

**UNECE**

# **Adapting household surveys to the situation of the pandemic**

**Working Paper Series on Statistics**

**Issue 6**



**UNITED NATIONS**

**UNECE**

**Adapting household surveys to the situation of  
the pandemic**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Designing a short questionnaire to be sent out to national statistical offices in the UNECE region	4
III.	Analyzing the information obtained from statistical offices	5
	A. Analysis of NSOs' responses to the questionnaire	5
	B. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Measuring Its Impact: An Overview of Good Practice	17
IV.	Conclusion	24
	ANNEX 1	25
	Questionnaire to focal points on poverty statistics in national statistics offices of UNECE countries	25

## **I. Introduction**

1. This interim report has been prepared in accordance with the terms of reference, which assumes conducting a study on the actions of national statistical offices (NSO) in the UNECE region to adapt poverty and household surveys to the COVID-19 context and consist of the following stages:

(a) Designing a short questionnaire to be sent out to NSO in the UNECE region;

(b) Analyzing the information obtained from NSO through the questionnaire and through documents, websites and presentations, to identify and describe emerging good practices that could be recommended to countries;

(c) Engaging with NSO offices in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to understand their demand for capacity development for poverty measurement in the COVID-19 crisis;

(d) Developing proposals and recommendations for providing technical assistance to countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, based on their demand, and considering the recommendations in "Poverty measurement: guide to data disaggregation" (UNECE 2020).

2. This report presents the results for the first and second stages of work. It should be noted that the author faced some difficulties related to the fact that only a sample of NSOs were included in the questionnaire therefore some countries left outside the study may also need support for their intentions to improve surveys to measure poverty and vulnerability in the COVID-19 context. Accordingly, since not all NSOs of UNECE countries took part in the survey, perhaps, there are other examples of good practice that were not reflected in this report.

3. This work was carried out in the project "Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Responses" of the United Nations Development Account (13th tranche).

## II. Designing a short questionnaire to be sent out to national statistical offices in the UNECE region

4. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, a Poverty Measurement in the Pandemic questionnaire was developed for focal points on poverty statistics of NSOs of the UNECE countries, which includes 14 questions (Annex 1). When developing the questionnaire, the following aspects were taken into account as its sections:

- *General section*, which specifies contact details and types of surveys conducted by NSOs to measure poverty and vulnerability;
- *Adaptation of survey-taking to the physical contact restrictions* that examines the shift to remote methods and the present difficulties of the survey-taking;
- *Special surveys designed for the pandemic crisis context and its impact*, where the ways to improve the questionnaires are asked;
- *Survey coverage of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups who may suffer disproportionately in the crisis*. This section specifies which surveys have been *taken* and which groups have been covered during pandemic;
- *Monitoring poverty and vulnerability to poverty in shorter than annual intervals*. This section clarifies what efforts have been made by NSOs to reduce periods for taking surveys;
- Statistical offices' needs for capacity development on the above-mentioned issues.

5. The questionnaire was sent to focal points of national statistical offices of the 30 countries participating in the UNECE work on poverty measurement. Replies were received from 25 national statistical offices, including 8 in Russian and 17 in English (Table 1).

Table 1  
NSOs that took part in the survey

<b>Countries in Europe and Western Asia (19)</b>	Austria, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Georgia, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom
<b>Countries of America (3)</b>	United States, Canada, Mexico*
<b>Central Asia (3)</b>	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan

*Note:* Mexico is not member of UNECE; however, participates in the work of the Conference of European Statisticians.

### III. Analyzing the information obtained from statistical offices

6. This section analyzes the NSOs' answers to the questionnaire and presents emerging good practices in the COVID-19 context based on the NSO's website documents.

#### A. Analysis of NSOs' responses to the questionnaire

##### Section I. General part

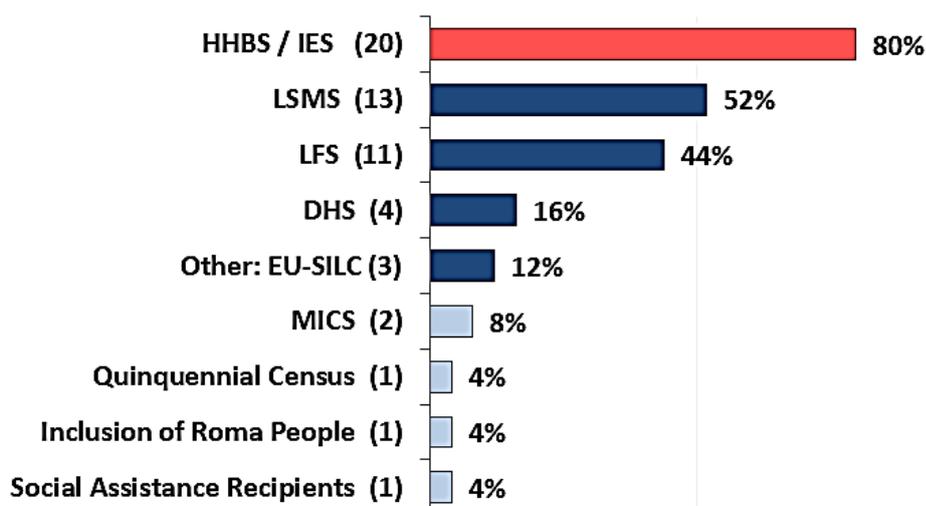
*Question 1. What surveys does your agency conduct for measuring poverty and vulnerability?*

7. During crisis, surveys to measure and assessment poverty and vulnerability are particularly relevant because governments need accurate statistical information to take informed actions to protect the most vulnerable.

8. It should be noted that all of the responding countries conduct surveys on poverty and vulnerability, which takes various forms (Figure 1). Twenty of the 25 national statistical offices that participated in the survey (80%) use the Household Budget Survey (HHBS) / Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) to measure poverty and vulnerability. Three countries (Latvia, North Macedonia and Czechia) conduct the EU-SILC or multi-topic survey integrated with it. The number of countries conducting surveys on Living standards / Living conditions (LSMS) is quite large – 13, which is 52% of those surveyed.

Figure 1

**NSO surveys to measure poverty and vulnerability, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)**



9. Survey also identifies that:

- Slightly less than half of the countries (11, or 44%) take the Labour Force Surveys (LFS);
- Four NSOs (Kyrgyzstan, Austria, Switzerland and Canada) mentioned the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS);
- The statistical offices of Belarus and Kazakhstan carry out the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

10. A number of NSOs noted that additional specific surveys were carried out to measure certain aspects of vulnerability and poverty:

- Statistics on social assistance recipients (Switzerland);
- Survey on Inclusion of Roma People (Italy);
- Quinquennial Census (Canada).

## Section II. Adaptation of survey-taking to the physical contact restrictions

11. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, national statistical offices face the challenge to be adapted to the strict restrictions on personal contacting, which led to corresponding changes of the household survey procedures and data collection methods.

*Question 2. Were you taking any of these surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic?*

12. The most of countries, 22 out of 25 (88%), reported that they kept taking the surveys on poverty and vulnerability during the pandemic. Three NSOs did not conduct poverty surveys during this period for the following reasons:

- The face-to-face interviews were prohibited due to health reasons (Luxembourg);
- The surveys were postponed to a later date (Slovakia);
- Most of staff, with some exceptions, worked remote (from home) due to COVID-19 from 16.3.2020 to 31.5.2020 (Slovenia).

*Question 3. If you did take surveys, then how did the survey-taking process change?*

13. In 20 countries out of 22 (91%) the national statistical offices have cancelled the face-to-face interviews and switched to the remote survey methods.

14. The Russian and Mexican NSO, conducted personal interviews with the mandatory use of personal protective equipment in addition to the telephone survey. For example, in Mexico, the remote methods were used for taking the Labour Force Survey, while the Income and Expenditure Survey was conducted with the face-to-face interviews, but protection gear was provided.

15. In Belarus, Kazakhstan and North Macedonia, the face-to-face interviews remained as the main method of the household surveys, but they were conducted in compliance with the physical distancing requirements of and the personal protective equipment.

*Question 4. If you switched to other methods of remote survey-taking, then which of them?*

16. **All NSOs responding to this question (21 responses)** mentioned the phone interviews as the primary method of remote data collection.

17. Only two countries, Latvia and Canada, use the website survey methods in addition to the phone survey<sup>1</sup>. A number of NSOs, Slovenia, Switzerland and Czechia, mentioned the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) methods in use, however, with certain restrictions: in Slovenia, interviews based on CAPI and CATI were interrupted starting from March 16, 2020 due to COVID-19; CATI resumed on May 15, 2020 and CAPI on July 6, 2020. In Switzerland, the CATI interviews are conducted, but some of the interviewers work at home. In the Czechia and Austria, the CAPI face-to-face interviews have been postponed.

18. Statistics Canada is the only NSO with a broader range of survey methods; it also has launched the Citizen-generated data/ Crowdsourcing Instruments.

*Question 5. What difficulties does your office currently face in taking surveys for measuring poverty and vulnerability?*

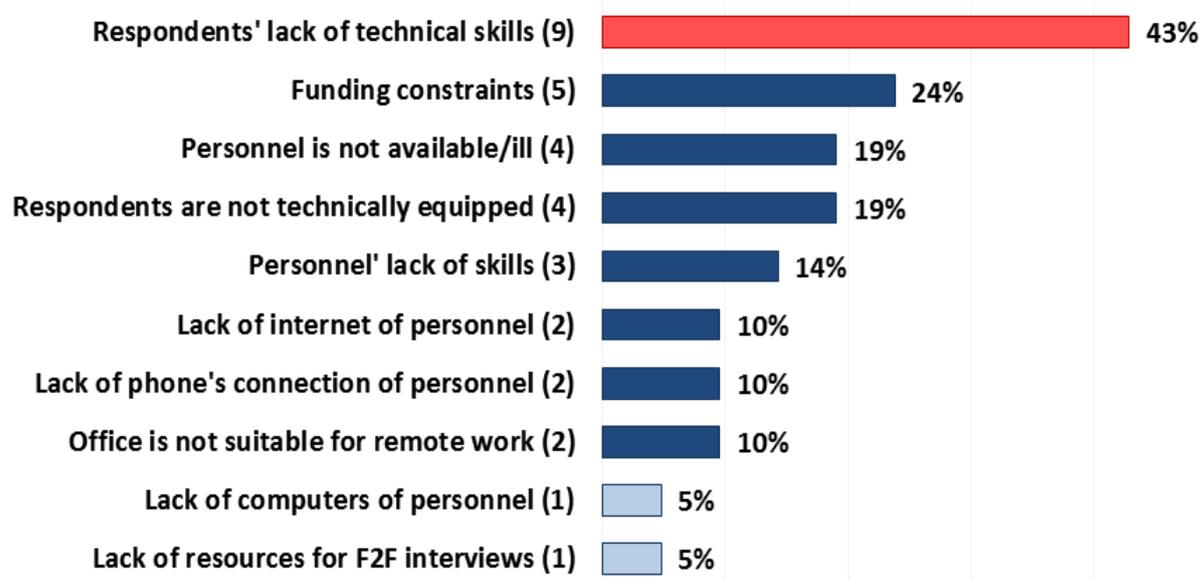
19. **Answers to this question were received from 21 NSOs.** Nearly all offices mentioned that strict physical distancing guidelines led to the cancellation of the face-to-face interviews and CAPIs.

---

<sup>1</sup> The US Census Bureau did not mention in response to this question that they switched to remote survey-taking, but its innovative products, such as the Household Pulse Survey, are online surveys. More details about them are given in the next section.

Figure 2

**Difficulties faced by NSOs in taking poverty and vulnerability surveys, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)**



20. The results of the survey (Figure 2) indicate that the most significant difficulty in taking the household surveys is related to the fact that respondents are not ready to use remote methods (43% of the answers say that the respondents do not have the required skills for online work and 19% – that they do not have the required technical equipment)). Five statistical offices (24% of the respondents) reported the pressure of financial restrictions (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Israel). In four countries (19%) the work process was hampered by the unavailability / illness of officials (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Slovakia, and Mexico).

21. The survey demonstrated that NSOs did not experience significant difficulties in the area of skills and technical equipment of their officials, as well as in the provision of Internet-based communications and transport. No statistical office mentioned the procurement difficulties.

22. Nevertheless, representatives of many offices additionally pointed out a number of difficulties arising in the process of remote (telephone) interviewing of respondents. The main ones were:

- Availability of telephone numbers was limited (Georgia);
- Non-response rate is increased / interruption of the survey before its completion, since a telephone survey takes more time from the household (Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, and United States);
- Mistrust of informants for answering by phone (Mexico).

23. The United Kingdom ONS raised one very important question that recurs throughout the study: even with the availability of the needed technical equipment and professional competence, the shift of the offices to remote phone surveys may impact the analysis and results of statistical surveys on poverty and vulnerability.

### **Section III. Special surveys designed for the pandemic crisis context and its impact**

24. In the third section of the Questionnaire, questions were asked regarding the design of special surveys that allow taking into account both the context of the pandemic and its impact on the poverty and vulnerability.

25. The main point here was to find out how actively NSOs have worked in response to requests from government agencies to provide information on the coronavirus impact on the poor and vulnerable.

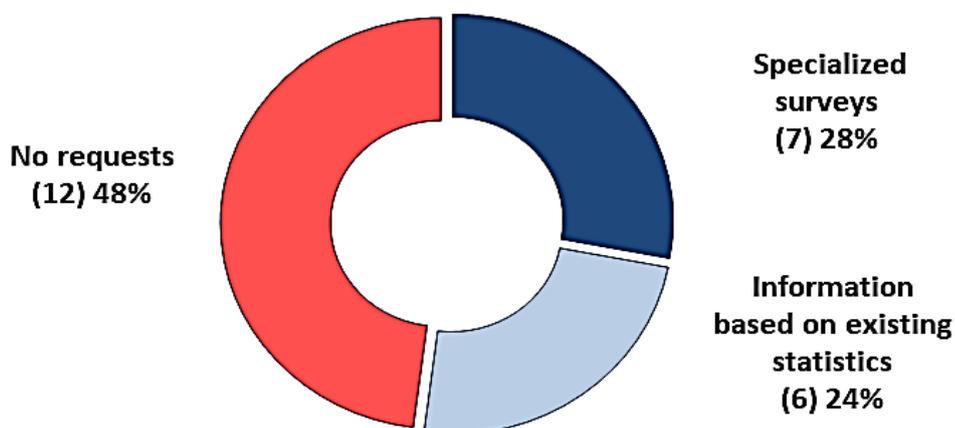
*Question 6. Have there been requests from government agencies to produce statistical information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the poor and vulnerable?*

26. The survey showed (Figure 3) that:

- More than half of the statistical offices implemented various requests of government bodies and institutions;
- 6 offices (24%) prepared relevant statistical information upon request based on existing statistics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Mexico);
- 7 offices (28%) developed and carried out specialized surveys at the request of government agencies (Austria, United Kingdom, Israel, Moldova, Slovakia, United States, and Canada);
- 12 statistical offices (48% of responses) did not receive any requests for the production of statistical information in the context of COVID-19.

Figure 3

**Activity of NSOs in response to government requests for information on the impact of COVID-19 on the poor and vulnerable, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)**



27. The preparation of additional information upon request required some efforts from the statistical authorities to alter existing questionnaires and / or develop new special questionnaires taking into account the COVID-19 impacts.

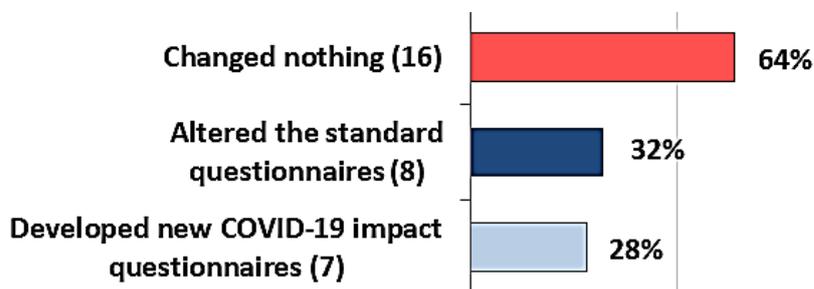
28. It should be emphasized that there is some concern that a number of statistical offices have not received any requests from government agencies. Although this is largely dependent on government initiative, the constraints NSOs face, both with regards to financial, technical and expert capacity, have contributed to the NSO's supply.

*Question 7. How did you reflect the pandemic context and its impact in the questionnaires?*

29. Almost a third of the countries (8 responses, Figure 4) altered the existing questionnaires and added questions related to the COVID-19 impact (Russian Federation, Austria, United Kingdom, Italy, Luxembourg, United States, Canada, and Mexico).

Figure 4

NSO actions to reflect the pandemic context, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)



30. In parallel, the NSO of the same countries (Austria, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, United States, and Canada), as well as in Republic Moldova and Slovakia, have developed new questionnaires on the COVID-19 impact.

31. However, in a much larger number of cases (16 countries out of 25 responding), NSOs did not change anything in their questionnaires.

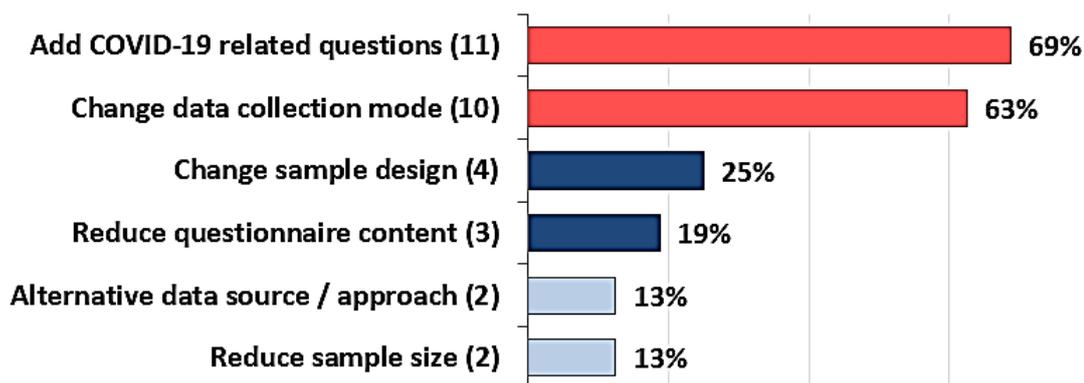
*Question 8. If you have altered questionnaires or developed new ones, which changes did you introduce?*

32. In the process of changing existing and developing new questionnaires NSOs have made changes not only to the structure and content of the questionnaires, but also to the sampling and collecting primary data methods.

33. The most common way to alter questionnaires to the COVID-19 context was to introduce additional questions into existing questionnaires (Figure 5): this has already been done by NSOs in 11 countries. In Italy, several COVID-19 questions have been added for EU-SILC, but this survey will be conducted at the end of 2020.

Figure 5

Changes in NSO questionnaires, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)



34. Some NSOs have made other changes in the survey methodology: the sample design was changed by NSOs of Latvia, Italy, United States and Canada. For example, in Italy, the statistical office had to select a new survey sample for the second quarter of 2020 from the population whose phone numbers were available.

35. The content of the questionnaires has been reduced in the United Kingdom (despite the addition of coronavirus-related questions to the questionnaires), Luxembourg, and Mexico. The Kyrgyzstan officials informed that they did not include the previously planned module into the survey.

36. Only two NSOs (Canada and Armenia) switched to using alternative data sources and data collection methods; two more NSOs (Luxembourg and Mexico) reduced the sample size.

37. It should be emphasized that a significant part of the countries changed their questionnaires quite comprehensively. Five countries (United Kingdom, Luxembourg, United States, Canada, and Mexico) have made changes in 3 or more above-mentioned areas.

**Section IV. Coverage by surveys of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups who may suffer disproportionately in the crisis**

38. An important focus of the survey was to find out the extent to which statistical surveys will cover those groups of the population who are at risk of being disproportionately affected during a pandemic. The questionnaire identified the following most vulnerable groups:

- (a) Poor and vulnerable population;
- (b) Informal workers;
- (c) Small (micro) business;
- (d) Pensioners;
- (e) People with disabilities;
- (f) Women;
- (g) Health workers.

*Question 9. Have you taken surveys on the COVID-19 impact on the following groups?*

39. The survey showed that 17 out of 25 national statistical agencies that participated in the survey (68%) did not conduct surveys related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on selected groups (Figure 6). However, among them, a number of NSOs emphasized that they were planning additional work. The Federal State Statistics Service of Russia plans to conduct a number of studies in August-September 2020, which will add questions related to COVID-19. The National Bureau of Statistics of Republic of Moldova mentioned that the survey was carried out within the framework of the HHBS in the II quarter of 2020, but the results of the survey and their analysis at that time was not yet available. In Slovenia, the COVID-19 impact on income and poverty of all of the above groups will be reflected in the 2021 EU-SILC survey.

Figure 6

**The focus of NSO research on specific vulnerable groups of the population, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)**



40. It is clear from the survey results that the maximum coverage was achieved for such groups of the population as women and the poor and vulnerable, people with disabilities, as well as for those employed in small (micro) businesses. In fact, these are the groups most sensitive to crisis consequences.

The statistical information obtained in the course of the surveys can become a real basis for the development of adequate mechanisms of social protection for these vulnerable groups.

41. Some NSOs have used other approaches to assess the COVID-19 impact on the most vulnerable populations, so:

- In Austria, the COVID-19 related surveys were conducted for the general population, so the impact on specific populations could be analyzed depending on sample size;
- No new surveys specifically designed for these populations have been developed in the UK, but the existing ONS surveys have now new COVID-19 questions so they will cover selected groups;
- In the Czechia, questions about the COVID-19 impact were added to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) questionnaire.

42. It should also be noted that if a country conducted research on the COVID-19 impact on vulnerable groups, then it tended to cover the largest number of these groups. The survey showed that the broadest survey coverage of vulnerable groups of the population was provided by the NSOs of United Kingdom, Switzerland, United States, Canada and Mexico (Table 2). Austria can also be included into this group, as it mentioned the possibility of conducting such an analysis for these groups within the framework of its survey.

Table 2  
**Countries with the highest coverage of vulnerable groups in COVID-19 impact surveys**

	United Kingdom	Switzerland	USA	Canada	Mexico
Poor and vulnerable population	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Informal workers			✓	✓	✓
Small (micro) business	✓	✓	✓		✓
Pensioners	✓	✓	✓		
People with disabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Women	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health workers	✓		✓	✓	

*Note:* Italy and Slovakia surveyed only one group.

43. However, a number of vulnerable groups did not receive due attention in surveys; these are health workers, pensioners and informal workers.

*Question 10. Which topics were included in these surveys?*

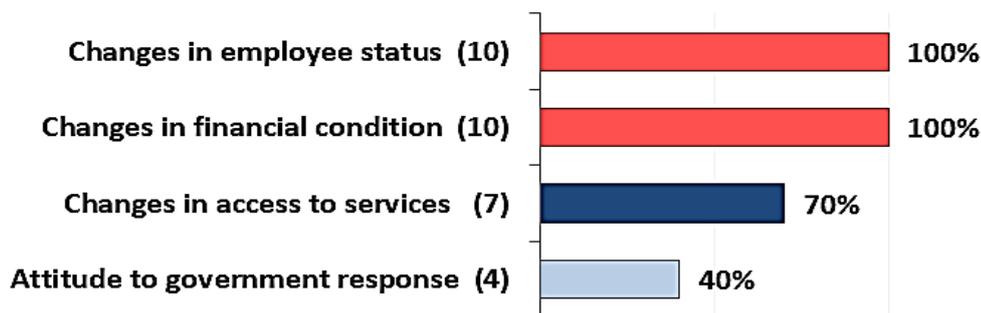
44. As part of this question, the NSO representatives were asked to highlight topics they have included in surveys on the COVID-19 impact on the most vulnerable groups. The questionnaire presented the answer options that cover both changes in the employment status of workers and in financial condition, as well as changes in access to basic social services. It was also assumed that NSO surveys could also question the attitude of the population towards the government's response to the pandemic.

45. Only 10 statistical agencies have answered this question, as most NSOs have not conducted research on the COVID-19 impact on the most vulnerable populations. The survey showed (Figure 7) that the NSOs focused on the issues of changes in the financial conditions of households and changes in employment status during a pandemic and the restrictions on economic activities. All 10 NSOs that responded to question 10 mentioned these topics in their responses.

46. Seven out of 10 NSOs also touched on changes in access to basic social services – health care, education, and employment services.

Figure 7

Main topics of NSO questionnaires, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)



47. In four countries (Austria, United Kingdom, Slovakia and Canada), respondents were also asked questions related to attitudes towards the government action during the pandemic, in the Czechia, questions related to the COVID-19 impact were asked in the Labour Force Survey.

48. In addition to the general topics identified in the questionnaire, a number of NSOs included other topics in their surveys, for example:

- Problems associated with distance education (Republic of Moldova);
- Health symptoms related to COVID-19 and general health status (Austria);
- Some prevention measures (Mexico);
- Questions of satisfaction with certain financial and socio-psychological aspects of life (Switzerland).

*Question 11. Do you publish the results of studies on COVID-19 on your agency's website?*

49. To the final question in Section IV, 10 NSOs (40% of those surveyed) replied that no studies on COVID-19 had been conducted. Seven offices do not publish their research results on the NSO website. Only eight statistical agencies (32%) answered the question affirmatively, six of them provided active hyperlinks to the results of statistical studies and other publications on the COVID-19 impact on the situation of households and other socio-economic aspects. Links received from the following NSOs:

- [The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia](#);
- [The Statistical Office of Austria](#);
- [The UK Office for National Statistics](#);
- [The National Statistical Institute of Italy](#);
- [The Luxembourg Central Office for Statistics and Economic Research \(STATEC\)](#);
- [The United States Census Bureau](#); and [the Bureau of Labour Statistics](#)
- [The Statistics Canada](#).

50. The next section will provide a more detailed overview of good practice examples.

### **Section V. Monitoring poverty and vulnerability to poverty in shorter than annual intervals**

51. In emergency, crisis conditions, and the COVID-19 pandemic context are such, the situation can change quite quickly. Therefore, the requirements for the relevance and efficiency of national statistics are brought to the fore, providing an information basis for government decision-making processes to mitigate or overcome the crisis, including in the area of social protection and support for the most vulnerable groups of the population.

52. The traditional format of quarterly and annual household surveys under these conditions cannot always satisfy the need for update and urgent information. In this regard, the questionnaire included a

question on how the NSO tried to shorten the time interval for conducting household surveys and presenting the results.

*Question 12. What have you done to reduce the time interval for conducting and presenting the results of surveys?*

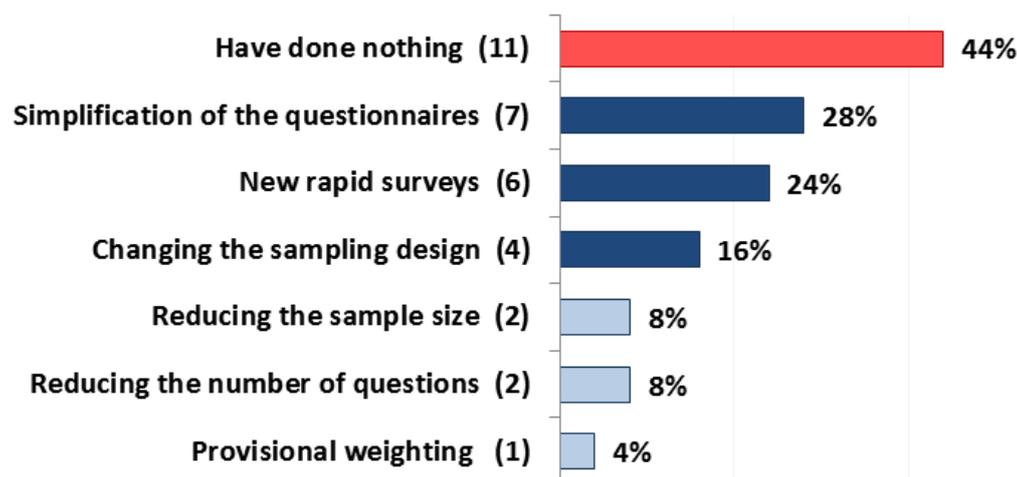
53. The results of the survey (Figure 8) indicate that in the context of the ongoing pandemic, the many NSOs (44%) did not take action to reduce the time interval for the provision of data on poverty and vulnerability measurement.

54. There are several reasons for this, according to the NSO:

- Standard, quarterly, format of the household survey, which sets the work schedule for the NSO staff;
- Availability of an approved work plan / statistical work program for a calendar year with fixed funding allocation;
- Availability of an approved calendar of statistical publications for the current year.

Figure 8

**Actions of the NSOs to reduce the time interval of surveys, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)**



55. Moreover, the survey showed that in a number of countries the planned household budget surveys and EU-SILC were postponed due to the pandemic.

56. A significant proportion of the NSOs that took part in the survey (14 agencies, or 56%) took certain steps to reduce the interval between household surveys. This was done by:

- Simplification of the questionnaires, for example, by eliminating additional, auxiliary modules (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Luxembourg, North Macedonia and Mexico);
- Introduction of new, rapid surveys on selected thematic COVID-19 related issues (Austria, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Slovakia, United States, and Canada);
- Changes in the sample design (Armenia, Slovakia, Canada, and Mexico).

57. The statistical offices of Luxembourg and Mexico have also reduced their sample sizes and reduced the number of questions in the traditional questionnaires. The Federal Statistical Office of the Switzerland has developed of a provisional weighting to analyze the subjective dimensions.

58. In its work in the context of the pandemic, the United Kingdom ONS uses both new and existing household income surveys, comparing their results to understand whether the obtained data are suitable for more up-to-date reporting. Interestingly, the United Kingdom ONS presents weekly summaries with regards to coronavirus and its social impact on the country based on results of the recently introduced

online Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. While this survey was not specifically designed to measure the impact on the poor and the vulnerable, these issues are covered to some extent.

59. Although most NSOs have followed the path of changing (simplifying and/or reducing) the already existing traditional questionnaires, quick ad hoc surveys may be more effective in terms of providing quick, up-to-date information in a pandemic. Such short Internet surveys (no more than 10-12 questions) on a relatively narrow topic can become a real source of information on the situation of households and their pressing problems in the crisis context.

### Section VI. Statistical offices' needs for capacity development on the above-mentioned issues

60. The COVID-19 pandemic and related crisis might not be overcome in the near future, and the pandemic itself should be considered as ongoing factor that determines the trends in the socio-economic development of countries, regions and the world as a whole. The impact of the pandemic on poverty and vulnerability is unquestioned, and it is significant in both developed and developing countries. Therefore, now the NSOs should consider more deeply the need to conduct relevant statistical surveys.

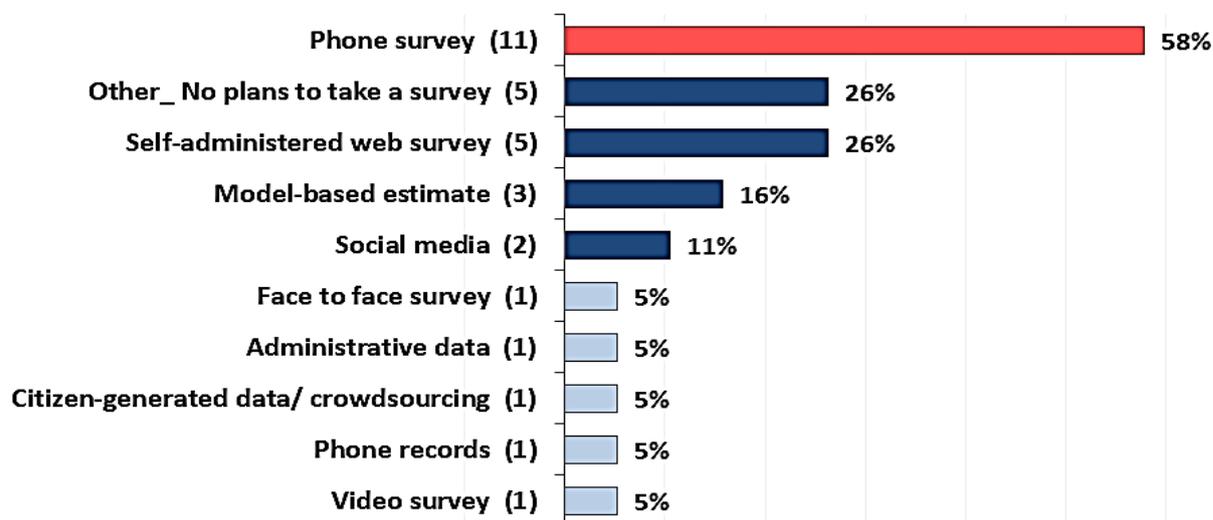
61. This section of the questionnaire included questions related to the prospects, expectations and difficulties in adapting the activities of the NSO to the new conditions.

*Question 13. If you plan to take a survey on the COVID-19 impact on the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, which data collection method would you use?*

62. Answers to this question were received from 19 NSOs (Figure 9). Five offices (26%) responded that they do not have plans to conduct surveys on the COVID-19 impact on the poor and vulnerable. More than half of the respondents pointed that the telephone survey is the main (in fact, the only!) method of collecting information, even despite the negative aspects and difficulties of implementation they mentioned (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Israel, Switzerland). A number of NSOs chose the telephone interviews in addition to other methods.

Figure 9

**Estimated survey methods on the COVID-19 impact, % of responses received (in brackets – the number of responses received)**



63. It is encouraging that five offices (25%) named the website survey as a potential (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Austria, and United States) and already used (Canada) method of remote statistical survey.

64. Three statistical agencies (Russian Federation, Italy and Canada) assume that they would use the modelling-based estimates; two agencies (Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan) will focus on social media in future surveys.

65. Several other methods were employed in some countries: the Citizen-generated data / Crowdsourcing (Canada), survey based on phone records (Russian Federation), and video survey

(Kazakhstan). In Slovakia, the direct face-to-face survey, even in a pandemic, is still the only preferable one.

66. Finally, methods such as the Remote sensing / satellite imagery, Scanner data and Web scraping were not mentioned by any of the NSOs that took part in the survey.

67. The analysis of the survey results also revealed some limitations on the choice of methods in the activities of statistical agencies. Thus, of the 14 NSOs that gave an affirmative answer to the question about the use of listed methods, nine offices intent to apply one or maximum two survey methods. Only three NSOs (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Canada) assume a greater number of methods.

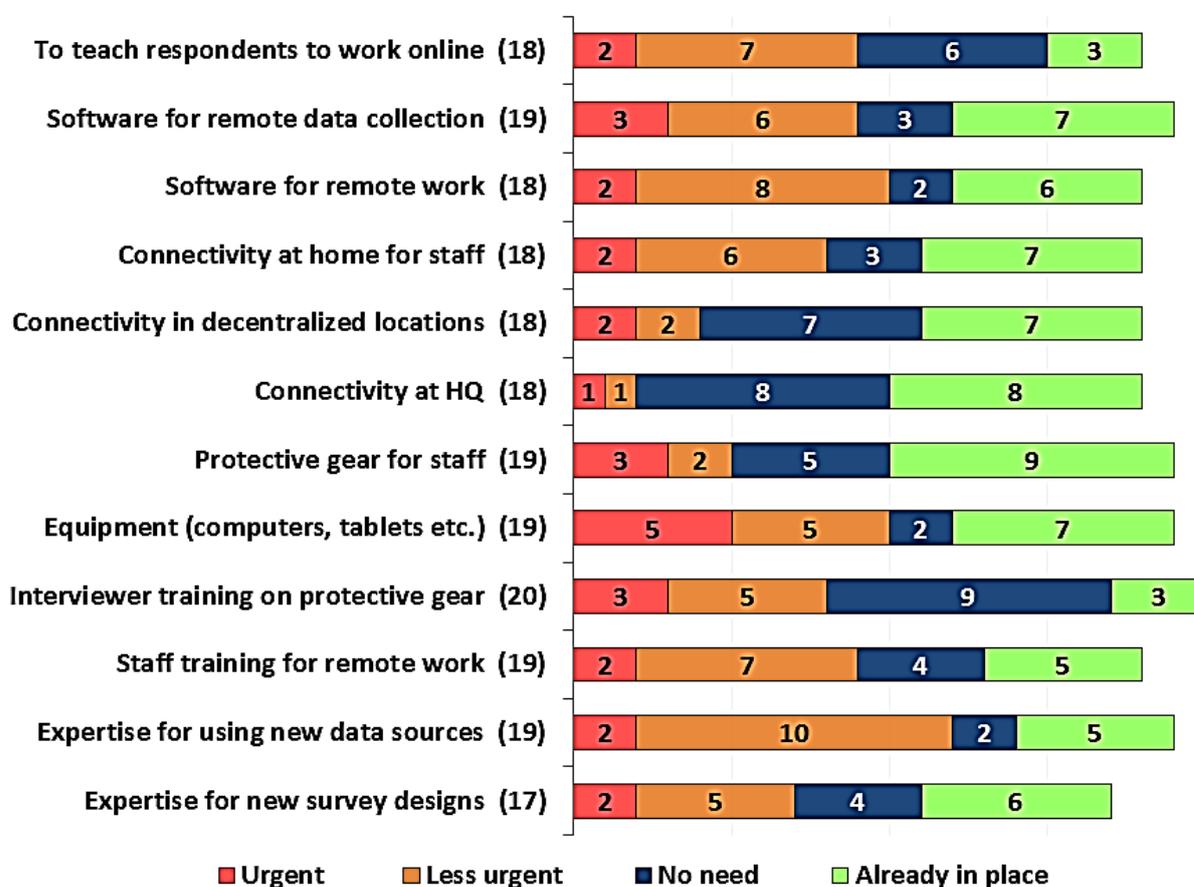
*Question 14. What kind of support would your agency need to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?*

68. This section of the questionnaire assesses the need for national statistical agencies to carry out activities to develop professional skills and competencies, to upgrade technical equipment for a timely response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSOs were asked to determine the rank of the need for certain resources / conditions necessary for successful work in a pandemic: "Urgently needed", "Necessary, but less urgent", "No need" and "Already in place". No answers were received to this question from the NSOs of Belarus, Ukraine, Austria and the United Kingdom. A number of offices (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) mentioned only the answers "Urgent" and "Less urgent", without specifying the answers "No need" and "Already in place".

69. Analysis of the answers (Figure 10) showed a significant spread of NSO opinions, which is due to their different professional background and technical base.

Figure 10

**Required support to NSO, the number of responses (in brackets – the total number of responses for this position)**



70. The survey revealed that a quarter of NSOs (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) urgently need technical support for remote work – equipping offices and employees with computers, tablets, modernizing servers, etc. For another five NSOs (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Georgia, Israel and Slovenia), such technical support is also needed, but less urgently. At the same time, nine offices responded that they already have these resources in possession.

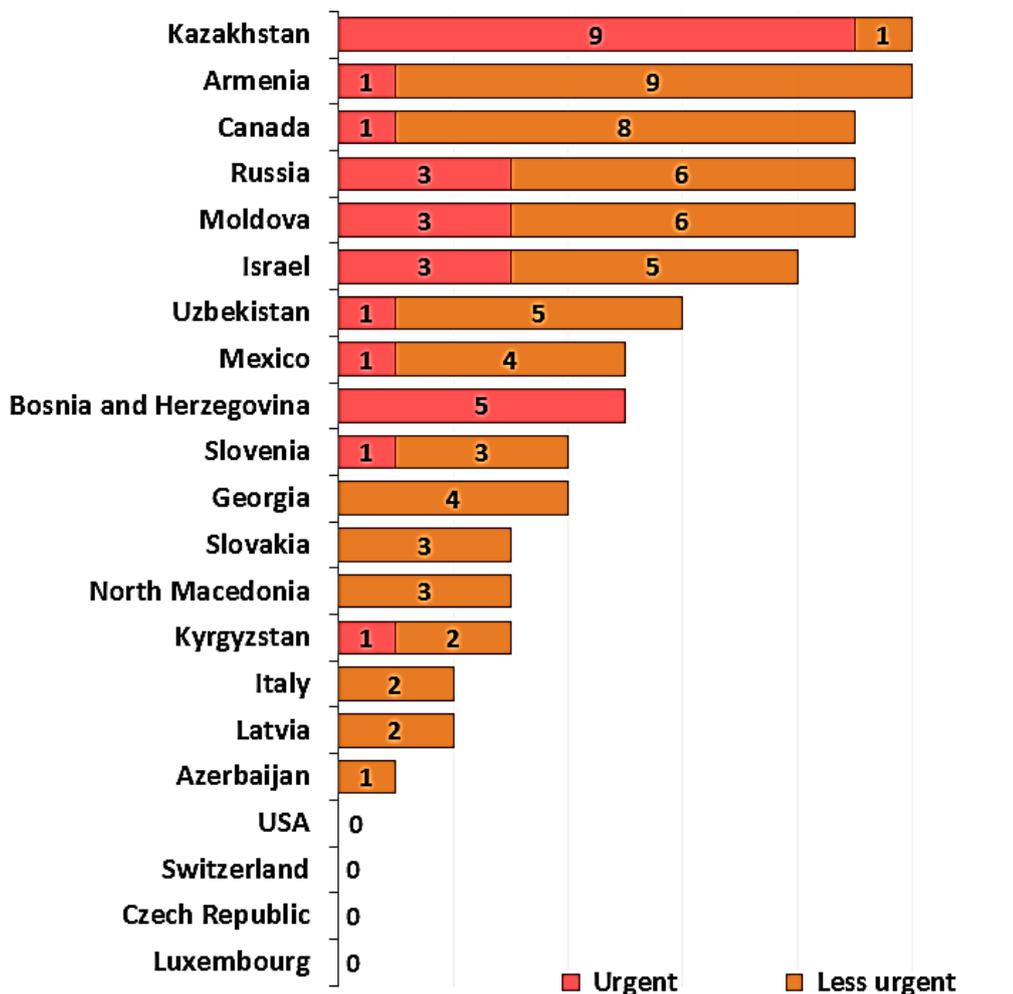
71. The top six most pressing NSO needs based on the total number of answers "Urgent" and "Less urgent" are as follows:

- Expertise for using new data sources (12 answers);
- Equipment: computers, tablets, servers etc. (10 answers);
- Software for remote data collection (10 answers);
- Software for remote work (9 answers);
- Staff training for remote work (9 answers);
- To teach respondents to work online (9 answers).

72. The lowest "need level" was identified for such items as "Improving connectivity at HQ" (two answers; this problem is acute in the NSOs of Armenia and Kazakhstan) and "Improving connectivity in decentralized locations" (four answers; NSOs of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova and Canada). It should also be noted that the improvement of connectivity at home for the NSO staff scored a fairly high level of need – eight answers.

Figure 11

**Level of NSO need for support, number of selected support measures (total number of support measures considered in the survey is 12)**



73. An analysis of the needs for the countries that took part in the survey revealed the following (Figure 11):

- Professional and technical support is necessary not only for NSOs of lower-income countries; thus, the statistical offices of Canada and Israel showed a high interest in support for a fairly wide range of needs;
- Nevertheless, it can be concluded that lower-income countries have a greater need for support; so, for most of the CIS countries, technical support (equipping offices with modern equipment) is important, as well as expert assistance in the new survey designs and in the use of new data sources; there is also need in the modern software for remote work and data collection;
- The most favourable situation is in the national statistical offices of the United States, Switzerland, Czechia and Luxembourg; here, for all the measures of support proposed in the question, the answers "No need" and "Already in place" were received.

## **B. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Measuring Its Impact: An Overview of Good Practice**

74. Facing of the coronavirus pandemic and in line with the responses of governments to contain it, many NSOs have changed their survey-taking processes, suspending or postponing some surveys. Many of them also have faced significant difficulties and limitations of remote methods, which, according to their answers, influenced the process and results of activities. However, some NSOs have undertaken actions to ensure the continuity and quality of statistical production even in an emergency. These actions can be conditionally divided into the following areas:

- Development of new topics for the surveys and combining them with existing ones;
- Improving the survey methodologies and procedures;
- Improving the openness and awareness of general public.

### **1. Development of new topics for the surveys**

75. A number of statistical offices that took part in the survey included a fairly wide range of new topics in addition to the traditional ones, and also strengthened cooperation with other institutions on certain aspects.

76. **Switzerland.** The Swiss Federal Statistical Office has included the widest possible range of additional topical questions in its questionnaires to assess the COVID-19 impact on the level and quality of life, including for vulnerable groups. To some extent, these questions overlap with the questions of the [OECD Better Life Index](#), which, for example, aim to assess the life satisfaction or the quality of support from the community. However, the indicators used by the Swiss NSO provide a more detailed picture of the respondent's well-being and the degree of his life satisfaction in such aspects as:

- Assessment of current income and satisfaction with the financial position;
- Confidence in the political system;
- Feeling happy / disappointed or depressed in the past 4 weeks;
- Moral, material or financial support;
- Satisfaction with life (relationships, free time, and leisure).

77. This approach to household surveys allows responding to the aggravation of socio-psychological and mental problems in a pandemic caused by fear of illness and death from coronavirus infection, loss of work and a stable source of income, the stress of remote work and severe restrictions on household leisure.

78. It is worth noting that similar surveys were taking by NSOs in other countries but in narrower extent:

- **In the United Kingdom**, an [Analysis of clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) (the shielding population) in England during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was carried out from

24 June to 30 June 2020, including an assessment of their behaviours and mental and physical well-being;

- In **Luxembourg**, the COVID-19 and Social and Economic Impact Survey was taken, in particular, on the effects of the lockdown on mental health. Results were published in [«One in three Luxembourg residents report their mental health declined during the COVID-19 crisis»](#);
- **Statistics Austria** conducted a [COVID-19 prevalence survey](#) twice, in April and May 2020, which estimated the population affected by coronavirus infection. Five topics were covered in detail:
  - Acceptance of the protective measures taken by the Austrian government;
  - Expected consequences of the coronavirus pandemic;
  - People’s personal well-being during the coronavirus crisis;
  - Changes affecting their work situation; as well as
  - Subjective prevalence.

79. This study was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Science, the Austrian Red Cross and the Vienna Medical University. During the survey, tests for coronavirus were carried out, so 1432 people underwent a PCR test.

- in **Latvia**, the Central Statistical Bureau has conducted [a survey of areas with the highest density of elderly residents](#) in response to the call for special protection of elderly population during COVID-19 restrictions. Based on the survey, a map was drawn depicting densely populated areas where share of people aged 65 and over exceeds 30 %.

80. **Canada.** Statistics Canada publishes a significant number of its products on a variety of topics, some of which are listed below.

- On July 15, 2020 it published the results of the study of fears of citizens being stigmatized caused by the pandemic "[Fear of COVID-19 related stigmatization](#)";
- Previously, the site posted data from the study "[Gender differences in mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)" through crowdsourcing survey "Impact of COVID-19 on Canadians: Your mental health":
- The Statistics Canada’s study such as "[Personal protective equipment demand and supply](#)" may be of great interest as the growth of this sector creates new opportunities in a pandemic.

81. During the pandemic, Statistics Canada conducted a significant number of special surveys on the COVID-19 impact on various aspects of citizens' lives; most of them were conducted using the crowdsourcing method (Table 3).

Table 3  
**Statistics Canada: list of surveys**

Collection dates	Survey topics
August 4 to 17	Experiences of Discrimination (in collection)
June 23 to July 6	Living with Long-term Conditions and Disabilities (collection completed)
June 9 to June 22	Parenting During the Pandemic (collection completed)
May 26 to June 8	Trust in Others (collection completed)
May 12 to May 25	Perceptions of Safety (collection completed)
April 24 to May 9	Your Mental Health (collection completed)

## 2 Improving survey methodology and procedures

82. In the process of adapting the survey methodologies to the new context of the pandemic, a number of NSOs made changes in the frequency of surveys, sample design, switched to online surveys and rapid COVID-19 impact surveys on the various groups, and also used a wider range of methods in comparison with traditional interviews.

83. **Canada.** Statistics Canada uses the Citizen-generated data / Crowdsourcing method and web-based panel survey. These methods are the most secured one during pandemic and could be effective in terms of involving the more respondents in the survey. Using these methods, Statistics Canada accelerates data collection in response to the urgent need for information to help the country respond to, and recover from, the COVID-19 social and economic impacts on labour, well-being, poverty and social exclusion (Figure 12).

Figure 12

Announcement of the [Discrimination Survey](#) on the Statistics Canada's website

### Surveys on the impacts of COVID-19

Statistics Canada is accelerating data collection in response to the urgent need for information to help the country respond to, and recover from, the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. Please participate in any of our crowdsourcing data collections that may be applicable to you, and check back here often for new topics.

**Next topic on August 4: Experiences of Discrimination**

The screenshot shows the Statistics Canada website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and the Statistics Canada logo. Below the logo is a navigation menu with tabs for Subjects, Data, Analysis, Reference, Geography, Census, Surveys and statistical programs (with a dropdown arrow), About StatCan, and Canada.ca. Below the navigation menu, there is a breadcrumb trail: Home > COVID-19: A data perspective. The main content area features a large blue banner with the text "COVID-19 A data perspective" and a background image of a network diagram.

### Surveys on the impacts of COVID-19

Statistics Canada is accelerating data collection in response to the urgent need for information to help the country respond to, and recover from, the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. Please participate in any of our crowdsourcing data collections that may be applicable to you, and check back here often for new topics.

**The current topic: Experiences of Discrimination.**

[Participate now](#)

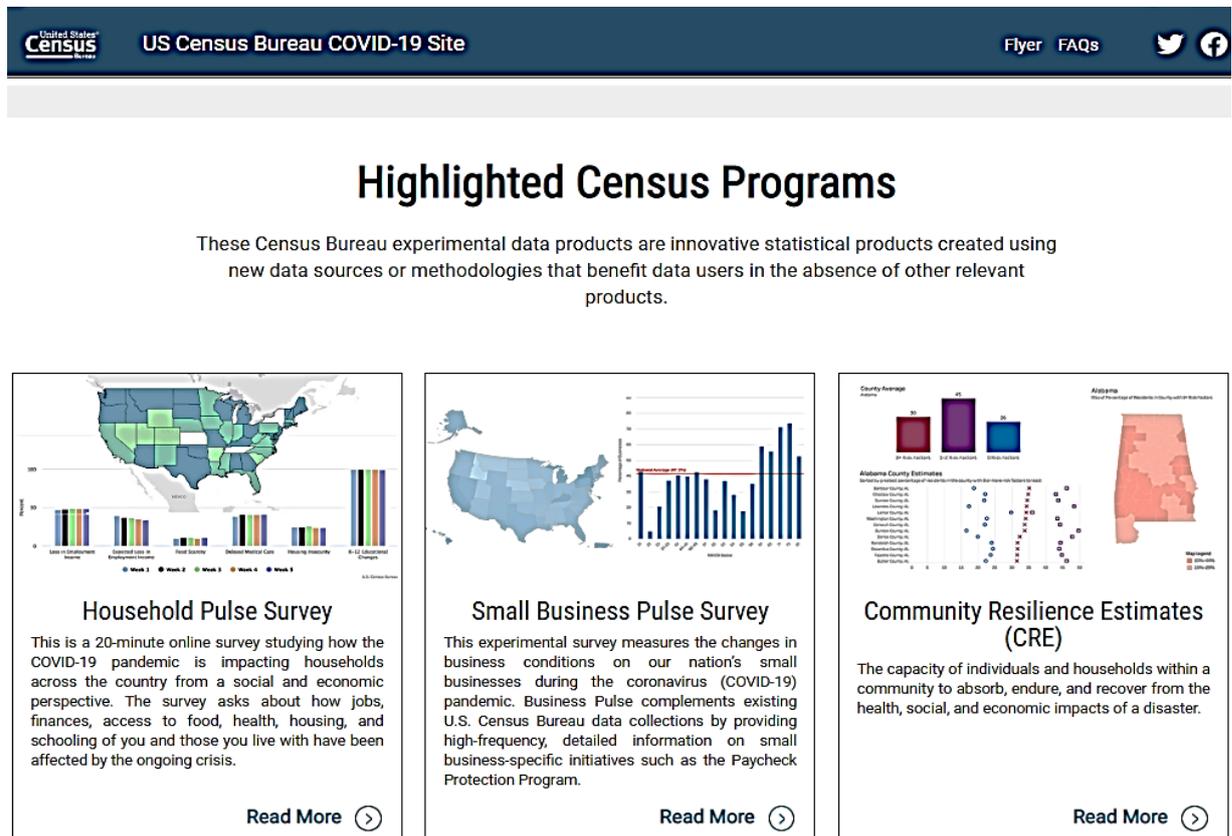
84. We also note the special approach to the interaction of Statistics Canada with website users. With its [mission](#) to "Serving Canadians while Navigating a Path to Recovery" and recognizing that the importance of providing reliable statistics is becoming increasingly evident, NSO Canada has accelerated the data collection and dissemination of insights on the COVID-19 impact on businesses and individuals. Statistics Canada says "... that thanks to the rapid deployment of crowdsourcing initiatives, Canadians were able to tell how COVID-19 is affected their mental health, their finances, and their domestic situation – even their ability to finish school". In partnership with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, with input from Canadian business owners, the [Canadian Survey on Business Conditions](#) reported on factors like revenues, layoffs and payroll, trade and exports, and stimulus support.

85. Another NSO that mentioned it conducts the website surveys is the **National Bureau of Statistics of Latvia**. During the pandemic, the Latvian NSO moved the [household income and living conditions survey](#) to the website and used telephone interviews also. The website provides detailed instructions on registration procedures and filling out an [electronic questionnaire](#). Initially, it was assumed that the first-wave interviews will be conducted as the face-to-face interviews, and the rest waves web and telephone interviewing methods may be used as well. However, the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (CBS)

announced that since the start of the pandemic, as of 13 March 2020, it would not conduct the face-to-face interviews at respondent residences and all interviews would be taken by phone.

86. **United States.** The Census Bureau presents Highlighted Census Programs, experimental and innovative data products created using new data sources or methodologies. They benefit data users in the absence of other products that are difficult to create in the pandemic.

Figure 13  
Experimental data products during a pandemic



87. **The Household Pulse Survey (HPS)**, launched on 23 April 2020, is designed to deploy quickly and efficiently, collecting data to measure household experiences during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

88. The 20-minute online survey includes questions about their experiences in terms of employment status, spending patterns, food security, housing, physical and mental health, access to health care, and educational disruption. The Census Bureau collects data for 90 days and release data on a weekly basis. Such a short-term instrument could indeed provide valuable up-to-date data to aid in recovery from the pandemic.

89. It's important that the questionnaire is a result of collaboration between the U.S. Census Bureau and the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS), the Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

90. The results of the first phase of the [Household Pulse Survey](#) – detailed spreadsheets and microdata files for public use (containing individual answers to questions) – are already available on the website for download.

91. **Small Business Pulse Survey.** As it comes from the title this survey measures the effect of changing business conditions during the coronavirus pandemic on nation's small businesses. The survey includes information about small business operations and finances, requests and receipt of assistance, and measures of overall well-being and expectations for recovery.

92. The results of the first phase of the [Small Business Pulse Survey](#) – tabulations and visualizations – are already available on the site. They give local, state, and federal officials essential real-time data to assist policy and decision-making. In addition, the information may help businesses in making economic decisions and researchers in studying the effects of the pandemic.

93. Another instrument is **Community Resilience Estimates** that measures the capacity of individuals and households to absorb, endure, and recover from the health, social, and economic impacts of a disaster such as a hurricane or pandemic.

94. The survey is based on an individual risk index that includes [11 possible risks](#) divided by three categories. Risks are related to population density, age, poverty, employment, linguistic isolation, specific diseases, etc. This index helps communities where resources and information may effectively mitigate the impact of disasters.

95. Resilience estimates can aid stakeholders and public health officials in modelling these differential impacts and developing plans to reduce a pandemic’s potential effects.

96. The innovative approaches implemented by the U.S. Census Bureau are aimed at overcoming some limitations to create statistical products that have arisen in the context of the pandemic. For example, many countries mentioned that a negative consequence of the shift to remote methods was lower response rates. A possible solution to this problem could be the approach used in the [HPS](#): to enable rapid deployment of the survey, the U.S. Census Bureau uses both e-mail and mobile phone numbers from the contact base; households are contacted via email and SMS if both are available, email if no mobile phone number was available, and SMS if no email was available.

97. It should also be noted that the U.S. Census Bureau collaborates with the Bureau of Labour Statistics on the employment data and all of the household expenditure survey data are published on the Bureau of Labour Statistics website.

98. The **Current Population Survey (CPS)** is a monthly survey of households conducted by the Bureau of Census for the Bureau of Labour Statistics. It provides a comprehensive body of data on the labour force, employment, unemployment, persons not in the labour force, hours of work, earnings, and other demographic and labour force characteristics. The [survey results](#) presented on the website of the Bureau of Labour Statistics cover a fairly wide range of issues related to employment and unemployment during a pandemic.

### 3. Improving the openness and awareness of citizens

99. Some NSOs that took part in the survey makes efforts to increase the transparency and awareness of their citizens through the creation of data portals. There they not only publish COVID-19 data, but also provide their visualization, direct access to datasets to be downloaded, and also post press releases and articles on various aspects of the pandemic.

100. **Informing citizens and organizations.** The overwhelming majority of NSOs have informed about the change in the working regime of the office during the pandemic. However, the good practice is to create a coherent system that can regularly provide complete information on various aspects of statistics describing the impact of a pandemic rather being limited only by ad hoc reporting.

101. **Development of COVID-19 related data portals.** Data portals of Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Canada, and United States are examples of good practice.

102. For example, Statistics Canada's website features the **COVID-19 – A data perspective** (Figure 14), which provides quick access to a variety of information and tools. The portal aims to accelerate data collection in response to the urgent need for information to help the country respond to and recover from the social and economic COVID-19 impact in Canada. The site gives links to government resources related to coronavirus, for example link to the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan in Canada, which includes support for individuals, businesses, sectors and organizations helping Canadians. Through user-friendly interface any user can pass current crowdsourcing survey. Links to articles and recent highlights (press releases) are given, such as:

- [Data tables](#) related to COVID-19;
- Canadian Statistical [Geospatial Explorer Hub](#);

- Canadian [Economic Dashboard and COVID-19](#);
- [Businesses' Demand for Personal Protective Equipment During COVID-19](#).

Figure 14  
Statistics Canada COVID-19 Portal

**COVID-19**  
**A data perspective**

### Surveys on the impacts of COVID-19

Statistics Canada is accelerating data collection in response to the urgent need for information to help the country respond to, and recover from, the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. Please participate in any of our crowdsourcing data collections that may be applicable to you, and check back here often for new topics.

**The current topic: Experiences of Discrimination.**

[Participate now](#)

### Highlights

- [Data tables related to COVID-19](#)
- [Canadian Statistical Geospatial Explorer Hub](#)
- [Canadian Economic Dashboard and COVID-19](#)
- [Child care use during and after the pandemic](#)

[All COVID-19 releases](#)

## StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada

A series of articles on various subjects which explore the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic landscape. New articles will be released periodically.

- [Commuting to work during COVID-19](#)  
This article examines the changes in the mode of transportation of workers over the course of the pandemic, and examines the characteristics of those who switched to teleworking. The article also provides new insights on the concerns expressed by those who

103. **Data set dissemination.** Within this element, NSOs perform one of their main functions – dissemination of data sets and meeting the user needs for complete, accurate and up-to-date information, in particular on coronavirus-related issues.

104. The **United Kingdom website** has detailed information on the coronavirus impact. For example [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roundup](#) presents the latest data and analysis related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its impact on the economy and society, including of 81 data sets that are related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

105. **The U.S. Census Bureau website** publishes datasets on demographics, housing, social services, economics, business, and employment. Special attention is paid to highlights in relation to social vulnerability, where data is provided on persons below the poverty level, the population over 65, the payroll per employee. This data is very well visualized and posted as graphs on the country map with divisions into counties.

106. A significant amount of information is also published on the websites of NSOs in other countries. It should additionally be emphasized here that, for example, the national **statistical offices of Austria and Canada** have published data on the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, which may not be entirely the task of the NSO itself. **Statistics Canada's** partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada resulted in detailed [preliminary data](#) on the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases available to Canadians and researchers. The site contains a detailed table on the number of cases. Moreover, a profile of each patient is presented according to 12 dimensions, including: region, gender, episode week, symptoms, hospital status, recovered, and type of transmission. This information is available by age and gender.

107. Such data speak of the potential of NSOs, and also highlights their role in informing objectively the public.

108. **Publication of articles.** Many NSOs post the latest articles on various subjects which explore the different aspects of COVID-19 impact on the socio-economic landscape.

109. For example, on July 15, 2020, Statistics Canada posted almost [70 CanStat articles](#) on the COVID-19 impact on the economy and society:

110. The website of the **Luxembourg Central Office for Statistics and Economic Research (STATEC)** is also an active platform for the dissemination of COVID-19 data, both statistical data and the results of scientific research and surveys on COVID-19 issues. The STATEC Coronavirus Dossier (in French) contains a significant number of different [links to mass media](#), think tanks / networks, YouTube videos, COVID-19 scientific journals, etc. These links are collected in one document, which greatly simplifies the search for COVID-19 related materials for the user.

111. The website of the **United Kingdom ONS** also hosts not only statistical bulletins related to COVID-19 (25 bulletins as of August 15, 2020), but also [articles](#) on the economy and society issues during the pandemic (72 articles as of August 15, 2020).

112. **Regularity of statistics updates in various areas related to COVID-19.** Regular statistical monitoring and updating of data is especially important in a pandemic, when the situation can change quite quickly and dramatically.

113. A unique aspect of **the United Kingdom data portal** is the regularity and timeliness of publication of articles and statistical bulletins. So, for example, only for the period from August 1 to August 15, 10 such documents were published. At least four of them were related to the coronavirus impact on vulnerable populations.

- [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#): on 7 August 2020 the Statistical Bulletin provides indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 29 July to 2 August 2020 to understand the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impact on people, households and communities in Great Britain;
- [Coronavirus and Latest United Kingdom Socio-Economic Indicators](#): on 6 August 2020 the Statistical Bulletin provides the experimental data on the coronavirus (COVID-19) impact on the United Kingdom economy and society. These first indicators are received by using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods. A similar bulletin was published on August 13, 2020;
- Already mentioned earlier analysis [Coronavirus and shielding of clinically extremely vulnerable people in England](#) during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, considers their behaviours and mental and physical well-being;

114. It is also noteworthy that the COVID-19 page contains separately [methodological documents](#) related to the study of coronavirus.

## IV. Conclusion

115. As it mentioned in the report, about half of NSOs have suspended or postponed surveys to measure poverty and vulnerability. Virtually all NSOs have faced the challenges and constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a rule, they cancelled the face-to-face interviews, switched to remote survey methods, where the phone interview method became as the main method. To some extent this speaks of the limited strategy of some NSOs, since, as shown by the analysis of good practice, during the coronavirus crisis windows of opportunity arise that will improve the survey-taking in new difficult conditions and switch to new formats and methods of work.

116. The NSO replies to the relevant questions and analysis of their websites lead to the following **conclusions regarding good practice:**

(a) NSOs kept working even in the extreme context of the pandemic, surveys were not postponed or cancelled; this means that these NSOs have the required professional and technical capacity;

(b) NSOs were able to adequately respond to the changing context: they introduced new questions into traditional questionnaires, developed new questionnaires, and used new sources and data collection methods;

(c) NSOs were able to become active partners in research groups / consortia / partnerships, carrying out a variety of studies on the COVID-19 impact on various aspects of socio-economic development, including poverty and vulnerability;

(d) NSOs were able to shorten the interval for providing statistical information on the COVID-19 impact on vulnerable populations by providing monthly / weekly rather than quarterly data publication;

(e) NSOs actively used website surveys and crowdsourcing methods that are most convenient and secured in a pandemic and effective in terms of feedback, calling on the general public (everyone who is interested, not just those included in the samples) to participate in surveys;

(f) NSOs have taken on a possibly uncharacteristic function of broader awareness of COVID-19, realizing how important it is to ensure maximum awareness of all aspects of coronavirus pandemic. They actively publish on their websites not only the results of their own research, but also the researches of other organizations and institutions; they post hyperlinks to sites where one can get various information;

(g) NSOs provide a user-friendly format for presenting data on their websites: a clear and user-friendly interface, clear and attractive visualization and even an emotional component, indicating that these NSOs share the principles of social responsibility in overcoming the pandemic.

117. It should be emphasized that the implementation of these practices did not happen overnight, but was a continuation of the efforts of these statistical offices and, therefore, the transfer of experience to other countries will require significant support from both advanced NSOs and donor organizations, including the UNECE.

## Questionnaire to focal points on poverty statistics in national statistics offices of UNECE countries

### Poverty measurement in the pandemic

#### Section I. General part

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution/Department/Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What surveys does your agency conduct for measuring poverty and vulnerability? Mention all that apply.**

- a) Household Budget / Income and Expenditure Survey
- b) Living Conditions / Multi-topic / LSMS Survey
- c) Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)
- d) Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)
- e) Labour Force Survey
- f) Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section II. Adaptation of survey-taking to the physical contact restrictions

**2. Were you taking any of these surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- a) Yes
- b) No (select the reason):
  - i) Office work was completely stopped due to lockdown
  - ii) Just was postponed to a later date
  - iii) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. If you did take surveys, then how did the survey-taking process change? (please select)**

- a) Was not changed at all
- b) Face to face interview was kept, but protection gear was provided
- c) Face-to-face interview was cancelled/ we switched to remote survey-taking methods
- d) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. If you switched to other methods of remote survey-taking, then which of them? Mention all that apply.**

- a) Phone survey
- b) Video survey
- c) Self-administered web survey
- d) Phone records
- e) Remote sensing / satellite imagery
- f) Social media
- g) Citizen-generated data/ crowd sourcing
- h) Scanner data
- i) Administrative data

- j) Model-based estimate
- k) Web scrapping
- l) Other (please specify)

**5. What difficulties your office faces while taking surveys on COVID-19 impact on poor and vulnerable population? Mention all that apply.**

- a) Personnel is not available/ill
- b) Personnel is not equipped with computer/tablet/smart phone to work from home
- c) Personnel is not equipped with internet to work from home
- d) Personnel is not equipped with reliable connection through mobile/landline phone to work from home
- e) Personnel does not have the sufficient skill to work remotely
- f) The main office connectivity and IT is not suitable for remote work
- g) There is no transport and resources to conduct face to face interviews
- h) Respondents do not have the skill to work online
- i) Respondents do not the relevant technical equipment
- j) We face funding limitations / constraints
- k) We face procurement difficulties
- l) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III. Special surveys designed for the pandemic crisis context and its impact**

**6. Have there been requests from government agencies to produce statistical information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the poor and vulnerable?**

- a) Yes, we took specialized surveys
- b) Yes, we prepared relevant statistical information based on existing statistics
- c) There have not been any requests

**7. How did you reflect the pandemic context and its impact in the questionnaires? Mention all that apply.**

- a) We have altered the standard questionnaires to add COVID-19 impact related questions
- b) We have developed new COVID-19 impact questionnaires
- c) We changed nothing

**8. If you have altered questionnaires or developed new ones, which changes did you introduce? Mention all that apply.**

- a) Change sample design
- b) Reduce sample size
- c) Reduce questionnaire content
- d) Add COVID-19 related questions
- e) Change data collection mode
- f) Use alternative data source or approach
- g) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section IV. Coverage by surveys of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups who may suffer disproportionately in the crisis**

**9. Have you taken surveys on the COVID-19 impact on the following groups? Mention all that apply.**

- a) poor and vulnerable population
- b) informal workers
- c) small (micro) business
- d) pensioners
- e) people with disabilities
- f) women
- g) health workers
- h) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- i) NO COVID-19 RELATED SURVEYS TAKEN

**10. Which topics were included in these surveys? Mention all that apply.**

- a) changes in financial condition
- b) changes in employee status
- c) changes in access to services (healthcare, education, employment services)
- d) attitude to government response to pandemic
- e) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Do you publish the results of studies on COVID-19 on your agency's website?**

- a) Yes, (please provide a link) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) No
- c) No studies done

**Section V. Monitoring poverty and vulnerability to poverty in shorter than annual intervals**

**12. What have you done to reduce the time interval for conducting and presenting the results of surveys? Mention all that apply.**

- a) Introducing of new rapid surveys on specific topics in the context of COVID-19
- b) Reducing the number of questions in the traditional questionnaire
- c) Simplification of the questionnaires (e.g. excluding secondary topics)
- d) Reducing the sample size
- e) Changing the sampling design
- f) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section VI. Statistical offices' needs for capacity development on the above-mentioned issues**

**13. If you plan to take a survey on the COVID-19 impact on the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, which data collection method would you use? Mention all that apply.**

- a) Phone survey
- b) Video survey
- c) Self-administered web survey
- d) Phone records
- e) Remote sensing / satellite imagery
- f) Social media
- g) Citizen-generated data/ crowd sourcing
- h) Scanner data
- i) Administrative data

- j) Model-based estimate
- k) Web scrapping
- l) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**14. What kind of support would your agency need to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic? Rank all that apply.**

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Less urgent</b>	<b>No need</b>	<b>Already in place</b>
Expertise for new survey designs				
Expertise for using new data sources				
Staff training for remote work				
Interviewer training on physical distancing and use of protective gear				
Equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.)				
Protective gear for staff				
Connectivity at HQ				
Connectivity in decentralized locations				
Connectivity at home for staff				
Software for remote work				
Software for remote data collection				
To teach respondents to work online				

**15. Please add any comments you may have or any additional information you would wish to share.**

---

# Adapting household surveys to the situation of the pandemic

## Working Paper Series on Statistics

In 2020, UNECE took first steps in gathering practices of national statistical offices in adapting their household surveys to the pandemic situation with respect to poverty measurement. The study, available in English and Russian, covered 25 national statistical offices participating in the UNECE work on poverty measurement. In some countries, surveys were postponed or cancelled, while the large majority (91%) of those who did take the surveys switched from face-to-face interviews to remote survey methods. About half of the countries altered existing questionnaires or developed new questions or modules to capture impacts of the pandemic on households and individuals.

The working paper provides an analysis of the challenges faced by countries and presents emerging good practices that some national statistical offices have undertaken in the context of the pandemic.

Information Service  
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations  
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
Telephone: +41(0)22 917 44 44  
Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05  
E-mail: [info.ece@un.org](mailto:info.ece@un.org)  
Website: <http://www.unece.org>