UN ECLAC COVID-19 Initiatives and Actions undertook on Economic Statistics

ECLAC Statistics Division

Fourth (Virtual) Meeting of the Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics
June 29-30, 2020
COVID-19 Observatory

ECLAC has built a COVID-19 Observatory to support review and follow-up over the medium and long terms and at the request of CELAC.

The Observatory tracks the public policies that the 33 countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region are implementing to limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and offers analyses of the economic and social impacts that these policies will have at the national and sectoral levels.

https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19
Initiatives undertook on economic statistics

• Actions undertook by UN ECLAC to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the statistical operation in the Latin American and Caribbean region started early April 2020.

• All the activities carried out up to now have been conducted in collaboration under the platform of the Knowledge Transmission Network in the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

• The initiatives cover the following:
  1. Virtual meetings (4)
  2. Virtual consultations (2)
  3. Technical assistance (8 countries)
  4. Documents with relevant policy recommendations for this period on National accounts and Price statistics (2)
1. Virtual meetings

As of June 2020, four regional meetings have been conducted as follows:

• 2 regional meetings on Price statistics.
  The topics addressed were focused on:
  1) Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the data collection (missing data).
  2) Actions undertaken by the statistical offices on new modalities of data collection.
  3) Imputation methods applied.
  4) Recommendations.

• 2 regional meetings on National accounts and foreign trade statistics.
  The main topics addressed were related to the impact of the pandemic on:
  1) Data sources,
  2) Compilation methods.
  3) Dissemination process
  4) Recommendations
2. Virtual consultations

For price statistics, 2 virtual consultations were carried out to know:

• Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the data collection (missing data)
• Actions undertaken by the statistical offices on new modalities of data collection.

The key findings are the following (1):

![Average percentage of imputed prices per month](image)

Source: Information from 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, which responded to this consultation.
2. Virtual consultations

The key findings are the following:

- 4 alternative price collection modalities were implemented by more than 50% of the countries, highlighting telephone and reporting website consultation.
3. Technical assistance

All these activities were conducted by on-line means.

- National Accounts statistics: 4 countries supported with TA
  1) Argentina
  2) Guatemala
  3) Paraguay
  4) Uruguay
- Price statistics: 5 countries supported through 13 virtual meetings.
  1) Bolivia
  2) Chile
  3) Dominican Republic
  4) Ecuador
  5) Paraguay
4. Documents with recommendations for this period on National accounts and Price statistics

The summaries of the problems raised and recommendations discussed during the virtual meetings were included in two documents already disseminated in English and Spanish:

Consumer Price Indices

National Accounts and Foreign Trade statistics
Main conclusions

- As of June 2020, the national statistical offices have faced struggles in the data collection of national accounts and price statistics, some of them fulfilled with administrative data, implementation of supplementary modalities of data collection, and others covered by imputation methods.

- The statistical offices that have already incorporated digital means for data collection are less impacted due to the restrictions posed by the pandemic. However, it is important to distinguish the closure of the operations of the enterprises from the low response rate due to the lockdown.

- It was identified that the impact of the new modalities in the coverage of the price survey was between 10% and 30% of the prices collected in March. These new modalities were applied in specific to cover the data gaps in the collection because of the health emergency.

- As a result of the use of these alternatives, most of the statistical institutes collected sufficient data to calculate the CPI for March and April.

- Recommendations on the treatment supports provided by the Government during this COVID-19 pandemic were discussed and shared with the statistical offices.

- It is advisable to adopt the criteria of flexibility in the methods used during the lockdown and the mobility restrictions in each country.
Steps forward

The Statistical Division will continue working with the LAC region during the pandemic and post-pandemic period to support the National accounts and Price statistics compilation.

Webinars, virtual meetings, and consultations will be organized to give follow-up to the actions undertaken by the statistical offices to solve to some extent the effects of the pandemic in their short-term series.

The TA will be carried out with flexibility to cover the needs of the statistical office with timeliness and effectiveness.
UN ECLAC COVID-19 Initiatives and Actions undertaken on Economic Statistics

ECLAC Statistics Division

Fourth (Virtual) Meeting of the Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics
June 29-30, 2020