

Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics

Supporting Note for the Discussion on the COVID19 Responses

Draft Agenda item 3

The world is facing an unprecedented threat from the spreading of COVID-19. This has led to a global health crisis unlike any other — one that is spreading human suffering, destabilizing the global economy and upending the lives of billions of people around the globe.

The Friends of the Group at its 4th meeting will address the global COVID-19 as a use case to examine its strategic direction in challenging the relevance, responsiveness and resilience of the working methods and operations of the national and global system of economic statistics. The international statistical community has an important responsibility to convene and share guidance, tools, and best practices to ensure the operational continuity of data programmes by the national and global statistical offices. At the same time, we need to consider in consultation with the users how we leverage data and data solutions for granular and integrated analysis and policy making and to anticipate our transition post COVID-19. These new demands may be quite different from the present statistics produced in terms of frequency and ability to inform the transmission mechanisms of the dynamics of economic domestic and international production of goods and services to the short and long term impacts on household groups and environment in terms of demographic change, inequality, climate change, urbanization, technological development.

The discussion could be centered around two main questions taking in account the perspective of both the national and the global statistical system of economic statistics.

1. What is the impact of COVID19? Ability to ensure business continuity, address new policy needs, introduce new data solutions and forge new partnerships.
2. How does post-Covid19 look like? Pivoting post-COVID19 is to ensure that we sustain the lessons learned by documenting where the system worked well to pivot where it did not work well and continue to address the new demands with the objective to enhance the resilience and responsiveness of the statistical system.

These two questions can be addressed by the following themes:

Ensuring continuity:

This theme will explore challenges and solutions available to National Statistical to be agile and innovative in adapting their data production methods and processes affected by COVID 19 to ensure continuity of major official statistical programmes and meeting the new user requirements.

- New mechanisms to communicate with policy makers during the COVID19 pandemic. What are these new mechanisms?
- New user demand for granular statistics on activities, products and societal groups. What are these new user demands?
- Balance the user demand for new crisis-related statistics and official statistics
- Collection of administrative and survey data in lockdown
- New compilation methods such as imputations and extrapolation for non-response and missing data

- Resilience of the statistical system - stress testing for different shocks
- Timely administrative and private data sources

Data solutions:

There is an unprecedented need of timely and responsive statistics to monitor the evolution and impact of the COVID-19 crisis. National statistical systems are therefore called to leverage all sources of data at their disposal and mobilize partners and experts from all sectors of society to implement solutions to produce timely and disaggregated statistics.

- Adjusted data and methods to produce statistics to inform policy making during a time of emergency. What new data sources (new surveys, crowdsourcing, web scraping, BD sources owned by the private sector data, etc.), new collection methods (CATI, household panel surveys, etc.) and compilation methods (nowcasting, flash estimates, delayed releases) are introduced?
- Networking with public and private sector partners for access and use of technology, data, methods and learning
- Networking country experiences in response to user requirements (e.g. supply chain analysis). Did you reach out to other NSIs to consult on the responses?
- Role of international and regional organizations in networking and helping NSIs to access data from digital intermediation platforms. Did you reach out to international organisations for assistance?
- Availability of secure data exchange capabilities and technologies
- Remote access to sensitive information
- Appetite for risk taking and experimentation for generating real time data. What is fit for purpose?
- Initiatives and innovative solutions to be scaled to deal with new data requirements to modernize our programs in the post-COVID era?

Pivot Post-COVID:

Post-COVID-19, there will remain a need to continue new working arrangements to make the statistical systems more resilient and to address the impact on the society and the economy with the pivot to sustain a more integrated and multidimensional statistical measurement of the economy, wellbeing of citizens and environment

- Requests from policy departments that NSOs provide integrated statistical presentation (either support for the creation of models, or the analysis itself) related to the social, economic, and environmental impact of policies and the impact of COVID19
- Most predominant statistical measurement challenges for NSOs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Most predominant new working arrangements to be introduced to make NSOs more resilient in the wake of COVID pandemic
- Most likely statistics to be demanded (active, real-time, integrated and forward looking versus passive statistics) and discontinued in the production of statistics
- Data stewardship of NSIs in management and oversight of national and departments data assets
How did NSIs assist in providing support to departments in generating high-quality data that is easily accessible in a consistent manner?