UNITED NATIONS
United Nations Statistical Commission
Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics
Annual meeting

11 November 2020, 07:00 EST
Agenda item (5) – Task Teams: Scanner Data

UN GWG Task Team on Scanner Data

The Task Team on Scanner Data was relaunched in Summer 2020 with the aim of building on the success of the 1st phase of the Task Team (May 2017 – April 2019). The deliverables of the 1st phase were:

- Two workshops on Consumer Price Index calculation were delivered: initially, at the 4th International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics in Bogota and subsequently, at the 5th International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics in Kigali.
- The FEWS price index method has been implemented using open source code and is available for use on the UN Global Platform. This implementation also include the provision of some synthetic data that can be used for testing this method.
- An instructional guide for price index methods that can be applied to these new data sources has been available on the Global Platform since March 2019. It has been peer reviewed by experts from our participating countries.

The 2nd phase of the Task Team is due to run from July 2020 to June 2022. Before the relaunch, a need was identified to expand the existing membership. After inviting expressions of interest, the group expanded to 31 members, covering a wide range of countries and experience. A new term of reference was produced. The Task Team objectives are:

1. Price Index Methods - Expand the current offering of methods and documentation relating to the calculation of price indices on the UN Global Platform for Big Data. This will include adding more index methods to the library and reviewing the existing documentation to ensure it remains up to date and relevant
2. Classification methods - Guidance on the process for classifying scanner data to produce data ready for price index compilation. This guidance will include advice on various international approaches to preparing these data including the use of machine learning techniques and, where appropriate, will load methods to the Global Platform for use by NSIs
3. Trusted learning - Ongoing capacity building efforts: expand existing training material; work with the UN Global Platform Team to produce a new certified training course on using these data in consumer prices

The related deliverables are:

Workstream 1 - Price Index Methods

1. Produce a handbook for price index methods using these new data sources

2. Include at least 5 methods on the platform, including the application of these methods to synthetic data

Workstream 2 - Cleaning/Classification Methods

1. Draft handbook on potential methods available
2. Initial methods/code available on the UN Global Platform

Workstream 3 - Trusted Learning

1. Provide training at international conferences
2. Review of existing training content
3. Delivery of new training content and production of new certified training course

The various workstreams are now progressing the work required to meet these deliverables. Next steps include working with the UN Global Platform team to get some further index methods uploaded and usable on the platform and scoping out what an updated guidance handbook may look like, that incorporates sections on index methods and classification. Furthermore, the Task Team is in contact with the TT on Capacity Building for the building of a certified training course. These deliverables will be kept under review as the work progresses.