



International Comparison Program

[02.01]

An Outreach Strategy

For the 2011 International Comparison Program

Global Office

2nd Executive Board Meeting

February 21, 2010

New York

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An Outreach Strategy for the 2011 International Comparison Program

I. Summary

This concept note sets out what will need to be done to prepare an outreach strategy for the 2011 Round of the International Comparison Program. The strategy will be prepared and delivered using existing facilities and organizations and will be designed on a global basis although many of the activities are expected to be implemented at the regional basis by the regional implementing agencies and others. An important consideration will be the need to outreach for the ICP with other advocacy initiatives for statistics and with other elements of the ICP 2011 Round. It is anticipated that development of the strategy will take about six months and implementation will begin from October 2010 onwards.

II. Background

The 2011 round of the International Comparison Program (ICP) is expected to be the largest to date, covering some 170 countries in five geographic regions: Africa; Asia and the Pacific; the Commonwealth of Independent States; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Western Asia. The round will also be closely coordinated with the regular purchasing power parity (PPP) program managed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Statistical Office of the European Union. In line with previous rounds, a regional implementing agency will coordinate the project in each of the five regions, while the OECD and Eurostat will manage their regular program. The ICP Global Office will consolidate regional results and publish the final ICP Global Results by the end of 2013.

III. Justification – the Need for an Outreach and Communications Strategy

The ICP is an international statistical program, whose objective is to compile and publish international purchasing power parities for all the main economies in the world; an important by-product is to help improve the quality of price and national accounts statistics generally in participating countries. The Program is currently managed at the global level by the World Bank under a mandate from the United Nations Statistical Commission. It is the largest and most complex international statistical program and its scope and coverage have gradually increased over time. Although the UN mandate only extends to the 2011 Round, which is expected to be completed by 2013, the demand for up to data purchasing power parity data will continue in the future and, indeed, is expected to increase. Interactions between national economies through trade and financial transactions are increasing year on year and it is to be expected that this pace of globalization will continue and may well accelerate. The expectation, therefore, in the international statistical community, is that the ICP will and should be continued as a regular exercise. If this is to be done and if the ICP is to be seen as a part of the regular work program of all statistical agencies worldwide, then it is essential that the data must be used and that demand for PPP statistics increases.

While there is already an appreciation of the need for PPP numbers among economic policy makers in many countries, it is not yet true to say that the value of the program is so widely recognized that its future is assured. To date, apart from the OECD/Eurostat program, which is financed on an ongoing basis with a regular budget allocation, in the rest of the world each round has been planned and financed as a separate exercise. This means that for each new round resources have to be secured and new processes established. The lack of continuity makes it difficult to build capacity at the global and regional levels that can be sustained from round to round and the need to raise funds imposes additional costs.

An outreach and communications strategy for the 2011 Round, therefore, will be important for two main reasons. First it will be support the fund raising efforts that are still needed to ensure that the Round can be completed successfully. Second and possibly more importantly, by helping to explain the importance of the PPP numbers, by illustrating how they are and can be used and by explaining why complex procedures are needed to ensure data quality, the importance of the exercise will be more widely appreciated and future rounds will be more widely supported. The problem in developing and then implementing the strategy is that the ICP is a complicated and complex program, where the procedures needed to compile good quality PPP data are not easy to understand. Great care will be needed both in planning and putting the strategy into effect to ensure that the importance of the data is recognized and their uses carefully explained.

IV. Objectives

The development objective of the ICP is to collect, compile and publish reliable and high quality purchasing power parity data to support the real comparison of economic statistics across countries and over time. Within the ICP, the objective of the outreach and strategy will be to increase understanding of the importance and use of the PPP data and of the procedures that are needed to ensure the data are accurate, reliable and consistent. The main focus will be to raise awareness of the importance of the ICP in measuring and comparing the economic progress of societies and in understanding how economies grow and change. It will also help to demonstrate the usefulness of the PPP data in areas such as measuring changes in poverty levels and monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Basically, the purpose of the strategy will be to ensure that all potential users of the ICP data know how the data have been collected and generated, understand how the data can be used and their limitations and see the ICP as the key source of data on purchasing power parities. At the same time, though, by focusing on the use of the data and the importance of collecting and compiling better price and national accounts statistics, the campaign will also help to raise the profile of national statistics and a subsidiary objective of the strategy will be to improve awareness and use of these statistics at the national level.

V. Scope and Coverage

The ICP operates at three levels – global; regional; and in participating countries – with a defined management and reporting structure. The PPP statistics will also be generated at all three levels, although the main focus and emphasis will be on the global figures since it is here that inter-country

comparisons will mostly be made. Given the global focus of the data, therefore, it is proposed that the outreach strategy will be developed and managed globally, although regional implementing agencies and countries will be encouraged and supported to use the material for more localized advocacy campaigns.

The main target of the strategy will be the users of the PPP statistics and these include:

- International policy makers and managers, concerned with monitoring and managing the global economy
- National governments and their policy makers concerned with macro-economic management
- Decision makers and analysts working in regional organizations and concerned with issues related to regional integration
- Participants in international financial markets and financial analysts
- The media, especially those specializing in economic and financial issues
- Researchers and academics, especially those looking at international economic and financial issues
- Businesses involved in the import and export of goods and services
- International aid agencies and their staff
- Students of economics and international relations

It is anticipated that the strategy will need to set out different ways of reaching different audiences and possibly messages with different emphases and focus. Some of the mechanisms that can be employed to deliver messages and information about the ICP will include:

- The preparation and publication of peer reviewed academic papers
- Press releases and specially prepared op-eds for publication in key media
- Ensuring that the importance of the ICP in generating good PPP data is highlighted at regular intervals in policy statements and speeches by key policy maker, including the senior management of the World Bank and the IMF
- Making presentations at relevant international meetings and conferences
- Ensuring that when the 2005 data are used in publications and other outlets that the source of the data is acknowledged
- Developing and strengthening recognition of an ICP “brand” in terms of a logo, and general presentation that is used consistently in all material produced by the Program
- Preparing special briefing material for use by journalists at key points in the program and disseminating these, including through specially organized meetings
- Making use of World Statistics Day on 10 October 2010 formally to launch the 2011 Round
- Preparing briefing material on the ICP for economic students and for those studying economic in high school

- Looking at the possibility of having a specific “ICP at school” program similar to the “Census at school” program sponsored by the Royal Statistical Society’s Centre for Statistical Education in the UK¹

VI. Coordination with Other Statistical Advocacy and Outreach Initiatives

A key requirement of the ICP capacity building program will be to ensure that it is coordinated with other major statistical programs. In particular the ICP Global Office, which will be responsible for the preparation of the strategy, will need to work in close collaboration with PARIS21, the UN Statistics Division and the IMF.

VII. Work Program and Budget

It is proposed that the ICP Global Office will prepare an outreach and communications strategy for the 2011 Round based on the following timetable.

February 2010	ICP Board considers and approves the concept note
March - April 2010	The Global Office prepares an initial paper outlining the areas to be developed and circulated this for peer review and discussion by the regional implementing agencies by April 30, 2010
May - June 2010	Detailed material for the launch of the 2011 Round is prepared in consultation with the regional implementing agencies
July – September 2010	The outreach and communications strategy is finalized for approval by the ICP Board in October 2010
October 2010 onwards	ICP is launched and implementation of the outreach and communications strategy begins on World Statistics Day. It’s also planned to organize an ICP users’ conference from October 19-20, 2010.
	Progress is monitored every six months, is summarized in ICP annual reports and is monitored by the Board regularly

At present, it is not possible to identify a budget for the strategy, but there will certainly be a call on both global and regional resources for implementation. For the preparation it is recommended that the Global Office secure the services of an experienced economic/statistical journalist. Depending on the contents of the strategy it is likely that the global office will need to call on these kinds of skills as it is implemented. It is likely, therefore, the implementation of the strategy will involve an annual expenditure of the order of US\$160,000 to US\$200,000 per year.

¹ See <http://www.censusatschool.org.uk/>

