



# International Comparison Program

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**[05.05]**

## **ICP DATA ACCESS PRINCIPLES**

**Global Office**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Coordinators Meeting**

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## ICP DATA ACCESS PRINCIPLES

The 2011 ICP Executive Board agreed there should be a set of principles that underpin the data access policy. There are three basic types of data:

**Type A:** PPPs, Price Level Indexes and National Accounts expenditure data for participating countries at the Basic Heading Level.

**Type B:** National Average Price data at the product level (where it exists).

**Type C:** Individual Price Data (micro data).

It may be convenient to have two sets of principles. The first set deals with aggregated data, i.e. data types A and B, whereas the second set of principles deals with micro data (data type C). Furthermore, there are some general principles that should apply to all forms of data.

The first and second sets of principles are the most important as the majority of access requests will be for aggregated data. Micro data access requests can be expected to be the exception rather than the rule.

### I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The following four Principles are suggested.

1. Given the ICP has involved considerable effort and cost, the data derived from the ICP should be utilized to the maximum extent possible, given the quality limitations of the data, after taking confidentiality constraints into consideration.
2. The agreed policy and procedures for data access should be acceptable to the vast majority of countries. Once that has been achieved; all participating countries should comply with the agreed policy and procedures.
3. The procedures for researcher access to detailed ICP data, as well as the uses of this data, should be transparent and publically available.
4. Releases of aggregated and micro data should be accompanied by appropriate metadata, including metadata that describes the quality limitations of the data.

## **II. PRINCIPLES WITH AGGREGATED DATA**

The following five Principles are suggested.

1. Aggregated data are generally not confidential (in the sense that individual businesses can be identified) and this should not be cited as the reason for not providing access.
2. Some proposed uses of ICP may require data quality that goes beyond the design intentions of ICP and therefore access to this data should be limited to researchers who are informed of the quality limitations and agree that the data is still useful for their purposes and are prepared to make an undertaking with the World Bank that outlines conditions on their use of their data.
3. As there are costs associated with deriving and providing the required data, which can be significant in some cases, access should only be provided where the value of work justifies the marginal cost of handling the data.
4. A Review Committee should be established to assist with decisions on access that are not straightforward.
5. The results of work utilizing ICP data should be put in the public domain but aggregated data should not be published at a more detailed level than is currently the case for the ICP.

## **III. PRINCIPLES WITH MICRO DATA**

The 2007 Session of the UN Statistical Commission agreed on a set of Principles for access to microdata. These seem like a reasonable starting point for Principles for access to ICP microdata. The agreed UN Statistical Commission Principles were:

**Principle 1:** It is appropriate for microdata collected for official statistical purposes to be used for statistical analysis to support research as long as confidentiality is protected.

**Principle 2:** Microdata should only be made available for statistical purposes.

**Principle 3:** Provision of microdata should be consistent with legal and other necessary arrangements that ensure that confidentiality of the released microdata is protected.

**Principle 4:** The procedures for researcher access to microdata, as well as the uses and users of microdata should be transparent, and publicly available.

Putting this into the context of the ICP, these Principles might read as follows.

1. It is appropriate for microdata collected for the ICP to be used for statistical analysis to support research as long as confidentiality is protected.
2. The microdata should only be made available for statistical purposes.

3. Provision of microdata should be consistent with the confidentiality laws of the country.

An equivalent to Principle 4 is not required as it is covered by General Principle 3.

It should be noted that Principle 1 does not imply that National Statistical Offices should release microdata. There may be other considerations such as quality that need to be taken into account before deciding whether to release or not.

Statistical analysis should be interpreted broadly. It includes the compilation of statistical aggregations of various forms, fitting of statistical models, research into statistical methods and analyses of statistical differences between sub-populations.

**Annex:** Covering Letter



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April 1, 2010

Dear National Coordinator,

The ICP Global Office is in the process of preparing Data Access and Archiving Policy for the 2011 round of the International Comparison Program (ICP). In this regard, I am writing to seek your input and feedback on access to ICP data through your responses to the attached questionnaire.

The 2005 round of the ICP was successful in many ways but the limited access to the more detailed data for research and poverty analysis purposes was one of the major criticisms. Also, in some regions, the memoranda of agreement between the regional coordinating agencies and the countries restricted researchers' access to detailed price data. In the 2011 round, we are striving to achieve a better balance between providing access to more detailed data and the need to preserve confidentiality.

Most of those seeking access to the more detailed data are attached to the ICP in some way. They are often staff members of the World Bank or the regional coordinating agencies, or prominent members of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), or one of the funding organizations. Some of the ICP funding might be at risk if we do not find a way of providing improved access.

The 2011 ICP Executive Board realized there was a need to unlock more of the value of the ICP, whilst maintaining confidentiality, but wanted to have a better understanding of the positions of participating countries before coming to a final conclusion.

For the purpose of the attached questionnaire, we are looking at three types of data:

**Type A:** PPPs, Price Level Indexes and National Accounts expenditure data for participating countries at the Basic Heading Level.

**Type B:** National Average Price data at the product level (where it exists).

**Type C:** Individual Price Data (micro data).

It is expected that the majority of requests will only be for Type A or Type B data. Requests for Type C data are often to support studies into price index methods.

Metadata is also important but, for the purposes of completing the questionnaire, please assume that appropriate metadata will be made available.

The Executive Board also agreed that Principles should be prepared to underpin the Data Access and Archiving Policy. Some Draft Principles have been prepared. They have not yet been agreed by the Executive Board. However, they are attached for your information and guidance.

Some work has been undertaken on a possible Data Access Policy. This has to be refined and revised in light of comments from countries, Regional Coordinators and the Executive Board. The key elements of a possible policy are set out below:

**Type A:** Make available to approved researchers through the same data access process used in the 2005 round.

**Type B:** Make available to approved researchers only. The conditions for approval would be more stringent than for Type A data.

**Type C:** These would only be released to approved researchers on an exception basis, with the explicit approval of the country concerned.

Another consideration, also covered in the questionnaire, is the role of the ICP Global Office within the World Bank as a custodian of these data sets. As custodian, it would be required to operate in accordance with the protocols of the agreed Data Access Policy. Given it would be mainly responsible for approving and servicing requests, it makes considerable sense for them to be the custodian for the Type A and Type B data sets. However, for Type C data sets, it may be prudent that they only act as custodian where they have the approval of the country. The World Bank would also be responsible for archiving the data sets for which it has custodial responsibility. This would provide a valuable back-up service if national or regional data sets became lost or accidentally destroyed. We would appreciate your feedback on this aspect also.

We would appreciate it if you could complete the questionnaire by April 30, 2010 and return to your Regional Coordinator, who would in turn send it back to us. We would be most grateful for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

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ICP Global Manager