.



ESCWA JCP EB meeting

Cairo, 1st July 2004

1. Follow-up the progress on the recommendations of the last meeting on 24-25 March 2004;
2. Discuss the progress of work on the global level and in the region (Mr. Biru kindly participated in this meeting);
3. Discuss the budget and fund-raising issues;
4. Discuss the work plan for the next three months and approve the following:
 - a. NC meeting in September 2004;
 - b. Workshop for NCs & Survey supervisors in October 2004;
 - c. Consultancy services to provide NCs with technical assistance needed for the preparation of the survey framework;
 - d. Collective responsibility for fund-raising;
 - e. Rationale use of funds allocated for travel;
 - f. Maximize the use of Arabic language in workshops and documentation.

Technical Assistance: Mr. Ward mission

- 1. Countries visited : Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Syria and Yemen**
- 2. Objective: guiding national ICP teams to prepare the framework of the price survey**
- 3. Strategy:**
 - Studying the national CPI coverage and calculations' methodology; demographic characteristics; locations of outlets; recent HH survey and aggregates of final consumption; distribution of income and identifying poor segments; ... etc
 - Visiting markets in capital city -- investigate different types of outlets and products and identify purchase behavior
 - Discuss with NCs the areas, outlets and ICP products which best fit the sample frame
- 4. Outcome: A technical report including the consultant's findings and recommendations. (discussed in NC meeting)**

Technical Assistance: Mr. Ward main points

- 1. aggregates for final HH consumption in the national accounts are generally calculated as a residual from a GDP figure estimated from the production side.**
- 2. breakdowns for separate expenditure components are mostly taken from a recent household survey backed up by a few commodity flow estimates.**
- 3. this approach creates several problems because the respective aggregates for national accounts and those derived from a grossed-up survey estimate are not the same either conceptually or in practice.**

Technical Assistance: Mr. Ward main points

- 4. causes for differences can be found in the methods of estimating own account consumption, own account construction, home ownership, major purchases of expensive durables, eating out, and underestimates of expenditure on such commodities as qat, tobacco products and alcohol .**
- 5. where people shop depends a lot on where they live, and their level of income.**
- 6. poorer households tend **whether they are mobile** to buy a little at a time and to go shopping more frequently, while the rich do most of their shopping in one go and visit only one outlet that satisfies all their regular needs.**

Technical Assistance: Mr. Ward main points

- 7. the problem of picking up expenditure patterns accurately is complicated by:**
 - a. the varying degrees of habitation and their concentration;**
 - b. the large non-indigenous resident populations [and refugees], particularly in the urban areas.**
 - c. a sampling frame that is able to incorporate all such key socio-economic population characteristics to facilitate an appropriate selection does not exist.**
- 8. while an outlet survey could be designed to pick up all those prices relevant to popular products, it is most unlikely it would be able to give the required information at the detailed item level, except in the largest modern stores where bar code scanning procedures are in effect.**

Technical Assistance: Mr. Ward recommendations

- 1. the selection of outlets has to take account of where people spend their money on certain goods and services and the value of the sales on various products in such outlets.**
- 2. attach greater importance to the most popular items, with the biggest turnover.**
- 3. enough outlets conforming to these requirements must be chosen, and a suitable place to start such outlet selection should begin, rationally and practically, with a review of the existing outlets used to provide price data for CPI.**
- 4. this will identify the largest stores and provide information as to where most people prefer to shop for all those goods and services that are characteristically representative of their annual consumption basket.**

Technical Assistance: Mr. Ward recommendations

- 5. The priorities for the ICP in the region therefore are:**
 - a. in small rich countries [city states] to make sure that new large super stores are added to the outlets covered in regular and ICP price collections;**
 - b. extend the list of products covered to make sure that goods and services bought by other countries in the region and by countries outside the region are covered. This is not a problem; the only problem is a logistical one of actually finding the products in question; they are already in the shops.**
 - c. in the poor countries the main issue is to make sure the rural community and their purchases in the rural areas are adequately represented. This may not be so serious insofar that, although their numbers may be large, the value of their outlays in GDP terms is small [but the prices, too, for such items are correspondingly lower].**
- 6. On the whole, however, it was noted surprisingly that price disparity by region was comparatively low and that reported price variability over the year was similarly small in these countries.**

Technical Assistance from Regional Office

- 1. Provide templates to collect most relevant data to assist in an optimum unbiased selection of retail outlets teams with**
- 2. Provide national ICP :**
 - a. illustrations and examples to prepare PSs;**
 - b. advices concerning the country's revision of the final Product List;**
 - c. training on SPD/PS software & ICP Tool Pack;**
 - d. on-line help to solve any encountered problems.**

Macro-economic Data

Data by each Governmental region (area):

1. Number of cities or villages
2. Population: natives and foreigners
3. Households: number, average size, average outlays
4. Per capita income
5. Percent of HH by income group:
bottom 20%, middle 60% and top 20%
6. Percent of HH expenditure on:
housing, food/beverages, clothing/footwear,
furniture/utilities, health, education, social protection and
collective services

Outlets Information

Data on number of outlets:

1. by each Governmental region (area),
2. by each group of expenditure,
3. for each type of outlets:

Food & Beverages		Clothing & Foot-wear	
Super market	Mini market	Boutique	Dept. store
Grocery store	Open market	Open market	Mobile vendor
Mobile vendor	other	Traditional	other
Wholesale store		Neighborhood shop	
Special superstore		Second-hand shop	

NCs meeting: Objectives

Beirut, 1-3 September 2004

1. Discuss the consultant's report on the outcome of his mission to assist NCs preparing the survey framework.
2. Guide NCs in the techniques and standard approach to follow in collecting price data from retail outlets.
3. Discuss the time-plan for:
 - a. finalizing the PSs of the remaining groups;
 - b. preparing the survey framework;
 - c. training the survey supervisors; and
 - d. Consultant's mission to the remaining countries.

NEs meeting: Outcome

Beirut, 1-3 September 2004

Technical issues:

1. Countries were already provided with background papers and guideline procedures on the use of the CPI and its supporting data collection systems as a basis for compiling relevant price statistics for the ICP.
2. Giving detailed explanation of why, as a standard procedure, the CPI and its institutional structure must serve as the core element of the ICP exercise in all regions.

NCs meeting: Outcome

Beirut, 1-3 September 2004

Instructing NCs about:

- a. how to modify and extend the CPI on the basis of the specific conditions applicable to each country.
- b. the importance of jointly matching prices to outlets and outlets to spending behaviour.
- c. how to identify and define the survey framework, using information related to population characteristics and their demographic composition, area location and concentration of habitation, outlet and enterprise structures, the nature and pattern of consumption, and the popularity of different products.

Technical and Administrative Concerns

- Technical Concerns:
 - SNA93 not adopted by most of the countries;
 - Insufficient information for building a reliable framework of the price survey;
 - Some countries will not provide the raw data to make necessary checks and data verification;
 - Methodologies used for constructing expenditure weights vary between countries and employing a standard methodology is quite difficult;
 - Inadequate number of qualified data collectors (education background) would affect the quality of data collected;etc

Technical and Administrative Concerns

- Administrative Concerns:
 - Budget Deficit;
 - Differences in the technical capacity of NCs;
 - Also, differences in the managerial capacity of NCs. Most of them are either lacking the minimum authority needed to manage the ICP team or abusing the authority they acquire;
 - Inadequate qualified staff in national ICP teams;
 - Shortage in the number of the regional ICP team;
 - Severe bureaucratic procedures at UN, World Bank and some member countries.

THANK YOU