

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UN-ESCWA

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Washington, DC, USA
September 2018

STATUS OF REGIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RISKS IN WESTERN ASIA





OUTLINE

- ***A brief overview of the latest interim activities***
- ***Status of the 2017 ICP cycle in Western Asia:***
 - *Updates on country participation*
 - *Outstanding survey activities underway/planned*
 - *Status of regional quality assessment*
 - *Workshops and technical assistance missions undertaken and planned*
 - *Expected timetable for the finalization of regional data and release of results*
 - *Outreach activities*
 - *Outstanding risks*
- ***Beyond the 2017 ICP Cycle***

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST INTERIM ACTIVITIES



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The below activities were conducted after the previous IACG meeting:

- Regional ICP meeting for the computation of preliminary results for 2014-2015-2016, April 2018
- Workshop for the computation of the Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI), April 2018
- Session with the World Bank for the final computation of Western Asia's 2014-16 results, June 2018
- Regional Workshop for Assessment of Price Statistics and Harmonization of Price Indices for the Period 2011-2016, September 2018

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST INTERIM ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

- The production of PPPs for 2016, 2015 and 2014 presented an opportunity for Western Asia to review and refine its entire PPP time-series, especially with the improved national capacities, in order to boost the accuracy of the provided data and ensure high quality of the produced indicators;
- The regional implementing agency (RIA) in Western Asia conducted a workshop in September for the revision of time-series data for the period extending from 2011 to 2016;
- The workshop was attended by price experts as well as national accountants from the participating countries;
- Western Asia conducted a new form of temporal price validation, presenting the HHC and non-HHC special survey price trends from 2011 to 2016;
- Expenditure data for the time period 2011 to 2016 was also reviewed.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS – XR VS. PPP AT GDP (OMAN=BASE)

Country	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	XR	PPP	XR	PPP	XR	PPP	XR	PPP	XR	PPP	XR	PPP
Bahrain	0.98	1.07	0.98	1.05	0.98	1.06	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.99
Egypt	18.39	9.80	18.39	10.13	18.39	10.82	18.39	12.45	19.77	13.10	26.52	15.26
Iraq	3,042.91	2,796.57	3,032.51	2,836.46	3,032.51	2,819.41	3,032.51	2,643.52	3,035.11	2,650.06	3,074.12	2,674.51
Jordan	1.84	1.63	1.84	1.63	1.84	1.65	1.84	1.56	1.84	1.53	1.84	1.53
Kuwait	0.74	0.84	0.74	0.87	0.74	0.87	0.74	0.88	0.78	0.92	0.79	0.92
Morocco	-	-	-	-	-	-	21.85	19.92	25.75	21.18	25.49	21.26
Oman	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Palestine	9.31	10.24	10.03	10.43	9.39	10.03	9.30	9.11	10.11	9.48	9.99	9.54
Qatar	9.49	11.76	9.49	11.80	9.49	11.91	9.49	11.96	9.49	12.27	9.49	12.14
Saudi Arabia	9.75	9.67	9.75	9.70	9.75	9.73	9.75	9.51	9.75	9.50	9.75	9.55
Sudan	22.91	6.14	22.91	7.63	22.91	10.46	22.91	12.70	25.18	14.14	36.88	18.13
UAE	9.55	12.46	9.56	11.65	9.56	11.71	9.55	10.60	9.55	10.66	9.55	10.69

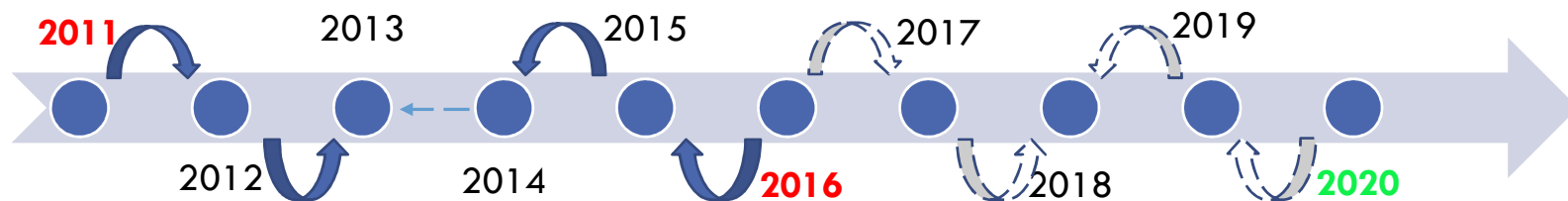
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST INTERIM ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

After the workshop, national implementing agencies (NIAs) worked on refining their data as follows:

- Since HHC prices were extrapolated from 2011 to 2012 and 2013, and also retropolated from 2016 to 2015 and 2014 by the RIA, NIAs reviewed outliers and modified some prices using the appropriate CPI data, thus achieving a higher level of consistency between the years;
- Special survey prices for 2011-2016 for certain items were also refined using administrative records for government compensation (one example is a country which had not incorporated transportation allowances in 2011, 2012 and 2013), private education and rentals (making sure to price mid-range surfaces instead of extremities);
- Appropriate indices were used for the revision of M&E and construction surveys and updates were made where needed, for instance making sure that electricity price is the one charged for construction companies and not households;
- Estimations of NA data were updated using more recent household budget surveys - for instance the 2014 HBS in one country - which were not yet available when results for 2011-2012-2013 were computed and which enhance expenditure estimates.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST INTERIM ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

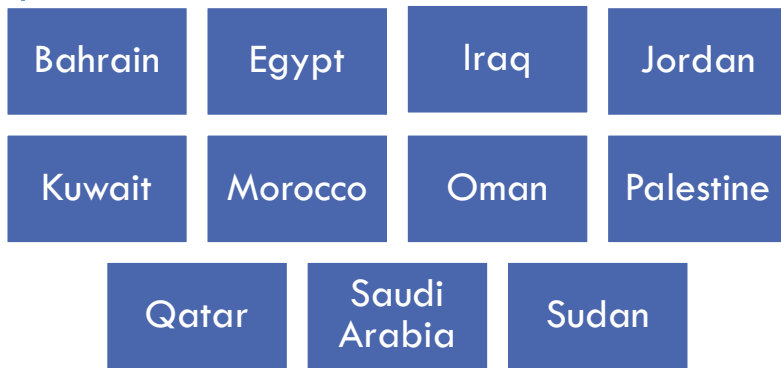
- Updated results are under computation for the whole period from 2011 to 2016;
- The temporal revision will result in improved and more consistent PPPs and PLIs across the years;
- The final results will be published by the end of the year.



STATUS OF THE 2017 ICP CYCLE IN WESTERN ASIA



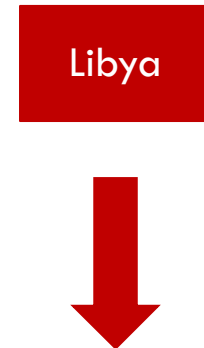
UPDATES ON COUNTRY PARTICIPATION



- Extrapolation of HHC prices with actual collection of FET, energy, communication and transport items
- Actual collection (with a few cases of extrapolation) of special survey prices



- Actual collection of HHC and special survey data



- Actual collection of HHC and special surveys in 2019 and retrapolation to 2017

OUTSTANDING SURVEY ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY/ PLANNED

- 2017 survey activities are progressing as planned;
- HHC data was extrapolated from 2016 by the RIA;
- Almost all special survey data is readily available from NIAs;
- Some surveys are still pending from NIAs but should be received soon – *more coordination with Africa is needed regarding dual participation countries.*

OUTSTANDING SURVEY ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY/ PLANNED (CONT'D)

Below is the current status of data submission from all the participating countries:

Status of 2017 Data Submission										
Countries	HHC FET	Rentals	Education	M&E	Govt Comp	Construction	CPI	Housing Volume	MORES	Housing Metadata
Bahrain	Received	Received	Received		Received	Received	Received	Received		Received
Egypt						Received	Received			
Iraq	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received		Received	
Jordan	Received									
		Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received			
Kuwait	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received		
Morocco	Received	Received	Received			Received	Received		Received	
Oman	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received		Received	
Palestine	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received			
Qatar	Received	Received	Received	Received		Received	Received			
Saudi Arabia	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received		Received
Sudan	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received			
UAE	Received (all items)	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received			

DATA QUALITY

- Frequent validation workshops and regular communication between the regional office and national statistical offices ensuring the submission of high quality data;
- The construction of an annual PPP time series allowed for the availability of 6+ years price trends which significantly help in reviewing and validating new and old data;
- National metadata and quality assurance surveys (Housing Volume, Housing Metadata, Household Consumption Survey Framework Questionnaire, National Accounts Country Practices Questionnaire) are underway.

WORKSHOPS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MISSIONS UNDERTAKEN AND PLANNED

Workshops and technical assistance missions undertaken:

- National training workshops were conducted for launching the 2017 activities in the UAE and Tunisia (for Tunisia and Libya).
- Since the UAE did not collect actual data for 2016 and thus did not participate in regional data validation workshops, a national workshop for the validation of 2017 price data was conducted in the UAE to ensure accuracy and high quality of data.
- Since the ICP is conducted regularly in Western Asia, there was no need for technical assistance during the data collection phase for countries which regularly participate in the program.
- Now that the 2016 regional round ended, the 2017 data was collected and a new grant was received, workshops and technical assistance missions will begin.

WORKSHOPS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MISSIONS UNDERTAKEN AND PLANNED (CONT'D)

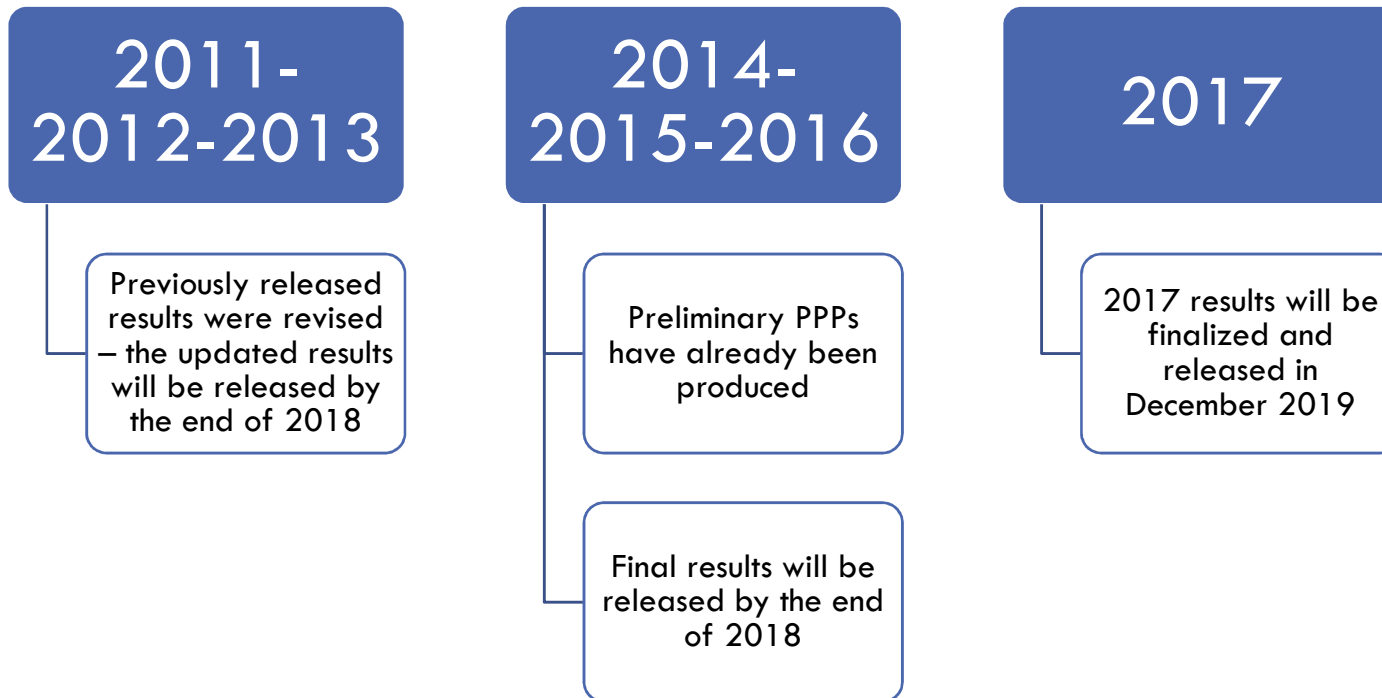
Activities planned for Q4 2018:

- 1st regional workshop for validation of 2017 ICP data;
- Sub-regional workshop for HCPI;
- National workshop for Libya for capacity building in data collection for 2019.

Activities planned for 2019:

More activities will take place during 2019 for data validation of prices and national accounts, capacity building, sub-national PPP production and production of the HCPI.

EXPECTED TIMETABLE FOR THE FINALIZATION OF REGIONAL DATA AND RELEASE OF RESULTS



INTEGRATION IN THE FIELD OF PRICE STATISTICS

- Some member countries have integrated the ICP within their regular work programs by introducing a subset of new items from the regional ICP list to be priced alongside the CPI, hence reducing data collection efforts and costs in the next ICP rounds.
- As a result, regular PPP production will be more accurate as it will rely less on extrapolation and more on actual data collection.
- This integration will lead to the synchronization of data collection activities between CPI and ICP, thus reducing cost, time, and additional efforts placed into the collection of price data for the ICP.
- ICP non-household consumption surveys also act as a foundation for countries to build on in developing their own special price indices, such as a construction price index or a machinery and equipment index.

INTEGRATION IN THE FIELD OF PRICE STATISTICS

THE CASE OF PALESTINE

- Palestine benefited from its participation in the ICP for the improvement of the national statistical infrastructure through investing the capacities built and knowledge gained at the national level:
 - Merging the CPI and ICP lists into a single database composed of common items and items specific to ICP or CPI.
 - The same team conducting CPI and ICP work using the same equipment for data collection of both indicators.
 - Constructing an illustrated catalogue for national CPI guiding in item identification to ensure consistency.
 - Applying ICP data validation rules on the national CPI to improve accuracy.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- Western Asia is already implementing PPP production rounds regularly and producing annual PPPs, and ESCWA member states are aware of the importance of the ICP and the wide benefits and uses of PPPs, and are already involved in the ICP activities as if it is a permanent program.
- To further increase awareness on the importance of the ICP, Western Asia has been using the following methods:
 - Regional ICP newsletters are regularly produced;
 - A new ICP webpage is under development under UNESCWA's website;
 - ICP posters will be displayed during the Statistical Committee;
 - New initiatives are undertaken integrating between the ICP and other price statistics, thus increasing the visibility of the ICP;
 - NIAs have also been exerting efforts to increase awareness on the importance of the ICP at the national level.

OUTSTANDING RISKS

At the regional level:

- There are no outstanding risks for the implementation of the ICP;

At the national level:

- Work is progressing well on the 2017 ICP cycle with no major issues;
- Libya was not able to conduct data collection during 2017-2018; however, it was agreed with the NIA to collect data for 2019;
- The instability of the geopolitical situation in many countries in the region has caused different countries which were interested in partaking in the ICP activities within Western Asia to be unable to participate;
- The possible risk of treating the ICP as an ad-hoc program has been addressed by the RIA which has been continuously developing initiatives for sustaining the production of PPPs and raising awareness on the importance of the program and its sustainability.

BEYOND THE 2017 ICP CYCLE



BEYOND THE 2017 ICP CYCLE

- To keep up with the global trend, Western Asia's next ICP round will also take place in 2020;
- The 2020 ICP cycle in Western Asia will consist of actual HHC data collection in 2020 along with extrapolation to 2021 and retrapolation to 2019 and 2018;
- Meanwhile, in 2018 and 2019, actual data collection will be taking place for special surveys and FET – some countries will go an extra mile, collecting actual prices for other HHC items as well;
- By applying this methodology, Western Asia has been getting its countries used to data collection on an annual basis while highlighting the benefits of this practice on the long-term.

BEYOND THE 2017 ICP CYCLE (CONT'D)

- In the 2011 ICP round, countries faced challenges in data collection. But with time, the burden associated with data collection was reduced;
- Member countries have started witnessing the advantage of annual data collection and are benefiting from the resulting effects in terms of improving their price statistics and their relationship with the data suppliers, thus enabling them to acquire the required data on a regular basis and update the previously collected data from their source;
- Countries are also investing the capacities built from the participation in the ICP and integrating ICP activities with their regular price statistics programs by building on the special surveys to develop new national price indices.

THANK YOU!

