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Background document

Available in English

**The joint OHCHR-UNDP-UNODC Survey Initiative to improve data availability
of indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 16**

Prepared by Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations
Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

I. Introduction

1. OHCHR, UNDP and UNODC present this background document on the SDG 16 Survey Initiative which aims to improve data availability of survey-based indicators on Access to Justice, Corruption, Discrimination, Governance, Human trafficking and Violence[1].
2. The present background document illustrates the development of the SDG 16 Survey Initiative as an instrument to address needs or gaps referred to in previous reports to the Statistical Commission: Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on crime and criminal justice statistics (E/CN.3/2019/19); Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (E/CN.3/2021/16, para.11); Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics (E/CN.3/2020/19, para 8)
3. This document informs on the rationale, development process and contents of the survey, presents the piloting results, and reviews various forms of survey implementation at country level. It is presented in association with the report on crime and criminal justice statistics (E/CN.3/2022/14)

II. Rationale

4. The SDG16 Survey was developed to address the data gaps in the monitoring of SDG 16 indicators. As of November 2021, only two indicators under Goal 16 had a country coverage above 75%, five indicators had a coverage between 50% and 75%, two indicators had a coverage between 25% and 50%, and thirteen had a coverage below 25%. Among the thirteen indicators that had a coverage below 25%, nine are now covered by the SDG 16 Survey¹.
5. The SDG16 Survey is primarily addressed to countries that are not yet producing SDG 16 indicators in line with relevant SDG metadata. The SDG 16 Survey modules have been developed on the basis of existing standards or international guidelines² with the overall aim to provide a coherent and harmonized survey instrument that countries can use to measure progress on most of the survey-based indicators under SDG16. Overall, it enables the measurement and monitoring of 13 indicators, including two indicators under SDG 11. It was created to translate the approved metadata for survey-based SDG 16 indicators into a consolidated survey instrument. This new tool is made available to national statistical systems, which might want to use it according to their needs and priorities, either as a standalone survey, to collect data on all the indicators in one single operation, or as separate modules to be inserted in other household surveys. The Survey focuses on eight domains, namely: Access to Justice – Access to Dispute Resolution Mechanisms; Access to Justice – Violence Reporting; Corruption; Discrimination; Harassment; Physical Violence; Psychological Violence; Satisfaction with Public Services; Sexual Violence; and Trafficking in Persons.
6. This tool is not intended to replace ongoing national survey programs but to provide countries with an instrument aligned with the approved IAEG-SDG metadata, and strengthen in-country capacity for producing statistics in matters such as peace, justice and inclusive societies. In particular, it will promote a harmonized, accurate and comprehensive methodological approach in measuring the survey-based SDG 16 indicators.

III. Development Process

7. The development of the SDG 16 Survey was a two-year process that started with an assessment of existing standards and best practices in collecting data for each of the indicators, as well as a mapping of their recommended disaggregation. This preparatory phase was

[1] The SDG 16 Survey instruments are available online: <https://www.sdg16hub.org/sdg-16-survey-initiative>

¹ United Nations SDG Indicators Database website (Accessed 25 November 2021):

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/DataAvailability>

² See Table 1 for relevant documentation

followed by (a) an expert consultation, (b) cognitive testing, (c) piloting of the instrument and a (d) finalization phase.

8. The development of the survey instrument considered the following aspects: clarity and consistency of the instrument itself, alignment with international standards (in relation to data disaggregation³, the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics⁴, and the Rights Based Approach to Data), the mode of application, the way respondents are identified and encouraged to participate in the survey, as well as survey the method of coding and recording data from respondents. All tools and methods to be used in the implementation of the survey were tested in a variety of contexts with the aim of developing a globally applicable methodology that can easily be contextualized to diverse contexts.

9. The development and piloting of the SDG 16 Survey consisted of 5 phases.

10. In the first phase, an expert consultation requested expert reviewers to share their comments on each section of the survey instrument⁵, in terms of the readability and clarity of questions, the behavioral components of definitions, any sensitivity/bias in question formulation, problems with response categories, or other issues. As part of this expert consultation, reviews were provided by data producers from Australia, Belarus, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Qatar, Palestine, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and an Independent Expert.

11. In the second phase, cognitive testing of the questionnaire was conducted in three countries: Cabo Verde, Kenya, and El Salvador. The aim of cognitive testing was to assess comprehension, retrieval, judgement and response on survey. This phase also contributed to strengthening the in-country capacity for producing statistics on peace, justice and inclusive institutions, by carrying out cognitive trials and preparing the ground for fully pilot testing the survey. The cognitive testing was initiated in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 which constituted a particular challenge since the cognitive testing required a visual contact with the respondent. This was addressed in El Salvador by conducting virtual interviews, in Cabo Verde by using acrylic divisions between respondents and interviewers, and in Kenya by using special interview rooms with a maximum capacity of three.

12. Following the expert consultation and cognitive testing, the feedback received was used to revise the questionnaire which was eventually piloted at country level.

13. The piloting phase started in January 2021 and it lasted almost one year, after a three-month preparatory phase during which a diverse set of pilot countries was identified. Cabo Verde, Kenya and El Salvador, who had done the cognitive testing, were joined by Kazakhstan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Somalia for the piloting.

- a) The selection of pilot countries was based on member states' expression of interest to take part in the pilot, their availability to conduct the pilot within the requested timeline, and the balanced representation of regions and development contexts.
- b) The eight pilot countries received coordinated support from the three agencies at global, regional and national level, including both technical and financial assistance. UNDP supervised the pilot operation and coordinated a dedicated technical assistance team composed of experts from all three agencies.
- c) In most countries, the National Statistical Office led the pilot exercise. The national teams were invited to contextualize the questionnaire in line with the national practices and regulations, in collaboration with the three agencies.
- d) Once the pilot was completed, national teams submitted the full dataset as well as their recommendations derived from the contextualization process. They also shared their annotated questionnaire, their annotated implementation manual, the

³ For instance, from the Washington Group on Disability, the United Nations Expert Group On Migration Statistics, the United Nations, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, among others.

⁴ The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics were taken as standards to all phases of implementation as they apply to all types of statistical production, including surveys. The SDG 16 Survey takes into particular consideration principles 1 on Relevance, Impartiality and Equal Access, 2 on Professional Standards, Scientific Principles and Professional Ethics, 3 on Accountability and Ethics, 6 on Confidentiality, 7 on Legislation, 8 on National Coordination, 9 on Use of International Standards, and 10 on International Cooperation.

⁵ Reviewers provided their comments on each indicator that would be collected, the sociodemographic section, Screeners and the introduction to the household.

paradata⁶ and a piloting report.

14. The finalized SDG 16 survey instrument draws on the contributions of a wide range of member states across these different stages as well as from recommendations from several international organizations in terms of existing international standards and procedures, including the Technical Guiding Note on Planning and Implementing Household Surveys Under COVID-19 by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Survey.

IV. Contents of the Survey

15. The SDG 16 Survey is constituted by six modules – namely on Governance, Violence, Access to Justice, Corruption, Discrimination and Trafficking in Persons – and enables the collection of the data needed to measure 13 indicators, including two indicators under SDG 11. The SDG 16 Survey enables the measurement of the following indicators (with disaggregations aligned with the metadata endorsed by the IAEG-SDG and approved by the UN Statistical Commission):

Table 1: Survey modules and relevant SDG indicators

Module	Indicator
Governance (UNDP)	16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive
	16.6.2 Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services
Access to Justice (UNDP, UNODC, OECD)	16.3.3. Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism.
Corruption ⁷ (UNODC)	16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months
Violence (UNODC) ⁸	16.1.3(a) Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence in the previous 12 months
	16.1.3(c) Proportion of population subjected to (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months
	11.7.2: Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment in the previous 12 months
	16.1.3(b) Proportion of population subjected to (b) psychological violence in the previous 12 months
	16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms
	16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live
Discrimination (OHCHR)	16.b.1/10.3.1 Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
Human trafficking (UNODC)	Indicator 16.2.2: Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation
Socio-Demographic Module	Sex, Age, Education, Income, Citizenship, Urbanization level, National Subregions, Marital Status, Disability Status, Population Groups, Migration, Indicator specific

⁶ Data generated as a by-product of the data collection process that enabled additional analysis on the ‘performance’ of questions.. For instance, it enabled an analysis of the time required to answer each question, thus helping to identify questions that required more concentration/attention from the respondent.

⁷ The module builds on UNODC-UNDP Manual on Corruption Survey (<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/corruption-manuals.html>)

⁸ The module builds on international and regionals methodological, namely International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), UNODC-UNECE Manual on Victimization Survey and Latin America Initiative on crime victimization surveys (LACSI) applied in 13 countries in that region (<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistical-activities.html>)

Note: In brackets, name of the custodian agency(ies) of the indicator(s) covered in each module.

V. Forms of implementation at country level

16. The SDG 16 Survey has been designed to be implemented either as a standalone survey or using a modular approach. When the latter approach is selected, member states can select specific modules of interest and integrate them in suitable household surveys conducted in the country, ideally by (or with the collaboration of) the National Statistical Office/National Statistical System.

17. In line with their custodianship responsibilities and based on their mandates and areas of expertise, UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR stand ready to provide technical advice to countries implementing specific modules or the full survey, including support to the national contextualization of the questionnaire, to data processing, analysis of results and dissemination⁹. The agencies will also work together to mobilize joint resources mobilization for the provision of technical support to countries interested in implementing the full survey.

18. The instruments and tools developed as part of this initiative, specifically, the questionnaire, the implementation manual, the tabulation plan, and the CAPI/CATI script and syntax, will be made available for countries to use. In 2022, the agencies will also make available a detailed ‘indicator computation manual’ to assist countries implementing the SDG 16 Survey in using the data collected to compute the various SDG indicators.

⁹ The questionnaire and implementation manual are available online. Technical assistance, the Survey Solutions Script, and a Tabulation Plan.

Annex 1 – Expert Consultation

In 2020, UNODC, OHCHR and UNDP launched an international expert consultation addressed to NSOs, where national statisticians were requested to provide comments on each indicator/section of the draft questionnaire, in terms of readability, instructions, clarity, behavioral components of definition, sensitivity/bias, response categories or other problems. For each section, an average of 9.5 organizations* provided comments. Contributions were received from Australia, Belarus, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Qatar, Palestine, Philippines¹⁰, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and an independent expert.

Section	Reviewers
Screeners	12
16.1.3(a) Physical violence (PHV)	13
16.1.3(c) & 11.7.2(b) Sexual violence (SEV) and Sexual Harassment (SHAR)	12
16.1.3(b) & 11.7.2(a) Psychological violence (PSV) and Non-sexual Harassment (PHAR)	11
16.3.1 Violence reporting (VR)	8
16.1.4 Safety (SA)	12
16.5.1 Corruption (CR)	12
16.7.2 External political efficacy (EPE)	8
16.6.2 Satisfaction with public services (SPS)	12
16.3.3 Access to Justice (AJ)	9
16.b.1/10.3.1 Discrimination (DS)	10
16.2.2 Trafficking in persons for forced labour (TIP)	10
Socio-demographic variables for standard disaggregations	10

Each one of the 172 individual contributions received was taken into consideration in the drafting of the revised questionnaire for cognitive testing.

ANNEX 2 – Cognitive testing

The cognitive testing was conducted in three countries, namely El Salvador¹¹, Cabo Verde¹², and Kenya¹³. The cognitive testing was conducted with the double objective of strengthening the in-country capacity for producing statistics in matters of peace, justice and strong institutions, and of supporting the development of international tools to measure SDG16 indicators. Due to the COVID 19, El Salvador opted for Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI), Kenya and Cabo Verde for Pen-and-Paper Personal Interviews where special measures were introduced, with Cabo Verde providing sanitization kits and using acrylic separation between interviewers and interviewees. Kenya limiting the number of individuals in the interview room to three.

In all countries the participants had previous experience as victims of crimes and were 18 years or older, from two genders (female and male).

The three countries provided detailed reports on the cognitive testing, which included an assessment of the comprehension, retrieval, judgement and responses on 10 domains, namely:

1. Access to Dispute Resolution Mechanisms
2. Discrimination

¹⁰ Contributions were received from two separate entities, the Ministry of Justice and the National Statistical Office.

¹¹ Concluded in August 2020.

¹² Concluded in September 2020.

¹³ Concluded in December 2020.

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3. Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
 4. Harassment
 5. Physical Violence
 6. Psychological violence
 7. Satisfaction with Public Services
 8. Sexual Violence
 9. Trafficking in Persons
 10. Violence Reporting

Some of the main takeaways shared by the national teams included the following: the cognitive testing enabled them to gain valuable experience in collecting data on crime, insecurity and victimization, and in measuring SDG 16 indicators; they were pleased to have an opportunity to contribute to a global measurement initiative, and they stressed the importance of always grounding such global initiatives into local experiences; repetition across different modules should be avoided; additional efforts to mobilize participants and guarantee their safety were necessary as the cognitive testing was conducted in the first year of COVID-19, at a time when ‘best practices’ for running surveys during a pandemic were still unknown; and although there were some questions that were more sensitive, they did not pose considerable constraints. The feedback provided by the countries was integrated into a new questionnaire and (re)definition of criteria for piloting to include other national contexts.

ANNEX 3 – Piloting

The piloting phase¹⁴ was initiated in January 2021 after a three-month preparatory phase during which five pilot countries were identified, namely Cabo Verde, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia and El Salvador. Three additional countries joined the initiative later, namely Kazakhstan, Somalia and Togo.

Country	Mode	Language	Pilot completed	N
Cabo Verde	CAPI	Portuguese/Creole	AUG 8, 2021	511
El Salvador	CAPI ¹⁵	Spanish	APR 25, 2021	503
Kazakhstan	CAPI	Russian, Kazakh	JUN 9, 2021	500
Kenya	CAPI	Kiswahili	AUG 8, 2021	554
Somalia*	CATI	Somali	SEP 20, 2021	560
Tanzania	CAPI	Swahili	Nov 23, 2021	500
Togo	CAPI	French	AUG 8, 2021	381
Tunisia	CAPI	Arabic (Tunisian dialect)	SEP 16, 2021	570

The methodological and technical support to pilot countries was provided by UNODC (Vienna), OHCHR (Geneva) and UNDP (Oslo), in consultation with the relevant national, regional and international experts of each agency. Two UNDP consultants also supported the piloting, namely a Survey Expert for the period 2019-2021, who supported the national contextualization of the questionnaire, and a CATI-CAPI Expert in 2021, who helped countries with the CAPI/CATI script and syntax. Pilot countries were provided with a questionnaire, an implementation manual and a piloting report template designed by the agencies. The agencies also supported all phases of the piloting through:

- Monthly update meetings among agencies to take stock of progress, to address specific questions/constraints and to make recommendations regarding the pilots.
- Monthly update meetings with the eight the national pilot teams.

¹⁴ Funding for the SDG 16 Survey Initiative was primarily provided by Department for International Development / FCDO United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Norway to UNDP. Funding was also by UNODC, OHCHR. In addition to the above UNDP El Salvador (USAID Infosegura), UNDP Togo and UNDP Tunisia also contributed technically and financially to the pilot in their respective countries.

¹⁵ El Salvador used a split sample design

- Individual meetings with UNDP Country Offices in pilot countries.
- Individual meetings with pilot (custodians and national teams).
- Responses to specific queries and requests for support from pilot countries.

The overall assessment of the survey questionnaire was positive, and survey topics were found to be pertinent across the diversity of pilot country contexts, and of interest to respondents. The assessment of the questionnaire by enumerators was also positive across the pilot countries.

One pilot country decided to pilot only the modules about which they did not have prior experience, while other countries opted to pilot all modules and sections to have a more holistic vision of SDG 16 in the country. This highlighted the importance of offering countries both a modular and a holistic approach when using the SDG 16 survey, depending on information needs at country level.

The only consistent negative feedback was related to the length of the SDG 16 Survey, which can be addressed when the questionnaire is contextualized to the national information needs and survey practices.

The paradata submitted by four countries enabled an analysis of the interview time for each section and concluded that the mean duration was under 30 minutes. Even in the country with the highest mean duration, it was still situated within the ideal boundaries set for the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless it should be stated that in some countries, the duration surpassed the ideal length in some very specific circumstances, for instance in specific regions or among the elderly population. To address this issue, some sections were shortened, by rephrasing questions and/or by eliminating unnecessary repetition.

It should be noted also that the questionnaire includes both questions that are indispensable to calculate an indicator, and additional questions which may not be required for the computation of an indicator, but enable a deeper analysis in each domain. Depending on the national data needs, and on space in the ‘host survey’ to which SDG 16 Survey modules are attached, the length of the questionnaire can be reduced (by keeping the ‘core’ questions only) or increased (by adding additional items in accordance with national priorities).

Timed interviewing lengths as recorded by Survey Solution paradata, in four pilot countries (A-D), in minutes, 2021

Section	A	B	C	D	Overall Mean
Introduction (INT)	0,39	0,63	0,4	0,32	0,44
Cover	0,1	0,1	-	0,38	0,34
General screeners (SCR)	0,58	0,76	0,51	0,86	0,68
Socio-demographic variables	2,38	3,05	1,6	3,18	2,55
Access to Justice (AJ)	1,25	1,47	1,45	3,02	1,82
Corruption (CR)	-	1,82	-	2,69	2,28
Discrimination (DS)	1,18	1,28	1,06	2,12	1,41
Governance (EPE+SPS)	3,47	2,93	-	5,15	3,9
Physical violence (PHV)	-	1,46	1,91	1,71	1,7
Psychological violence (PSV) and Non-sexual Harassment (PHAR)	-	1,72	-	2,76	2,27
Safety (SA)	-	0,62	0,37	1,09	0,69
Sexual violence (SEV) and Sexual Harassment (SHAR)	-	1,85	-	2,81	2,35
Trafficking in persons for forced labour (TIP)	3,46	3,21	-	4,64	3,8
Timed total	12,81	20,9	7,3	30,73	24,23
Interview evaluation	0,94	1,2	0,96	1,65	1,19

The piloting experience also enabled an analysis of the effect of using an itemized approach to estimate prevalence¹⁶ versus a blanket screening approach¹⁷, the sequence between violence and discrimination, and TiP Network scale up approach.

The piloting experience concluded that the detected prevalence increased considerably with the itemized approach. For example, the annual prevalence for physical violence increases from 10.3% to 16.4% with the itemized approach, while the prevalence of sexual violence increased from 3% to 10.1% when the question is itemized. This led to the conclusion that despite a resulting increase in questionnaire length, the considerable improvement in accuracy supported the recommendation of an itemized data collection.

Another question that arose during the cognitive testing was related to the sequencing of modules. Two different approaches were recommended: one where the discrimination module was administered *before* the modules related to violence and violence-reporting, and another one where the discrimination module was administered *after* the modules. While proponents of both approaches argued that the less sensitive module(s) should be administered first, one group considered the discrimination module as the most sensitive, while the other found the violence and violence-reporting modules to be more sensitive. In some countries, both sequences were tested and there were no significant differences originating from using a particular sequence, neither in the prevalence rates, nor in the level of item-nonresponse. Since there is no specific international recommendation in this regard, it was decided to draw on the recommendation of enumerators, who advised to place the discrimination module first.

Finally, the Trafficking In Persons module tested the network scale-up method (NSUM), an approach drawn from epidemiology, to indirectly estimate the prevalence of trafficking in persons for forced labour. NSUM builds on information collected on the size of the social network of a person (either familial or social) to estimate a scaling factor of their awareness of persons who may have been affected by this fairly rare phenomenon. The SDG16 Survey pilot tested two approaches for network size estimation. One used the size of the extended family the respondent is in contact with (the requirement for this being to have hosted them in one's home over the past year), and another explored the number of individuals belonging to certain types of demographics or professional groups that the respondent knows personally (i.e. had a drink or a meal with the person over the past one year).

The assumption behind the application of the NSUM method was that it would be unlikely that people sampled directly would have been victimized by forced labour themselves and/or that they would be unwilling to disclose their experience. However, respondents may know others who face such situations, and NSUM scaling could help to project that to the whole population. In reality, pilot respondents were not more likely to report exploitative work practices in their network than reporting such experiences of their own. On the contrary, the percentage was higher when considering their own experience. The NSUM approach was therefore removed and the final questionnaire considers the respondents' direct experience only.

In addition to the questionnaire, the implementation manual was also piloted with the national teams, which used it both as the main manual for the implementation team, and also as a base for developing the interviewer manual (. The evaluation of the instrument was highly positive across all teams, with one recommendation that in the future there should also be a dedicated and standardized interviewer manual.

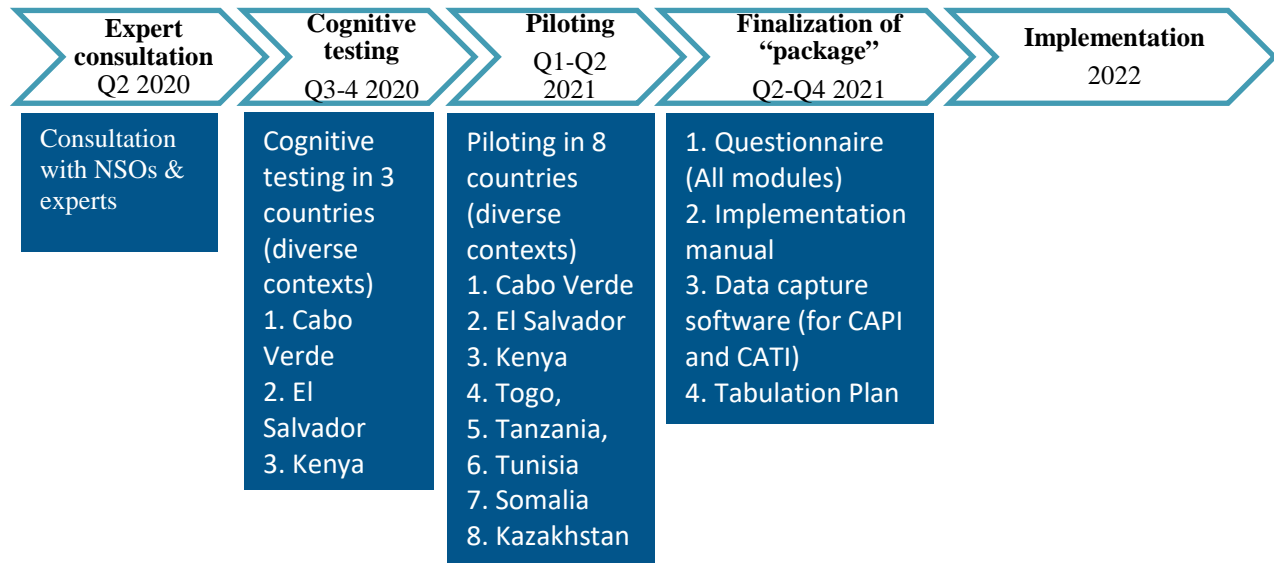
On the data collection software, several solutions were tested. Survey Solutions by the World Bank was recommended and supported directly with central scripting for the pilot, but some countries preferred other solutions. In one of the pilots, Dooblo was used (and faced a major outage during the pilot causing some data loss) and in another country, a data collection

¹⁶ When a phenomenon is measured by asking about each one of its specific manifestations/components. For example, measuring the experience of discrimination by asking about each individual type of discrimination.

¹⁷ When a phenomenon is measured by asking about it overall instead of asking about each one of its specific manifestations/components. For example, asking respondents if they were victims of discrimination without specifying each type of discrimination.

software was developed internally by a participating NSO for data collection via CAPI. The pilot experiences clearly showed the benefits of a centrally managed CAPI/CAWI script and use of a common software as it improved data consistency, reduced data quality issues (skip patterns) and reduced the required time investment by each national team.

Annex 4 – Piloting workflow



Annex 5 – Indicator and Disaggregation Matrix

