Office for National Statistics

Telephone interview considerations

International guidance for moving from face-to-face interviewing to interviewing over the telephone for surveys

Contents

Introduction

COVID-19 is impacting the collection of survey data in various ways. The typical impact is that collection of data through face-to-face interviews needs to be suspended which has then prompted an attempt to move from face-to-face interviewing to telephone interviewing. This has various challenges among the kinds shown in table 1, taken from guidance material issued by the International Labour Office (ILO):

Table 1: Challenges faced moving to telephone interviewing

Surveys normally carried out fully using face-to-face interviewing		
Problem	Face-to-face interviewing suspended	
Possible solution	Data collection to continue by moving to telephone interview	
	Main data collection challenges	**Main methodological challenges**
Challenges and options	Sample frame availability & selection	Response rates and bias
	Obtaining respondent contact details	Non-response adjustments
	Enabling & managing telephone interviews	Weighting to population figures
	Adapting questionnaires (CAPI or paper)	Quality assessment
	Data processing and analysis	

Phone-based surveys offer the benefit of avoiding the risk of contagion especially in the context of a pandemic like COVID-19. However, phone calls can only reach respondents who use a phone with an active subscription in an area with network coverage, and who agree to be interviewed. Therefore, statistics from such a survey are only representative for this part of the population, potentially excluding to some extent the poorest households living in harder-to-reach areas or businesses that are difficult to contact on the telephone.

These guidelines cover potential issues with sampling, technology and logistics, questionnaire design, fieldwork delivery, data processing, and analysis. This is both when switching from face-to-face surveys to telephone surveys, and when setting up a new household survey using telephone interviewing. The topics covered are consistent with global statistical best practice and guidance, much of which is made available by international bodies, in particular, the ILO Statistics Directorate and the World Bank's Living Standards and Measurement Study (LSMS) programme. More details of this referenced material are set out in the following section on "International Guidance".

Acknowledgements

In addition to material taken from the above-mentioned international bodies, the practical examples contained in Annex B are provided by Social Survey Operations Division of the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) and those in Annex A are provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). Other sources are indicated by the individual web links provided within the text.

International guidance and references

International Labour Office: COVID-19 impact on the collection of labour market statistics

The ILO has communicated with National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on their statistical operations, in particular in the domain of labour statistics, mostly the operation of the national Labour Force Surveys (LFS), where they exist. The guidance shares the information gathered so that all countries can learn from the experiences of others. It is mainly high-level guidance aimed at statistical practitioners among NSOs and is set out as follows:

Key impacts and reactions to date

1. Impact on field operations
2. Impact on data analysis
3. Changing questionnaire content
4. Use of administrative data
5. Other issues (including impacts on other surveys and population censuses)
6. Maintaining quality and continuity of data
7. Impact on estimates

The ILO also provides extensive guidance for Labour Force Surveys more generally, available as "The global reference for labour force survey design".

The practical examples and specific guidance in this discussion paper are intended to help illustrate and offer more specific, practical insight into the ILO's material.

World Bank: High-Frequency Phone Surveys on COVID-19 as part of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

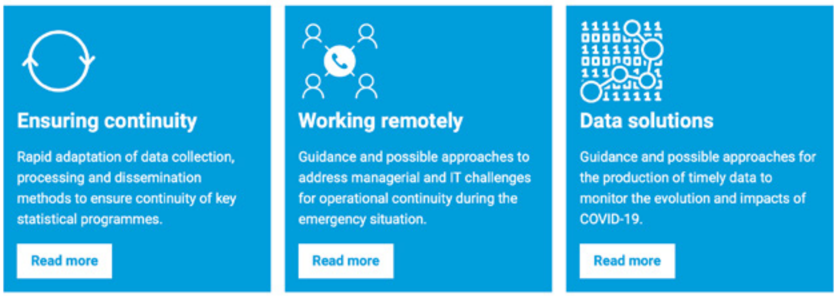
The World Bank's LSMS programme of household surveys run by their Development Data Group is supporting high-frequency telephone surveys in several African countries to track responses to, and the socio-economic impacts of, COVID-19. The LSMS-supported phone surveys are part of the broader group of World Bank-supported high-frequency phone surveys, including other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific. At the global-level, the LSMS team has been contributing to the development of a set of harmonized instruments and tools that can be readily adopted by as many countries and implementers as possible with little initial fixed costs, as follows:

- overview of the High-Frequency Phone Surveys initiative
- guidelines on sampling for high-frequency phone surveys
- a questionnaire template, with core and optional modules, plus an overview and manual
- guidelines on the implementation of CATI-based data collection

Over the period July 2020-June 2021, these resources will be complemented with additional World Bank Survey Solutions CATI software features, and the LSMS-led R-, Python- and Stata-based tools that facilitate the management of CATI surveys. These tools will be made publicly available.

United Nations Statistical Commission

This part of UNSD website provides a space for the global statistical community to share guidance, actions, tools and best practices to ensure the operational continuity of data programmes by National Statistical Offices, and to address issues of open and timely access to critical data needed by governments and all sectors of society to respond to the global COVID-19 crisis.



As an example article, it provides further thinking regarding sampling for telephone surveys: Using telephone interviews for household surveys

Also, non-response weighting and calibration are discussed in specialist UN guides and manuals, such as:

- household Sample Surveys in Developing and Transition Countries – Chapter VIII. Non-observation error in household surveys in developing countries (p160)
- designing Household Survey Samples: Practical Guidelines – Chapter 6 – Construction and use of sample weights (p109).

Preparation

Getting together a sample

In order to have as robust a survey as possible, a sample frame is needed that includes as many as possible of the households or businesses that you are interested in. A good quality and complete register of telephone numbers may be very unusual, but it is important that efforts are made to get something as complete as possible as this stage can be a major cause of bias if not considered carefully.

This can prove difficult to achieve. For example, phone penetration rates in rural areas can be low, for example roughly 40% of households in rural areas in Ethiopia have access to a phone compared with over 90% in urban areas. Phone-owning households are often better off in terms of total consumption, educational attainment, access to improved water and sanitation, access to assets, and access to electricity.

The sample is therefore only representative of households who have access to phones, which may mean your survey introduces bias, or changes any bias that existed in the survey previously. This can often be addressed by weighting the data when estimating results but, ideally, the potential for bias needs to be assessed in advance. As part of such an assessment, refer to whatever evidence may be available elsewhere, such as the results from other surveys or a recent census of population. If necessary, consider a different survey mode in areas with low phone coverage (if known), such as a paper questionnaire sent through the post or delivered by interviewers (see the next section on selecting modes).

In some countries where there is one dominant cell phone provider, it may be possible to obtain a register of cell numbers by working together with the provider.

The following needs to be assessed when sampling:

- **What is your target population?** Is it only those in a certain region, or type of person, i.e. those with children? You need to be clear what exactly your target population is.
- **What registers are available to you to sample from?** Do you have a business register you can access, or do you have a spreadsheet with business names? Do you have access to a general register of mobile phone numbers or landline numbers? Or a register of the whole

population or recent census of population?

- **How up to date and accurate are the registers?** Irregular updating means some listed numbers will no longer be active or more recent numbers will not be included. What you use should be as up-to-date and accurate as possible to prevent bias.
- **What information is on those registers?** As a minimum you need to have a phone number and a contact name for every record but having more information i.e. the size of the business, sector of the business or the region means you can sample more accurately
- **How complete and accurate is the register?** You should quality assure the register to make sure it is as accurate as possible. For example, carry out the following steps:
  - make sure that every record has a phone number and contact name
  - check that the phone number is in a valid format, i.e. it has the correct number of digits and always starts with a valid number (for example in the UK all phone numbers start with a '0')
  - check that the names make sense and are not just something like 'X' or '928'
  - exclude from your sample frame any records with incorrect information that you cannot correct
  - if you have a business sample, exclude from the sample any businesses that you know will not be operating during the fieldwork period in accordance with Government guidelines

An alternative to sourcing a new sample frame is to approach previous respondents who have provided contact information and have agreed to be contacted again. This is what is being done in the UK with the new COVID-19 related surveys (more detail here: www.ons.gov.uk/cis), and has been done in Kenya as well as part of the sample design for the World Bank's COVID-19 related survey. In the UK people who have completed the Labour Force Survey previously are being recontacted to do the new survey. This has the following advantages:

- respondents are familiar with the survey organisation and what sort of data is generally collected
- as a result, response rates are likely to be far higher than a new sample
- information from their previous interview might be available to use with the new information you gather

However, there are disadvantages:

- your sample may be biased from the start, particularly if the previous survey achieved a low response rate (either overall, or in some sub-groups of the population)
- not everyone who responded to the previous survey will have provided contact details and agreed to recontact. This may introduce bias if the profile of these people is different from the profile of people who did

Once you have identified the best sample frame to use, you then need to select a sample for your survey at random. The following method is suggested:

1. sort your database by whatever information you have available. This could be alphabetical order by business name, or just numerical order by phone number
2. do individuals appear more than once, i.e. do they have multiple mobile numbers? If at all possible, you should make sure that individuals only appear once in your sample
3. give each of your records in the database a unique reference number
4. decide how many records you want to select for your sample. For example, if it is 1,000, and your sample frame is 10,000 records, you need to select every 10th records in your sorted database.

It might be the case that you want to select all the available numbers if you want to do a census.

It also might be the case that you want to draw a purposive sample rather than a random sample. By this we mean that you want to have more of a certain type of household or business in your sample than other types. Where this is the case, the following method is recommended:

1. separate your database into the different groups that you want to sample differently. For example, large businesses and small businesses
2. for **each group separately** sort the records by whatever information you have available. This could be alphabetical order by business name, or just numerical order by phone number
3. do individuals appear more than once, i.e. do they have multiple mobile numbers? If at all possible, you should make sure that individuals only appear once in your sample

4. give each of your records in the database a reference number that is unique across all groups
5. decide how many records you want to select in each group for your sample. For example:
    - if it is 100 large businesses, and you have 500 large business records, you need to select every 5th record in your sorted database of large businesses
    - if you also want 900 small businesses, and you have 9,000 small business records, you need to select every 10th record in your sorted database of small businesses

If no databases of phone numbers can be sourced, another option available is called 'Random Digit Dialling'. This is where phone numbers are sampled from all possible phone number combinations existing in the country. For example, if all phone numbers are 10 digits long and start with a 0, and you need 3,000 phone numbers in your sample, you randomly generate 3,000 numbers which are 10 digits long and start with a 0.

This way of sampling is far from ideal as many of the numbers may not be in operation, and no further information will be available about the person who has the phone number. As a result, a very large number of potential phone numbers will need to be sampled in order to achieve the required number of interviews. However this is part of the sampling procedure for the telephone survey of socio-economic impacts of the World Bank's COVID-19 survey in Kenya (see International Guidance).

Collection mode

If a significant part of your population might not have telephones, you should consider whether paper questionnaires should be sent to these groups. To allow this to happen you need to have:

- enough time in your survey schedule to allow this
- postal addresses for your respondents
- a reliable enough postal system in your country (or the ability to hand deliver questionnaires)
- a questionnaire that works on paper as well as on the telephone
- a fieldwork monitoring and processing system that allows you to process questionnaire from more than one different mode

Consider sending a postal questionnaire to households or businesses that you cannot get in touch with over the telephone. This is a particularly good idea if you are getting a poor response rate from your telephone survey, or there are regions that have low mobile phone coverage. It is not a good idea to offer the option of modes from the start. Also be aware that people often answer differently on paper than they do with an interviewer. This can be an advantage when assessing socially undesirable behaviours. If the postal system is not very reliable, it may be possible to hand deliver questionnaires, depending on country specific restrictions on travel. Note that in Rwanda, chiefs of villages were used to help with obtaining telephone numbers and enabling responses to their revised Labour Force Survey – see Annex A for details.

You may want to consider having your survey via the internet if this is feasible in your country context. However, if a large proportion of the population do not have internet access then this is not worth considering. But particularly if your sample frame includes email addresses it might be something you want to consider trying if you cannot get hold of someone on the telephone. Further thoughts and experiences at ONS of web-based surveys are described in a recent article: Moving online – how ONS is digitising its labour market surveys.

Also consider whether a multi-mode solution might work better for you. This might be where telephone interviewing is only used in certain areas, and a different mode is used in other areas. For example, you might choose to conduct telephone interviews in cities, but continue with face-to-face interviewing or send paper questionnaires in areas where few people have telephones, if allowed and acceptable.

Sending your sample letters through the post before or during your survey

It is often preferable to send a letter ahead of your survey to let respondents know that an interviewer is due to call soon. This may not be appropriate in your cultural setting, or impossible if your country has low levels of unique addresses or limited available contract information, or an unreliable postal system. If you do send a letter:

- make sure that your postal system is reliable enough to guarantee that most people will have received their letter before the interviewer calls. Someone could be used to hand deliver letters if there are no restrictions on doing this and there is no risk to interviewers

- make sure where possible that the letter is personalised i.e. 'Dear Mr Smith' and it is clear who the letter comes from
- make sure that the gap between receiving the letter and receiving a telephone call is not too great (i.e. no more than 1-2 weeks)
- make sure that your letter is not too long and includes things that encourage people to take part. A lot of previous research has been carried out on good letter design, for example here is a [piece of research from the UK, which also refers to incentives]
- consider whether you want to send a letter during fieldwork. This might act as a reminder that an interviewer is trying to call, or ask the person to call the interviewer to make contact. It is best to exclude people who have already responded from the reminder where possible, although people who have very recently responded might still get a reminder. If this is the case then the letter should say 'If you have all completed the study in the last few days, please ignore this letter."

Are you going to offer your sample an incentive?

Good survey practice says that response rates can be improved if the person approached to do the survey is offered a tangible incentive. However, they can sometimes be a waste of money if they only increase response rates among groups of the population who are already good at responding, so care needs to be taken before introducing an incentive, using the learning from other similar surveys in similar countries as possible. Incentives may also help where there is a panel element to the survey in order to encourage participation in future waves.

What incentive this should be differs by country and culture, but generally it is best practice to have a monetary incentive (i.e. mobile phone credit, cash or a shopping voucher) and that this is presented as a 'token of thanks' rather than a direct payment for someone's time. However, the right incentive to use can be very sensitive to each country and local context.

It is also generally recognised that sending an incentive in advance of the survey rather than promising it for doing the survey is best practice, although this needs to be assessed against local cultural settings. Where no letter is sent to the sampled address in advance then it can be mentioned by interviewers as part of their initial conversation to avoid a refusal.

More generally to improve response rates it may be possible to use publicity to advertise the survey in advance, which can be particularly effective if the survey is large scale.

What interviewers are you going to use, and what equipment will they need?

Where at all possible, the same interviewers usually used for face-to-face interviewing should be used for telephone interviewing. This is for the following reasons:

- they will already be trained to conduct surveys, so will only need extra training regarding the telephone mode
- if the respondents have been interviewed in the past face-to-face, you can use the same interviewer again who already has a rapport with the respondent
- you will not need to go to the time and expense of recruiting and training new interviewers

You will need to assess whether you have the right numbers of interviewers for your survey. Generally speaking, fewer interviewers will be needed compared to a face-to-face survey as interviewers need to travel less. However, it may be the case that interviewers need to make more phone calls to get in touch with someone than if they were visiting somewhere in person. If possible, you should conduct a small pilot before your main survey to see how many interviews per hour an interviewer can achieve to assess how many interviewers overall you will need.

Interviewers should be trained before starting fieldwork. Many of the practical issues are covered in the next section ‘Field Issues’. Ideally interviewers should be trained in a face-to-face setting if this is possible. They should be provided with written instructions and guidance notes about how to introduce the survey and how to ask survey questions. Some training notes from other sources can be found in Annex B.

Interviewers will need to have access to a suitable space to complete interviews and have the necessary technology. This may incur new costs for the statistics office i.e. purchasing call data for officer’s mobile phones (landlines are not generally used in some countries such as Ghana).

Interviewers should ideally work from an office if this is practical. This allows interviewers to be monitored and allows them to easily ask questions of a supervisor, particularly as they get used to new working practices. However, in some countries, office working will not be practical or allowed, so the interviewer will need to complete the interviews at home.

Interviewers will need to have the means to be able to make telephone calls. Ideally the office will have a central telephony system, but if this is not possible, then landlines or mobile phones should be available to every interviewer. This could be the phone belonging to the interviewer or provided by the office, perhaps with a service that is prepaid by the office. If the interviewer is calling a specific respondent who they have spoken to before face-to-face then the interviewer should have their own telephone number so that the respondent can call them back directly rather than have to go through a central number.

Annex A outlines the telephone interviewing procedures that were set up for the Rwanda Labour Force Survey, which are examples of good practice.

The questionnaire

Face-to-face interviews are typically longer than what is recommended for a telephone interview. Therefore, you will need to consider whether you need a reduction in the survey content in order to maintain a good response rate. In the UK context telephone surveys are typically no longer than 20-25 minutes, but respondent tolerances will differ from country to country.

If the questionnaire does need to be made shorter, consider which questions are needed to generate your key indicators. For example, for the collection of price statistics it is likely that businesses will not own a scale so the statistics office will need to decide how to deal with this missing information consistently. Other adjustments may be needed, such as the introduction to the survey, particularly if there has been no letter sent out in advance of the interview, or no introductory contact.

There may be a need to consider additional survey content to cover issues directly relating to COVID-19. If this is the case, this should be done carefully. Consider whether adding questions may impact on how people answer existing questions or impact on drop off rates by making the questionnaire too long.

As well as the length of the questionnaire you will need to consider whether you need to make changes to the question wording to make it suitable for asking over the telephone. For example, you will not be able to show respondents lists of answers to choose from. You will need to include on your telephone questionnaire whether you want the interviewer to read out the list for the respondent, or just take the answer the respondent says and code it to the list on the questionnaire.

Some templates for questionnaires are provided by the World Bank (see International Guidance).

Field issues

This section details some of the practical considerations with conducting fieldwork on the telephone. A lot of the issues discussed below can be read about in more detail in the material made available by the World Bank in the International Guidance section.

Calling patterns

Thought should be given as to how many days or weeks interviewing needs to last. This will depend on how many interviews you need to achieve, how many interviewers you have available and also on the periodicity of the survey. However, you should also allow enough time for interviewers to get back in touch with respondents who have indicated that they are happy to do the interview, but not at the specific time the interviewer first calls.

Not all respondents will answer the phone straight away. Many numbers may not be answered or may go through to an answerphone. Interviewers should make as many call attempts as possible up to an agreed maximum number in order to make contact with the respondent.

There should be clear rules for the interviewer about what is expected from them, and calls should be spread over different days and different times of day, if possible. For example, interviewers should be issued with something like the following:

"You must make up to 10 calls to try and make contact with households/businesses. These must be spread between 9am and 7pm on different days of the week with at least 2 hours in between call attempts. At least 3 calls should be at the weekend, or after 5 pm." For ONS household surveys interviewers need to make at least six calls, including at least two calls on different weekday evenings, and at least two calls on a Saturday. Similar rules were applied for the Rwanda Labour Force Survey (see Annex A).

The exact nature of the rules needs to be adapted for local cultural practices (for example being called on a Sunday may be culturally inappropriate for some respondents) but for household surveys must aim to cover all the different times of day and week when respondents may be available. However, for business surveys, where you have established data collection times in line with business operating times, these should be observed.

A record of these calls needs to be made and collected to make sure that interviewers are following the rules correctly (see next section for more information).

Once contact has been made, the interview does not necessarily need to happen straight away, availability can be checked, and appointments made.

Monitoring

Interviewers will need to be monitored to make sure that they are making sufficient progress. This will be more challenging if the interviewers are working from home, although existing ways of monitoring process might be suitable to be adapted for telephone interviewing.

The ideal situation is to have a central ‘case management system’ where interviewers can log progress and the whole team can access the information to see how things are progressing. If interviewers are working from home, this information might be telephoned into HQ, or entered electronically into the system at home if this is feasible.

Interviewers should use outcome codes to record final outcomes for their sampled cases. The list of outcome codes can be like those used for face to face surveys but will need to be adapted to make sense for the telephone survey context. Where possible, interviewers should log interim outcome codes, i.e. log each time they have made a call, and what the outcome of that call is. This helps to judge how well an interviewer is performing, and how likely you are to reach your desired number of interviewers.

Having a good case management system also allows you to see whether you may need to make adjustments or revisions to your survey. For example, you may need to issue more sample to interviewers, or change your rules for interviewers, such as asking them to make up to 20 calls rather than 10 if a lot of cases do not have a final outcome code after 10 calls).

For quality control purposes, supervisors or head office should consider whether a random selection of households or businesses is re-contacted to check the accuracy of the information recorded in the case management system and to understand the users experience of data collection through this mode.

Interviewing best practice

Making contact

Some interviewers may not be experienced at making contact with respondents over the telephone and must be guarded against saying the wrong thing, as this can put off the respondent and have a big impact on response.

Interviewers should be given the exact wording to say when they make calls, and this should be followed in all circumstances in the initial part of the phone conversation. Thought should be given as to local factors. For example, if your organisation is not well known, or does not have a good reputation, you may not want to dwell on our organisation too much in the introduction (although it should still be mentioned for ethical reasons).

If there is a monetary incentive for participating in the survey, it should be mentioned at the start of the call to keep the respondent engaged.

Examples of introductions are given in Annex B.

Avoiding refusals

Interviewers should be ready to answer initial questions and queries from respondents, and interviewers should be issued with answers to frequently asked questions as part of their initial training. This will help to avoid early refusals from respondents. This might include the answers to questions such as:

- where did you get my name telephone number from?
- is this survey compulsory?
- why should I bother? What good will come from me doing this survey?
- do I have to do it here and now?
- can you send me a paper form instead? Can I do it over the Internet?

- what will happen to my answers after this, is the survey confidential?
- who can I call if I want further information about the survey?

Interviewers should have standard answers to give in these circumstances so there is consistency in what is being said across interviewers. Some example answers to some of these can be found in Annex B. However, if you are using the same staff to undertake the telephone data collection as the field data collection, it is likely that a rapport has already been established for officers to build on.

Making appointments

Interviewers should be clear that the reason for early refusals is usually the situation at the time of the call, offering to call back at another time often averts refusals. Interviewers should manage their diaries well and be clear about when they will be available to make an appointment and call back. Pressure should not be applied on respondents to fit in with interviewer availability, but interviewers should be as flexible as possible with their availability.

With a more advanced telephony and case management system, respondent availability can be entered into the central system, and an available interviewer can be messaged to call at a specific time, even if this is not the original interviewer.

When the call goes through to answerphone

If the phone number goes through to answerphone, interviewers should leave their name and organisation details and state that they will call back.

How to capture responses

Thought must be given as to how the answers respondents give will be captured. There are two options, but ONS would recommend option 2:

1. a paper system where the interviewer will have a paper questionnaire for each interview and will complete it with the respondent over the telephone. Although this might seem easier logistically, careful thought needs to be given to:
    - making sure that the interviewer records information clearly and correctly
    - making sure that the paper form has an ID number that matches the sample frame

- making sure that a system is in place for completed forms to be sent back frequently to the office for processing (if interviewing takes place from the interviewer's home)
- making sure that a processing system is in place for timely data entry

2. an electronic system, which can be as simple as something like an Excel spreadsheet, or a computer package specifically designed for surveys. The advantages are:
   - information is more likely to be collected clearly and correctly and is likely to need less editing in the office
   - information is easier and quicker to send back to the office (if interviewing takes place from the interviewer's home)
   - is more cost efficient as information does not need to be re-entered electronically from a paper form
   - most computer packages specifically designed for surveys can be programmed to make sure that questionnaire routing is automatically followed correctly

However, an electronic system requires interviewers to either have a computer at home, or to be working in the office. If working at home, the interviewer also needs the means to be able to send survey responses securely electronically back to the office. The interviewer also needs the necessary computer skills to be able to enter responses.

Incoming calls to the office

It is good practice to have a central telephone number that respondents can call if they have any questions about the survey. This number can appear on any letters that are posted out before or during fieldwork. It can also be given out by interviewers to respondents who want to call in to HQ for more information about the survey. This may need to be adjusted depending on individual country setup.

Thought must be given as to who will answer calls to this central number. This should be a small number of people, ideally based on HQ. They should be thoroughly briefed about the survey and how it is being conducted. As with interviewers they should be issued with answers to frequently asked questions as part of their initial training. This will help to avoid early refusals from respondents.

A central system will be needed to make a record of each call, and log what further action should be taken. Ideally this will be an electronic system that can be accessed by the team and all interviewers as part of a central case management system.

If this is not possible, then a paper system of recording calls should be given. An example of a form designed in Excel that could be used as a paper version is given in Annex C. A system will be needed for getting messages back to interviewers in a timely way.

Maximising response rates and dealing with non-response bias

For many reasons the move to collecting data via the telephone may mean that it is not possible to achieve a representative sample with as high response levels as desired and this could lead to bias in various ways.

There are many ways to try and achieve a high response rate, many of which have already been discussed:

- accurate sample
- well trained interviewers
- letters in advance/ incentives/advertising
- well managed fieldwork with flexible interviewing times for respondents

While the total response rate is an important indicator to monitor, a high response rate could still be biased if the achieved sample is unrepresentative, while a lower level of response may in fact be less biased if non-response is randomly distributed.

In terms of telephone interviewing some potential sources of bias are worth noting, such as:

- some groups do not have landline or mobile phone or do not want their numbers to be published on registers or directories.
- other groups are difficult to contact although contact details are available. If you are trying to call a landline telephone some groups have lifestyles that keep them out of their houses for most of time during the day and week, hence being difficult to find them home. Even with mobile phone numbers some groups may be less inclined to answer the phone if they do not recognise the incoming number.

Bias arising from non-response is likely to assume higher relevance in the current context of widespread lockdowns. One of the ways to avoid biases as a result of non-response is to use mixed modes, for instance, continuing to use face-to-face interviewing to cover cases which are difficult to contact, but this is unlikely to be possible in the current circumstances.

It is recommended to consider in advance of what groups might be less likely to respond using any relevant survey or other data sources that may be available and then attempt to achieve additional interviews for those groups. However, this might be difficult to do in advance may only become visible once the data has been collected. If it can be predicted in advance, it should be part of your sampling procedures.

Handling non-response after fieldwork starts with an assessment of possible bias. Compare the characteristics of the actual achieved sample with the sampling frame, population figures or past samples. If the assessment suggests that possible biases may exist - for example few households covered in some rural areas but higher coverage in urban areas – there are (at least) two options:

- attempt to achieve additional interviews for those groups that have been less well covered. This is only feasible where these groups are clear and the variables are included on the sampling frame that allow you to select an additional sample.
- try to reduce the bias with non-response adjustments and weighting (see next section).

Post-collection processing and analysis

Data entry or transmission

If telephone interviewing involves entering answers into a spreadsheet on a computer, you will need to make sure that secure internet access is available to transmit the data back to the office if interviewing takes place from the interviewer's home. These should be tested in advance to make sure that data is not lost or that there are any other technical issues.

If interviewers are using paper questionnaire along with telephone interviews, a system will need to be put in place to enable to answers to be entered into an electronic spreadsheet. If a data entry software has already been developed, this could be made available to interviewers, along with the necessary training on how to use it. Alternatively, logistics will need to be put in place for the forms to be returned and entered. If the HQ office is not open then the processes and systems may need to be remotely implemented, if this is feasible. If it is not feasible, forms may need to be collected and stored for later entry, which delays publication but doesn't risk loss of data.

Will you need to 'clean' your data?

As with face-to-face mode, consideration should be given to whether the completed data needs to be checked and 'cleaned' before analysis. Existing processes from the face-to-face mode should still be relevant but will need to be adapted if changes have been made to your questionnaire.

You should document your survey processes

It is important for future reference that you document each stage of the survey process to say how you have done each stage. This is from the choosing of a sample right through to the creation of a weighted database ready for analysis.

Non-response adjustment and weighting

Non-response adjustment and weighting approaches are closely linked parts of a strategy that can reduce bias in estimates by weighting the achieved sample to some external population data. The following extracts of key points are taken from a summary of non-response adjustment and weighting considerations provided by the ILO in their COVID-19 guidance paper.

… separate non-response adjustments are often used to impose the characteristics of the originally selected sample and is done before any other weighting or calibration. It requires information about both responding and non-responding households, which is often limited to the information used during sampling.

Where samples have a panel element in their design, non-response adjustment models can be constructed using longitudinal data by comparing the structure of the longitudinal sub-samples over time and correcting for panel attrition and non-response.

Weighting methods can produce estimates that are generally more accurate than those obtained using the design weight (i.e. the reciprocal of the probability of inclusion) only. Weighting methods allow us to equate the sample distributions with the population distributions.

Several methods are available to weight sample data using auxiliary information in sophisticated approaches such as raking, generalised regression and calibration. Despite their complexity, these approaches are increasingly popular as the availability of software to implement them has increased. However, while it may be attractive to move to calibration if not already employed, countries are advised to continue with their current weighting approach, or at least allow sufficient time to develop any alternatives.

The assessment or implementation of possible weighting alternatives is not straightforward. For example, where countries include sex in their current weighting framework but not age group it is possible that weighted sample estimates for certain age groups would be regularly under- or over-estimated (as they are not benchmarked to population figures). However, if the under- or over-

representation of age-groups within the sample is stable over time then the estimates may still be comparable.

Under the current exceptional circumstances, the response rate can decrease and the proportions represented by the different age groups might change as well, indicating a new or changed bias. If a new benchmark by age group is introduced to reduce the bias it may affect comparability with previous estimates. Therefore consideration must also be given to applying the new approach to previous periods and recalculating historical estimates.

Non-response adjustment or weighting cannot correct for all biases as it will only relate to certain selected criteria or variables. For example, if non-response adjustment or weighting corrects for age but not for household type then any differences in response rates between types of households could still generate bias.

There is no single recommended approach to weighting or calibration that would necessarily generate improved statistics in response to the COVID-19 disruptions. If differential non-response for some subgroups of the population is envisaged, then the existing weighting scheme needs to be reviewed, considering how well it may or may not correct for any biases that are identified.

Changes in data time series

Changes to the mode of data collection from face to face to telephone collection are more than likely to result in a change in your time series, if you have historical data points to compare with. Some people can answer the same question differently over the telephone compared with face-to-face. In addition, the interviewer is not able to help respondents in the same way. For example, looks of confusion on a respondent's face cannot be seen on a telephone interview, so interviewers cannot step in and help to explain further.

The move to other modes as a result of COVID-19 can often be regarded as a break in the time series. However, the impact of the change can be minimised by using some of the approached outlined in this paper. Further advice regarding survey mode effects has been published in relation to the UK Household Longitudinal Study ("Understanding Society").

Also, guidance from the UK's Government Statistical Service on comparability in analysis can be found in its note on comparability.

Analysis and dissemination of results

You should consider whether anything in your usual reporting and analysis of the survey's results needs to change. This is particularly important if you are expecting lower achieved numbers due to lower response rates. There may be some cross tabulations that are no longer possible because of lower sample sizes generally, or in particular population groups.

Linked to this it is recommended that some up-to-date sampling errors are calculated, if possible, and compared with those produced in the past.

Alternative data sources

You should consider whether there are any alternative data sources that you could use instead of moving your survey from face-to-face to telephone interviewing. Or your survey could be supplemented with non-traditional indicators such as mobility patterns among Google and Facebook users, social media activity, the extent of pollution in the atmosphere, patterns in vehicle movements, or data derived from satellite images.

You may be able to gain access to more administrative information from within government which means that you can get some of your analysis done without having to ask questions within a survey.

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data is pushing for the use of alternative data sources, such as the African Regional Data Cube project.

There are very interesting developments in the area of alternative data sources, although they are often some way from being able to supplement official statistics in any substantial way.

Other considerations

Delaying fieldwork

The ILO guidance outlines the option to delay fieldwork until face-to-face interviews are able to be resumed. However, as well as not being able to predict when that might be, do not assume that households or businesses will want to start taking part in surveys face-to-face. Some of the issues being debated in the UK are summarised in this article: “Someone’s knocking at the door”.

‘Knock and nudge’

A new method being trialled in the UK at the moment is called ‘knock and nudge’, which is similar to the use of village chiefs in Rwanda (Annex A). This is in the context where telephone numbers are not available for households that have been selected for a survey (many UK household surveys select households by their address only).

In these cases interviewers are allowed to visit sampled household addresses, but do not do any interviewing when they make contact. Instead, with appropriate safeguarding of interviewers and respondents, the interviewer attempts to collect a telephone number, and a telephone interview is attempted at a later point. Hence the interviewer ‘knocks’ at the respondent door and ‘nudges’ the household to take part by telephone.

Video interviewing

Another method possibly worth considering if the technology allows is video interviewing. This is similar to telephone interviewing in that an interviewer makes contact remotely with a household, but it is visual as well as aural, of course.

The main advantages are that visual materials (such as lists of possible answers) can be shown rather than read out and the interviewer can have visual contact with the respondent looking out for signs of confusion or lack of engagement.

The disadvantages are that suitable technology needs to be available and suitably robust both to the interviewer and the majority of respondents to make it worthwhile, and an alternative method needs to be available when it is not possible.

Introducing self-completion on the Internet

Some countries have introduced a facility for respondents to complete questionnaires by themselves over the Internet. While self-completion via the Internet is being increasingly used, it is not used (or likely to be used) in isolation as the only mode of data collection.

Experience to date shows that self-completion via the Internet can be useful to increase response in certain groups (e.g. those for whom it may be difficult to arrange interviews), but the main benefit is to reduce the cost of data collection. However, if used in isolation it will lead to partial and biased response without other modes.

Therefore, it is not recommended to plan to introduce self-completion via the Internet as the only mode of collection. Further, the introduction of this different mode is a significant development. The questionnaire will require adaptation for self-completion. Internet guides will need to be developed, survey management processes and systems will need to be updated etc. This will clearly be more feasible if the country has experience of surveys via the internet but would nonetheless require a comprehensive development and testing process before implementation.

In the UK, the ONS is currently going through a period of transformation, aiming to move as much social survey data collection as possible from face-to-face only surveys to mixed mode surveys, online first. The most progress has been made with the ONS Omnibus Survey (known as the Opinions Survey) and the Labour Force Survey, as described in the following articles:

- Labour Market Survey: technical report
- Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Annex A: Selected methods implemented in the Labour Force Survey in Rwanda

Extracts from the published report Rwanda Labour Force Survey Trends, May 2020

Background (following lockdown)

The government of Rwanda need updated information on labour market situation as well as monitoring employment from March to May 2020. However, social distancing practices in Rwanda were taken to fight the spread of COVID-19, and other measures severely limited the use of face-to-face interviews methodology in household-based surveys to collect data.

In response, the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) in partnership with the Labour Ministry (MIFOTRA) and GIZ has initiated and implemented a quick labour force telephone-based survey to capture main labour market indicators and monitor the employment throughout COVID-19 pandemic period.

Sampling

The list of households contacted for the rapid labour force telephone survey interview were taken from households which had been interviewed during the Labour Force Survey conducted in February 2020. The total interviewed households in February 2019 was 4,491 including 3,785 that had phone number and 706 without. However, after a careful observation of the list, it was realised that some telephone numbers were not valid and 301 households were excluded from the list.

The final list of the households which were contacted for interview contained 3,484 households corresponding to 77.5 per cent of the households interviewed in February 2020. Out of 3,484 contacted households for interview in May-June, 3,401 households corresponding to 97.6 per cent responded.

An implication of using telephone interviewing was the decreasing the February 2020 sample size by 22.5 percent. However, the standard errors of the estimates for main indicators provided by the LFS quarterly sample were still relatively low, even though they were increased by around 0.3 percentage points from 0.7 per cent in February 2020 to 0.95 per cent in May 2020.

Weighting

The weighting for the May-June estimates was done using the following two main steps: First, computing the adjusted weight for May-June labour force telephone survey; and then calibrating the weight to May 2020 population using 2012 population projections.

For the first step, list of enumeration areas containing the sampling information of February 2020 was used. The February 2020 design weight was adjusted to account for the attrition in number of households by enumeration areas due to households without telephone. Specifically, the adjustment was done by multiplying the design weight by the quotient of 16 (which is intake HH by PSU) and the number of households having valid telephone number in each PSU. The next step to obtain the final adjusted weight was the adjustment of the first adjusted weight by non-responses in each PSU.

The final step of weighting as above mentioned was the calibration of the adjusted weight to the population of May 2020. The calibration procedure followed the methodology of Deville and Sarndäl ("Calibration Estimators in Survey Sampling," Journal of the American Statistical Association, Vol. 87, 1992, pp. 376-382)

Questionnaire

Due to the nature of interview, the questionnaire volume was substantially reduced compared to the questionnaires administered in the LFS from August 2016 to February 2020. It was reduced to keep the interviewing time between 25 and 30 minutes.

The current questionnaire has two parts: the first part has a few questions on social and demographic characteristics such as age, sex, relationship with head of household and education. The second part which is the main one focuses on labour supply characteristics. It has a part that allows the classification of working age population in employment, unemployment and out of labour force. Those identified as employed are asked a few questions on employment characteristics such as current and usual hours of working, status in employment, economic activity and income from employment. There are also some retrospective questions on employment history, especially in March and April.

In addition, persons who were identified as not currently employed but reported that they were employed in March 2020 were asked to report the reason why they stopped working.

Training of interviewers

The training of interviewers took place from 13th to 15th May 2020 at NISR training center. In total, 30 trainees selected from the list of LFS field workers were trained on questionnaire and the use of telephone and CAPI to conduct the telephone interview. The trainers were NISR staff who have a strong experience in designing and conducting labour force survey, together with IT personal who developed the LFS Data entry application.

After the training, a pilot survey using the sub sample from November 2019 was conducted and some adjustments on the questionnaire and the data collection program were made. The pilot also provided information on the length of interview on average which were used to determine the daily work load of interviewers.

Data collection/Telephone interviewing

Two days before the data collection, a short telephone message was sent to the heads of households in the sample informing them about the survey and asking them to cooperate by providing requested information by the NISR staff through the telephone call. In addition, a spot radio was prepared and was displayed on radio twice per day.

The data collection started on 18th May and ended on 17th June 2020. The interviews were conducted in two big rooms of the NISR training center, where the interviewers were seating with enough distance to avoid interfering each other during the time of call. The interviewers were given by the NISR a telephone with airtime, head phone, tablet and the assignment list containing the names of heads of households and their telephone. Each interviewer was tasked to make at least 8 interviews per day. To carry out the interview, the interviewers had systematically to select an enumeration area, and households and call till someone pick the phone and consent to be interviewed. If after the call, no one picked the phone the interviewer went on to the next person and come back to the same person after 2 hours. The questionnaire for which the telephone was ringing but no one picked it was closed after 6 attempts of calls, with 2 hours interval of time between attempts, during 2 days.

Some given telephone numbers were not accessible because the person has no longer the telephone or because of network problems. Those cases were marked on the assignment paper for the next trial some days later, in order to give the priority to the respondents with accessible phone numbers. After covering the EA, the interviewer went back to the heads of households for which the telephone was not accessible during the first trials and tried to ask the interviewer neighbour living in the same village if he/she know that person. In many cases, especially in rural areas, the respondents were cooperative and accepted to connect interviewers to heads of households for whom the telephone numbers were not accessible. In that case, the household head provided a new telephone number to be used or the interview was conducted using the telephone of that neighbour.

Use of chiefs of villages to assist response

Chief of villages play also an important role to minimise the non-response rate, especially in rural areas. Interviewers were provided with the list containing the telephone numbers of chief of villages collected during the listing activities of household in the selected enumeration areas. Chief of villages helped also in connecting interviewers with the heads of households for whom the telephone numbers were not accessible.

Quality control

Each group of 6 interviewers was assigned with the NISR supervisors. The supervisors had the responsibility to follow-up the conduct of interview and support the interviewers in solving difficulties uncounted during the data collection process. To follow-up the interviews, the supervisors were requested to pick one interviewer, ask him/her to recode the interview and send it to the supervisor. After listening it, supervisor provided comments to the interviewer and provided advices for the improvements in the next interview.

Annex B: Examples of introductions to telephone calls and telephone survey etiquette

Rwanda

The following is used on the Rwanda Labour Force Survey on the telephone.

Interviewer read to the respondent:

> Greetings! My name is___________. I am working with National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). We are currently doing a nationwide Labour force survey to examine the impact of coronavirus to the employment in Rwanda.
>
> I am trying to reach [NAME OF PHONE OWNER] or any other adult living with [HEAD NAME]?
>
> May I know to Whom I am speaking, please?

Once it is established the interviewer is speaking to the correct person, the following is read out.

Interviewer read to the respondent:

> This interview will take around 25 minutes. The information we collect will help the government to plan for employment in the country, they will be kept strictly confidential and only be used for statistical purposes.
>
> I hope you will accept to cooperate as your answers are very important for this research
>
> This call will not cost you any airtime. To thank you for your participation, we will also transfer airtime to your phone. Are you willing to participate?

UK

The following are the interviewer instructions and guidance relating to the collection of prices data, including the wording of introductions and how to close calls. Following this is a template used when sending emails to businesses.

Local Collection Telephone calls 2020 (COVID-19 period only)

We are in a unique position and need to change the way we collect prices for the next few months. These instructions have been provided to help you phone and try and obtain prices from the independent outlets that are normally visited by [the data collection contractor] during price index week.

For this collection exercise you will be populating the spreadsheet that has been sent out to you. Details of the independent retail outlets and their contact numbers are on the spreadsheet. There are a few missing so you will need to try and find these numbers using the internet, e.g. Google, or any other resources available.

If you can find a website for the retailer and it looks like they are still trading (no obvious COVID-19 message saying they have ceased trading) then you can try and collect the prices online instead.

Here are some example scripts that you may find useful during your telephone conversation:

> Introduce yourself, for example: "Good morning/afternoon, my name is.....and I am calling from the Office for National Statistics.
>
> "As you are hopefully aware, we usually send in a collector to you on a monthly basis (from a company we use called Kantar) to collect prices for a range of items in your shop for the Consumer Price Index, but due to the Coronavirus, we have had to suspend all field data collection.
>
> "I appreciate you are very busy during this time but wondered if we could collect some of the prices over the phone as ONS are still obligated under legislation to produce the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).
>
> "Please would you provide me with the price(s) for Item(s)."

If there are more than 5 prices to collect from one retailer you may offer an option to supply the prices via email. Please collect their preferred email address. You will then need to ask any relevant questions to ensure that the correct item is being priced based on the previous item collected, paying attention to the Item description on the spreadsheet. Any changes in Price on the previous period will need to be verified during the conversation and recorded on the spreadsheet.

> Closing the call, for example: "Thank you so much for taking part in the CPI survey, would it be ok if I call you again next month if the situation remains the same?"

More detailed questions

If the contact wants more information or asks detailed questions that you feel unprepared for then below is some more information you could give them.

Consumer price indices are important indicators of how the UK economy is performing and are often referred to as the "Inflation Rate" in the media.
The indices are used in many ways by government, Bank of England, businesses and society. They can affect interest rates, tax allowances, bank gilts, bonds, wages, and pensions to name a few.

You can also lift information from the booklet which describes the two main consumer price indices in the UK - the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and the Retail Prices Index (RPI)

Refusal: If the contact refuses to provide the information over the phone because they are too busy, then thank them for their time and close the call. Record on spreadsheet.

Additional Notes: If the business is no longer trading, or the nature of the business has changed, and they can no longer provide the information required then record on spreadsheet.

COVID19: In case of refusals or increased prices due to COVID-19, please make a note in the comments that this is the cause as it will help with validation.

Email template

Good morning _______,

My name is ________ and I am emailing from the Office for National Statistics. I [had a discussion with one of your colleagues this morning who confirmed that it would be ok for me to send you an email to request prices]/am sending the request as agreed (Delete as appropriate) for the Consumer Prices Index.

Each month we collect prices for the following items from your shop: provided in the table below. I've included your prices from last month's collection for comparison.

Please could you complete the table and return to me as soon as possible?

Note: If there are any significant increases or decreases in price, would you please provide the driving factor for the changes; a simple statement would suffice e.g. supply chain increases/COVID-19 demand/Sale. If prices have stayed the same no additional comment is needed.

Insert copied and pasted table into the email.

Shop Name		**XXX Pharmacy**				
Item ID	**Item type**	**Description**	**Price last month**	**Price this month**	**In stock (y/n)**	**On sale (y/n)**

I appreciate that this is a difficult time for everyone but your ongoing cooperation for the Consumer Price Index collection is very much appreciated.

It would be really helpful if we could rely on your support again next month should the current situation continue.

Kind regards

_______.

Survey Telephone Process and Etiquette

Description: This section presents guidance produced by the World Bank about how interviewers should conduct themselves during a survey phone interview. The purpose is to ensure interviewers maintain the highest form of cordiality and discipline when carrying out phone interviews.

Before the call

There are several things you need to have ready before you even start dialling a number to start an interview. You must make sure you are in an environment that is conducive for your calls, so there should be no disturbance around you. You should also make sure the equipment you will be using for the interview process- your phone and tablets – are in working order. Phone interviews require you to be very attentive, otherwise you might miss something, so it is important that you have everything prepared before you begin. Specifically:

- Make sure you can get as much privacy as possible and are adhering to all rules regarding security and confidentiality.
- If at home, inform members of your household of what you are about to do, so you are not disturbed. Put a “DO NOT DISTURB” sign on the door. It is important to minimize distractions, so that your respondent does not become bored or frustrated and hang up.
- Make sure you have your PC or tablet ready, fully-charged, and open to the first household you will interview.
- Check the volume on your phone. Do a test with a friend to make sure you can be heard, and you can hear clearly.
- Have a clock in front of you, and time yourself; so, you can pace your questions.

Initiating the call

Once you start dialling a number, you MUST BE PREPARED to speak. This is why you should have had everything in place before you start dialling. You do not want to keep the answerer waiting on the phone once they pick up, your full attention should be on the call at all times.

- **Do not** be distracted by your environment
- **Do not** keep the answerer waiting

Identifying interview respondent

You are provided with different numbers to call for each household. In your tablet you will find number(s) for household members and possibly a number for a reference person, who is a non-household member. You must remember that you need to speak to a member of the household whose name appears on your tablet, which should preferably be the head of the household or at least an adult member (15 years or older) of the household. The person who answers the call, might not be either one of these persons so you will need to convince them to connect you with that person, especially if they are of a different household.

Remember to be ready to respond once the answerer picks up. Begin with:

> "Good morning/afternoon/evening Sir/Madam. My name is (First name and Last name). I am working for the World Bank Group in collaboration with National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). We are currently doing a nationwide survey to examine the impact of and responses to the coronavirus in the country."
>
> [pause and continue]
>
> "I am trying to reach (Household head FULL Name) or any other adult living with (Household head FULL Name). Who am I speaking to please?"

When the answerer tells you his or her name, you will know if it is your target respondent you are speaking to. If it is not the target respondent, then you ask very politely if the target respondent is available to take the call. Follow the directions and protocols you have been trained on to complete the 'Interview Information'.

If the answerer is not a member of the household, then you will need to convince the person (likely the reference person) to either provide a number you can call to directly speak to a member of the household or be willing to take their phone to the household, so you can speak to your target respondent or another adult member of the target household.

> "Could you give me their number or visit them so I can call them using your phone? It is really important for me to be able to speak to them"

You may need to coax the reference person to take the phone to the household if they do not have a number to give you. Using words like “I would be grateful”, “If you would be so kind”, “It would greatly help if you could…”. There is no need to beg, just ask with some humility that will encourage the reference person to go out of their way to do what you need them to do. If the reference person (answerer) is unwilling to provide a number or leave their home, after you have attempted to convince them to, then **do not** push further. Simply thank them for their time and follow the protocols you have been trained on.

When you have your target respondent on the phone, follow through with the rest of the ‘Interview Information’ questions as directed in your training and in this manual.

Read the rest of the introduction and ask if you can continue asking questions and that it will take about 15-20 minutes.

Make the introduction your own. In other words, introduce yourself and the project in the way you think is clear for the respondent and also with what you feel comfortable with.

Do not make any promises to the respondent or lie to the respondent just to get him/her to participate.

Questions the respondent might ask and each country should prepare their own answers:

How did you get my phone number?

For Panel Surveys: You (or the household head) may recall sometime within the last year, a team of interviewers from the NSO and the World Bank, visited households within your community to obtain consent to participate in follow up Surveys. During the exercise your household was one of the cooperative households which provided us with a phone number and permission to be part of the survey. In light of the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, we are collecting data on how households have been affected by COVID-19.

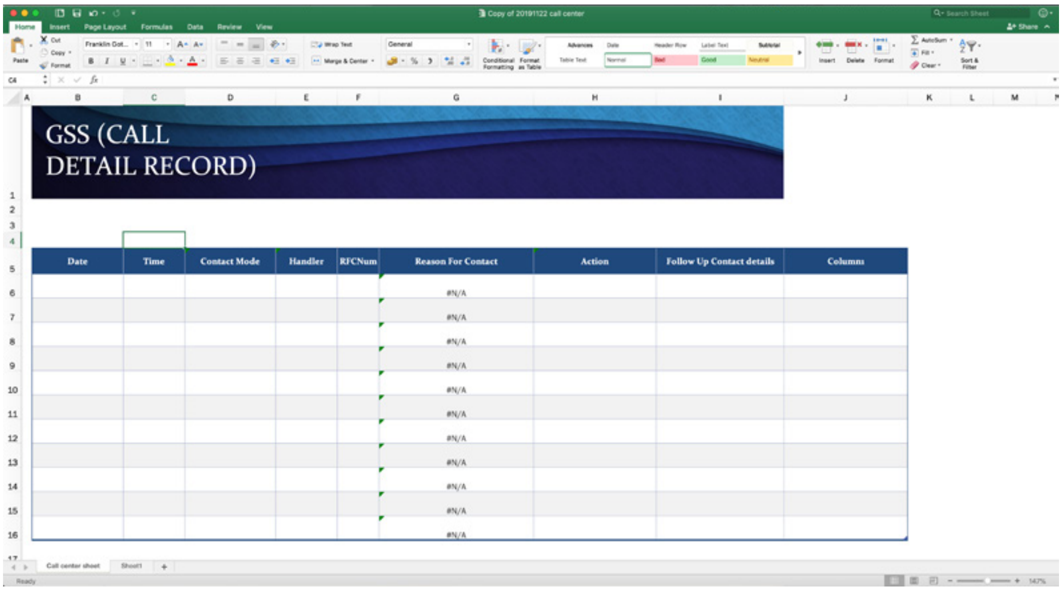
For Random Digit Dialling (RDD): No one gave us your phone number, we are calling XXX phone numbers from all the existing phone numbers in the country. In light of the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, we are collecting data on how households have been affected by COVID-19.

Etiquette

When you are on the phone with anyone:

- Speak clearly and confidently. Take brief pauses if reading a long sentence.
- Keep your voice tone at an appropriate level and maintain that level.
- Take your time to read out each question slowly.
- **Do not** engage the respondent in political discussions or discussions that are not related to the survey
- Be sure to address whoever picks up the phone with respect, even a child.
- **Do not** chew gum or eat food while on the phone.
- Maintain a high degree of professionalism at all times; remember you are representing the National Bureau of Statistics.
- When you have completed the interview, **do not** hang up on the respondent; let the respondent hang up first.
- Stress on the importance of the survey to avoid and minimize the number of refusals.
- Listen! Listening is a must-have feature when conducting a questionnaire. Even more important when conducting a phone questionnaire because you need to determine on basis of the respondent's voice if the respondent wants to participate, if the respondent is in doubt etc. According to the mood of the respondent you have to adjust the tempo of the interview. Listen carefully to determine this. Also listen carefully if the respondent has any objections against the survey so you can address them.
- Smile during the interview. People can sense when you do not do that. Smiling while conducting the interview makes it much more pleasant for both the respondent and you.
- **Do not** judge. Stay neutral throughout the conversation. Do not judge the answers of the respondent if you do not agree with him/her or if you find it obvious that the respondent should know about for example COVID-19/Corona virus. Although tempting, do not use 'okay' or 'uhu'. This might be interpreted in the incorrect way by the respondent. He/she might think that you approve or disapprove.
- Record information correctly. Best is to put your phone on speaker, so your hands are free to type in the information. If you have to type in the answer to an open-ended question you can repeat what the respondent in saying while typing. Or you can say 'Can you hold that thought for a minute, I want to make sure I get this right'.

Annex C: Examples of how to record calls into the office



The spreadsheet serves to record all incoming calls and SMS, with some information to support management with reporting.

Annex D: Assessing error

From Section 8 of the ILO's guidance paper referred to in the International Guidance section

The ILO guidance paper covers some of the actions to face the challenge of maintaining a large-scale Labour Force Survey. The correct approach to take in any given country can only be determined through an evaluation of the circumstances in the country and the different options which may be available. This evaluation needs to be holistic considering the many implications of possible approaches for data quality. In other words, the choices made should be guided ex-ante by expectations of the impacts on data quality, alongside resource implications or any other considerations relevant at the national level.

However, regardless of ex-ante evaluations, impacts on data quality will be almost inevitable, and will only become more fully understood once the data has been collected and processed.

There is a risk of survey error being introduced across all of the different stages of the survey. This is illustrated in the following table taken from Eurostat's handbook on data quality assessment methods and tools.

New survey designs should be assessed against these categories:

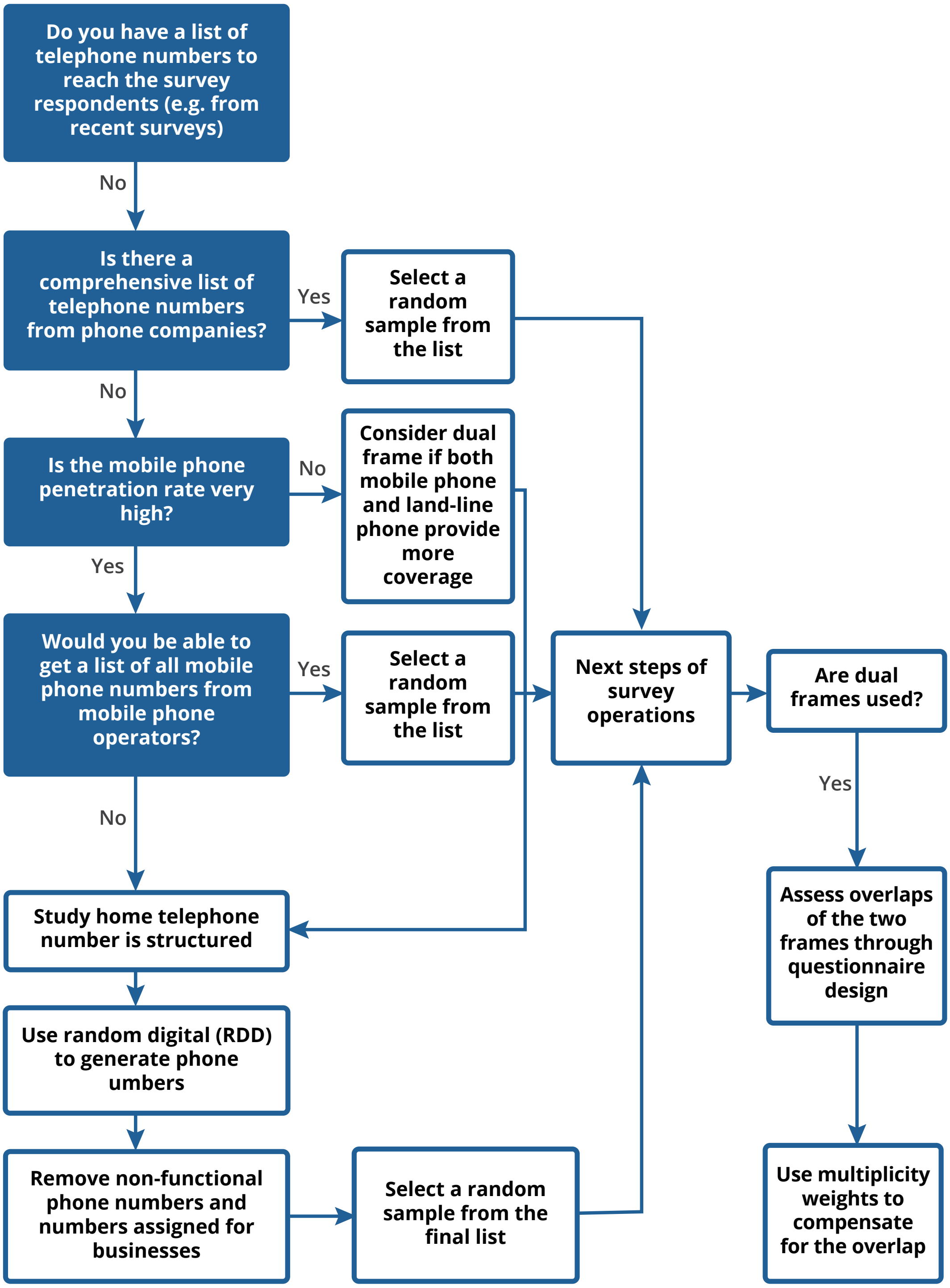
Table 2: Main headings for quality reporting under the dimensions of accuracy and comparability Dimension/indicator

	Possible impact
Accuracy	Lower accuracy due to the combined impacts
Sampling errors	Likely increase in sampling errors if achieved samples fall
Coverage errors	May increase, for example if a change in sampling approach/frame is introduced with incomplete coverage
Measurement errors	May increase if a change in mode is implemented without sufficient preparation/testing
Processing errors	May increase if changes to processing systems and practices need to be changed
Non-response errors	Likely to increase due to difficulties in maintaining response rates
Comparability	**Possible breaks in series (one or multiple)**
Comparability over time	Any change in methodology, practices or achieved response may create breaks in series. There is the potential that this may occur multiple times if changes are made in multiple periods. Simultaneously there will be actual shifts in time series due to the real-world impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market.

Source: Handbook on data quality assessment methods and tools, Eurostat

The assessment of Sampling errors can be assisted by using the following flow diagram from the UN, which can also be used to consider the best sample source for a telephone survey.

Illustration on steps if switching surveys to telephone mode



Note: information extracted by UNSD based on the interview

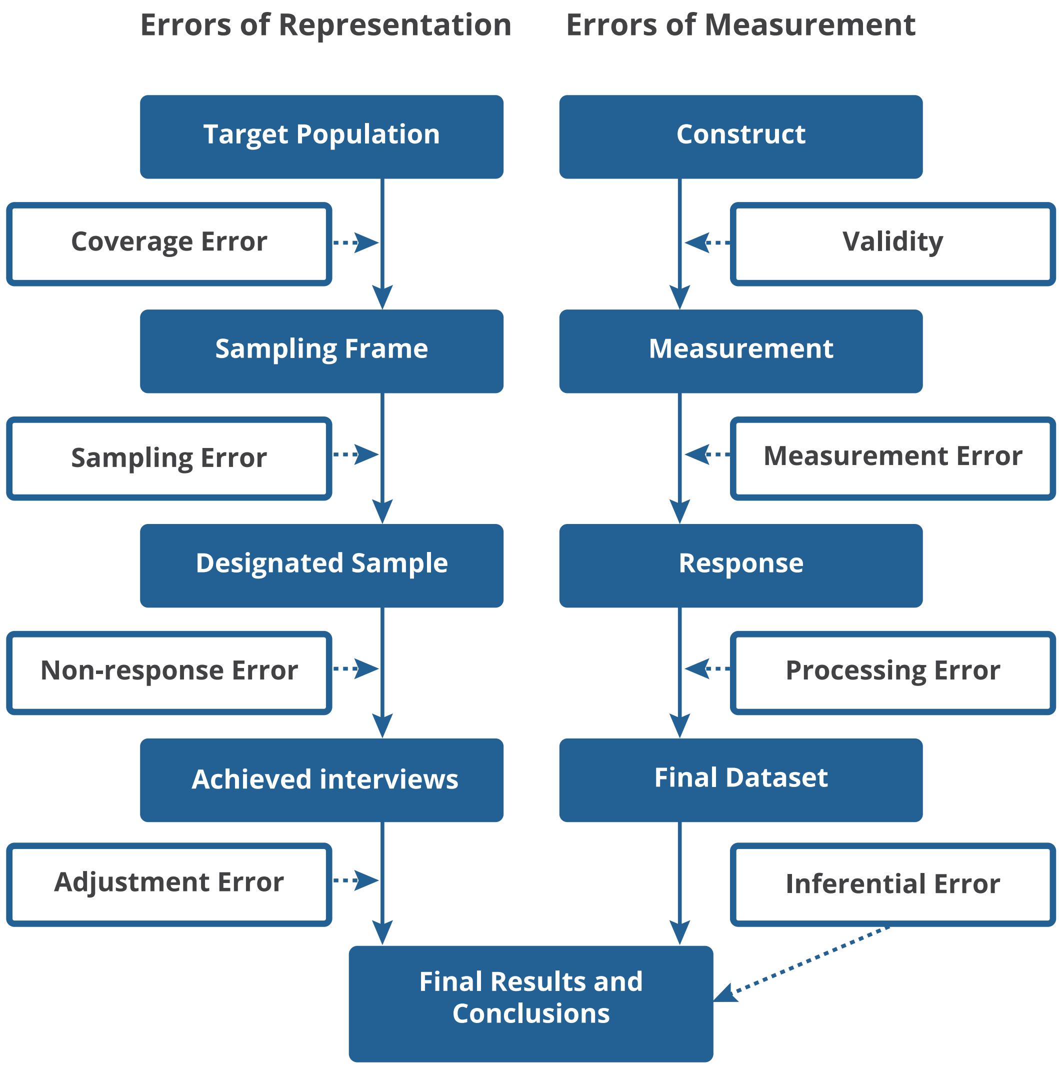
Annex E: What to look out for when quality assuring a survey design

The following is a brief checklist of things to consider when assessing the quality of a survey design proposal. This is based on the concept of Total Survey Error which is summarised in the diagram at the end of this annex. References to this diagram are given in the bullet points below:

- What sample source is being proposed? Does it cover as much of the population of interest as possible? Does it have as much contact information as possible on each sample household/business (Coverage error)
- What sample size is proposed? Is it big enough to allow robust statistical analysis (including subgroups of the population of interest)? (Sampling error)
- What modes of data collection are proposed (e.g. email, telephone)? Do they sound sensible given the population of interest? Will all (or nearly all) of this population have an opportunity to respond using at least one of the collection modes proposed? (Measurement error)
- Is it clear what question concepts are required to answer the research questions the survey is aiming to answer? Does the survey proposal detail how the question concepts will be developed into survey questions which will be understood by respondents (i.e. with pre-testing and piloting with people in advance of main fieldwork)? (Validity and Measurement error)
- What ideas are given for how to maximise response rates (see pages 14 and 15 in this document)? Do they seem sensible given the context? (Nonresponse error)
- If interviewers are being used, is it clear how they will be trained, both in terms of encouraging people to take part, and asking questions and recording answers accurately all without adding any personal interviewer bias. (Measurement error)
- Is there a clear plan for how fieldwork will be monitored and any mitigation plans if response rates are not as high as hoped? (Nonresponse and measurement error)

- Before analysis takes place, is there detail on how the survey data will be processed in a way that accounts for inconsistencies in the data, and codes any open text into closed text categories? (Processing error)
- Is there detail on how the dataset will be weighted to adjust for non-response (Adjustment error)

TSE framework



Adapted by (Lavrakas & Pennay, 2014) from (Groves et al., 2009)

Contact us

If you require more information email us at:
international.development@ons.gov.uk