

# GETTING STARTED

*This chapter is written for programme directors, their national counterparts, survey coordinators and technical resource persons. It will help you to:*

- Organize overall governance of survey
- Identify potential resource persons
- Decide on the level of aggregation for the estimates
- Estimate how long the survey will take
- Calculate how much the survey will cost

Once it is decided that a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey is necessary through the data needs assessment in the country, some important steps must be taken:

- First, establish the governance structure of the survey to facilitate decision making, harness resources, and build ownership.
- Second, identify an implementing partner and a survey coordinator working for implementing partner who will be in charge of the design, implementation and analysis of the data. UNICEF will also assist the survey by hiring a UNICEF MICS Consultant.
- Third, decide on the level at which subnational estimates is required – for example, at the regional, state or provincial level.
- Fourth, establish a timetable for the survey. Early planning is crucial because, in many cases, the full survey cycle, from inception to publication of results, may take more than one year. Planning should commence at least six months ahead of actual implementation.
- Fifth, calculate how much the survey will cost.

By completing these five steps, you will have assembled the majority of content to your survey plan.

## ESTABLISHING GOVERNING BODIES

Only in exceptional cases, a Steering Committee would not be crucial in overall governance of the survey. The survey implementation is a collaboration between partners. As a minimum, the steering

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**National ownership is crucial to implementation, capacity building, and acceptance and utilisation of survey results.**

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committee should be composed of senior staff from the implementing partner, UNICEF, and other funding partners but ideally relevant line ministries and stakeholders should also be on the committee. In a number of countries, such a committee has proven effective in creating ownership among the broader group of partners.

The Committee should meet at critical points during implementation, or when coordinated decisions are necessary at the highest level. Such meetings could include an inaugural meeting to also discuss funding and advocacy; another to review the Memorandum of Understanding and Survey Plan (including budget, time frame, dissemination activities, etc.); a few meetings to review survey progress; and, lastly, to close the Committee's work by deciding on the timing of the launch and further analysis and research.

The Steering Committee should also decide whether it is necessary to appoint technical people to be part of a technical Stakeholder Committee.

A technical committee is useful for establishing a well functioning "peer-review" mechanism on the survey instrument and for discussing methodological issues and advising the steering committee on technical decisions. The Committee should normally be chaired by the implementing partner and invite members from relevant government bodies, members of donor community, and civil society that have relevant household survey technical knowledge.

The Stakeholder Committee may not need to meet throughout the survey process, but will meet during crucial points of survey implementation. The committee will advise on the content of the survey questionnaires (which indicators are recommended). Through basic training, the group can also participate in fieldwork monitoring and report writing. All aspects of involvement benefit national ownership and survey transparency.

However, the survey management should be aware that such a diverse group of members often bring their own agenda to the table and often with a great spectrum of capacity and knowledge on household surveys. It is advisable to listen to the group's

#### **Good practise for ToR of Steering Committee**

##### *Composition:*

National Statistical Office, National Planning Agency, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, Representative of Donors (or Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper group on Health or M&E), other funding parties

##### *Objectives/tasks:*

1. To ensure transparent decision-making
2. To identify a collaborative approach to fund-raising
3. To promote understanding for and utilisation of survey and results
4. To oversee smooth implementation

##### *Method of work:*

The survey management acts as Secretariat to the Committee and prepares documents for decisions.

##### *Deliverables:*

1. Survey Plan accepted
2. Survey fully funded
3. Memorandum of Understanding signed
4. Review and response to progress reporting on implementation
5. Dissemination Plan developed

##### *Meeting frequency:*

No more than once every three months on average.

##### *Funding:*

Cost is very low, but a budget for arranging meetings should be made available

recommendations, but also to have a firm position on survey content and not compromise on the MICS standard recommended methodology.

### IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL RESOURCE PERSONS

A survey coordinator must be identified in collaboration with government partners. This person will ideally be a professional in the implementing partner or a governmental institution who is able to dedicate him/herself

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**Do not attempt to do a survey unless you can identify a full-time MICS coordinator.**

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full-time for the duration of the project. The coordinator may also be an independent consultant, but should have the respect of national counterparts. Previous experience in survey implementation is required, particularly in previous MICS or similar household surveys, along with a firm grounding in scientific methodology (as demonstrated, for example, by a postgraduate degree in demography, public health or related field). The survey coordinator, with the support of UNICEF MICS Consultant, will make sure that the entire process runs smoothly and that the basic protocols are followed, including carrying out the first stages of sampling, selecting and training fieldworkers, supervising overall field activities, and processing and analysing the data. Most important, the coordinator will be responsible for seeing that the survey results are reported in a manner that will *help all stakeholders understand their implications and use them for planning and decision-making*. The survey coordinator will also be responsible for obtaining the assistance of the resource person/s as well as the cooperation of government agencies at different levels.

In addition to the identification of the MICS Coordinator, the implementing partner will engage their technical resource persons, especially during the sampling, fieldwork, and data processing stages. Identification of a resource person for sampling and data processing is particularly required. In some cases, other governmental institutions may also contribute to the survey activities by providing their technical experts.

Survey coordinator is expected to work closely with the UNICEF focal point and the UNICEF MICS Consultant that will be hired by UNICEF Country Office to support and monitor the survey activities. UNICEF Regional Office will also support the survey activities by hiring a Regional Household Survey Consultant, a Regional Sampling Consultant, and a Regional Data Processing Consultant who will be assigned to each MICS country and will assist countries in the implementation of the survey.

### DECIDING ON THE LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

The level of aggregation in a survey is frequently determined by the level of data needed (national, sub-national) and by interest in special groups of respondents (e.g., persons who live in border or slum areas). The primary function of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey is to enable countries to fill major data gaps so that they are able to report at the national level. However,

some countries may also wish to have subnational estimates for planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes. For example, separate estimates for main provinces, regions or population groups, such as minorities or slum dwellers, may be desirable. In some instances, there will be interest in one or two subgroups of respondents. In this case, one option would be to oversample these groups to make sure that estimates with the desired degree of precision are obtained. However, sub-national estimates and over-sampling certain groups of respondents carries logistical and technical consequences, such as increased sample sizes, increased survey costs, and management implications (see MICS Manual Chapter ‘Designing and Selecting the Sample’).

### **ESTIMATING HOW LONG THE SURVEY WILL TAKE**

Due to the pressing need for reporting, survey planning should start as soon as possible, preferably at least six months ahead of actual fieldwork implementation. Good planning means specifying clearly at the outset what you need to learn from the survey and how that information will be used. Each step should then be tightly orchestrated around those needs, with the report format and plans for dissemination set out in advance. Unless the final phase of the survey is planned in detail at the outset, data processing, data analysis and report writing will inevitably be delayed, often to the point of rendering the results obsolete by the time they finally become available.

The timetable presented in Table 1 shows the minimum estimated time for completing the full survey cycle for a sample of 300 clusters of 20 households each. This table is provided for general guidance only, since local conditions can affect the duration of the study. Factors affecting timing include the geography of a country, road conditions and the prior experience of the survey team. For more detailed planning, using weeks rather than months is preferable when drafting the timetable. Other activities may also be included or made more explicit in the timetable, such as the updating of the sample frame, correction of questionnaires after the pre-test, the recruitment process of interviewers, data archiving etc.

**Table 1**  
**Sample Timetable for a National Survey Covering 6,000 Households**

| Tasks   | Months |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |  |
|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|--|
|   | 1      | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |  |
| Identify survey coordinator, survey personnel, and plan survey; establish steering committee      | ■      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |  |
| Adapt and pre-test questionnaires; translate questionnaires and manuals                           |        | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |  |
| Carry out sampling and household listing; order scales, boards, salt test kits, and GPS equipment |        |   | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |  |
| Complete logistical arrangements  |        |   | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |   |    |    |  |
| Select and train fieldwork personnel (interviewers, editors, measurers, and supervisors)          |        |   |   |   | ■ |   |   |   |   |    |    |  |
| Conduct pilot study and collect data  |        |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ |   |   |    |    |  |
| Enter and clean data  |        |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |    |    |  |
| Complete data processing  |        |   |   |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ |    |    |  |
| Prepare final report and disseminate widely; prepare survey archive                               |        |   |   |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ | ■  | ■  |  |

† **IMPORTANT:**

*A key factor that may affect the timing of your survey is seasonality. Fieldwork may not be feasible during the rainy season due to poor road conditions, or during special religious holidays such as Ramadan. In addition, some indicators may vary with the seasons, such as the prevalence of malnutrition. These influences must be taken into account, particularly if the survey results are to be compared to earlier findings.*

## CALCULATING HOW MUCH THE SURVEY WILL COST

Survey costs can vary widely from country to country and from time to time. This variability depends not only on currency and labour costs, but also on the degree to which you can reduce costs by using existing facilities. Savings can be achieved, for example, by using government personnel for interviewing, public or government-provided transportation, or by obtaining free accommodations and meals for the survey team from local institutions. On the other hand, saving attempts such as decreasing the number of fieldwork training days, decreasing the number of fieldwork days on the assumption of interviewers completing a lot of interviews, or increasing the number of recruited interviewers in order to complete the fieldwork in a shorter time are not recommended as they all have negative effects on data quality.

Table 2 provides a number of possible expenditure items, many of which may not be applicable for particular countries. The items are based on a number of assumptions regarding sample size, number of fieldwork teams, team composition and the like. It assumes a total sample size of 6,000 households, an average cluster size of 20 households, and 300 sample clusters. It also assumes that the fieldwork will be completed in 54 days (40 working days plus 14 days for travel from town to town and for unexpected delays), by 8 fieldwork teams, each comprising 1 supervisor, 1 field editor, 1 measurer and 4 interviewers. It also includes an 18-day training session for fieldwork, and a pre-test activity. The list excludes a number of other expenditures that may be applicable for some countries, such as those related to updating the sample frame, selection of the survey sample, etc. A detailed account of how fieldwork should be organized is provided in MICS Manual Chapter 'Preparing for Data Collection and Conducting Fieldwork', where the same example is used.

A comprehensive MICS costing framework has been prepared to help standardize the process of figuring survey costs (see Tables 3 and 4). Country offices are advised to use this framework to help make the process of cost-sharing more transparent and MICS4 more cost-efficient. The framework incorporates a breakdown of expenditures within each type of activity. It is intended to help national statistical offices/implementing agencies identify activities needing donor support, and to help donors decide how costs can be shared. The framework can also be used to provide a comparison of MICS4 costs across time and countries.

To calculate how much the survey will cost at country level, estimate the funds needed for each type of activity using the standard categories provided in Tables 3 and 4 (which can be expanded if necessary). Note that these tables include some additional cost and activity categories not included in Table 2.

After these steps have been completed, the survey implementation process is ready to commence. More supporting documents and guidelines to help planning a MICS can be found at <http://www.childinfo.org>.

**Table 2**  
**Common Survey Budget Items and Approximate Estimates**  
**for a Survey of 6,000 Households**

| Budget item   | Basis for calculation               |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Personnel (salaries plus indirect costs)</b>                     |                                     |
| UNICEF MICS Consultant.....   | 1 person x 12 months                |
| Accountant.....   | 1 person x 12 months                |
| Administrative Assistant.....                                       | 1 person x 12 months                |
| Computer programmer.....  | 1 programmer x 100 days             |
| <i>Pre-test</i>   |                                     |
| Pre-test interviewers' training .....                               | 20 persons x 3 days                 |
| Pre-test trainers.....  | .. number x 3 days                  |
| Pre-test interviewers .....   | 20 persons x 10 days                |
| Driver.....   | 5 drivers x 10 days                 |
| <i>Listing</i>  |                                     |
| Listing personnel's training .....                                  | 10 persons x 3 days                 |
| Listing trainers.....   | .. number x 3 days                  |
| Listing personnel .....   | 10 persons x 30 days                |
| Driver.....   | 5 drivers x 30 days                 |
| <i>Fieldwork</i>  |                                     |
| Trainees (field staff, data entry personnel + 10 %).....            | 74 persons x 18 days                |
| Fieldwork trainers.....   | .. number x 18 days                 |
| Field supervisors .....   | 8 supervisors x 54 days             |
| Field editors .....   | 8 editors x 54 days                 |
| Interviewers .....  | 32 interviewers x 54 days           |
| Measurers.....  | 8 measurers x 54 days               |
| Drivers.....  | 8 drivers x 54 days                 |
| Local guides .....  | variable                            |
| <i>Data entry</i>   |                                     |
| Data entry personnel's additional training .....                    | 5 persons x 2 days                  |
| Office editor .....   | 1 editor x 60 days                  |
| Data entry supervisor .....   | 1 supervisor x 60 days              |
| Data entry clerks.....  | 4 clerks x 60 days                  |
| <b>Transportation</b>   |                                     |
| Vehicle rental (pre-test).....                                      | 5 cars x 10 days                    |
| Vehicle rental (listing).....                                       | 5 cars x 30 days                    |
| Vehicle rental (fieldwork training-pilot) .....                     | 10 minibuses x 2 days               |
| Vehicle rental (fieldwork).....                                     | 8 minibuses x 54 days               |
| Public transportation allowance (urban areas) .....                 | variable                            |
| Fuel.....   | provision for 8 minibuses x 54 days |
| Contingency costs (repairs, ferries, etc.).....                     | variable                            |
| Consultant and monitoring staff field visits .....                  | variable                            |
| Regional workshop participation – UNICEF MICS Consultant.....       | 1 person x 3 workshops x variable   |
| Regional workshop participation – Implementing partner experts..... | 3 persons x 3 workshop x variable   |
| <b>Per diems (room and board)</b>                                   |                                     |
| <i>Pre-test</i> <sup>1</sup>  |                                     |
| Pre-test interviewers.....  | 20 persons x 10 days                |
| Driver.....   | 5 drivers x 10 days                 |
| Pre-test monitoring staff .....                                     | 4 persons x 5 days                  |
| Driver for pre-test monitoring.....                                 | 2 drivers x 5 days                  |

<sup>1</sup> If this activity requires overnight stay

|                  |   |                                 |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Listing</i>   | Listing personnel's training <sup>2</sup> .....                     | 10 persons x 3 days             |
|                  | Listing trainers <sup>2</sup> .....                                 | number x 3 days                 |
|                  | Listing personnel.....  | 10 persons x 30 days            |
|                  | Driver.....   | 5 drivers x 30 days             |
| <i>Fieldwork</i> | Trainees (field staff, data entry clerks + 10 %) <sup>2</sup> ..... | 74 persons x 18 days            |
|                  | Fieldwork trainers <sup>2</sup> .....                               | number x 18 days                |
|                  | Field supervisors.....  | 8 supervisors x 54 days         |
|                  | Field editors.....  | 8 editors x 54 days             |
|                  | Interviewers.....   | 32 interviewers x 54 days       |
|                  | Measurers.....  | 8 measurers x 54 days           |
|                  | Drivers.....  | 8 drivers x 54 days             |
|                  | Fieldwork monitoring staff.....                                     | 4 persons x 35 days             |
|                  | Drivers for fieldwork monitoring.....                               | 2 drivers x 35 days             |
|                  | Regional workshop participation – UNICEF MICS Consultant.....       | 1 person x 3 workshops x 7 days |
|                  | Regional workshop participation – Implementing partner experts..... | 3 persons x 3 workshop x 7 days |

### Consumables

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Stationery (paper, pencils, pens, folders, etc.).....                 | variable |
| Identification cards.....   | variable |
| Envelopes for filing.....   | variable |
| Computer supplies (paper, CD-ROMs, USB flash drives, cartridges)..... | variable |
| Bags, hats, t-shirts for fieldwork personnel.....                     | variable |

### Equipment

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Height boards.....   | 10 boards    |
| SECA scales.....   | 10 scales    |
| Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS).....                          | 10 GPS units |
| Salt test kits.....  | variable     |
| Other fieldwork kits (torches, first aid kits, sleeping bags)..... | variable     |

### Other costs

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Venue hire (pre-test).....  | 10 days          |
| Venue hire (listing).....   | 3 days           |
| Venue hire (fieldwork training).....  | 18 days          |
| Equipment maintenance.....  | variable         |
| Packing and sending filled questionnaires to implementing partner.....          | variable         |
| Listing form printing.....  | 350 sets         |
| Questionnaire and form printing.....  | 7,000 sets       |
| Manual printing.....  | 100 sets         |
| Photocopies of maps, listings, instruction manuals.....                         | 100 of each item |
| Communications (phone, fax, postage, internet use, cell phone cards, etc.)..... | variable         |
| Report writing and printing.....  | variable         |
| Dissemination meeting/National Seminar.....                                     | variable         |
| Independent audit.....  | variable         |

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<sup>2</sup> If this activity requires overnight stay



**Table 3**  
**MICS Costing Framework:**  
**Items Included in Cost and Activity Categories**

| <b>Cost categories</b>   | <b>Activity categories</b>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Personnel (salaries)</b><br/>           Consultants<br/>           Field supervisors and editors<br/>           Interviewers and Measurers<br/>           Drivers<br/>           Translators<br/>           Local guides<br/>           Data entry clerks<br/>           Computer programmer<br/>           Overtime payments<br/>           Incentive allowance<br/>           Coordinating committee</p> <p><b>Per diem (room and board)</b><br/>           Field supervisors and editors<br/>           Interviewers and Measurers<br/>           Drivers<br/>           Translators<br/>           Local guides (meal allowance)<br/>           Consultants</p> <p><b>Transportation</b><br/>           Vehicle rental<br/>           Public transportation allowance<br/>           Fuel<br/>           Maintenance costs<br/>           Consultant visits</p> <p><b>Consumables</b><br/>           Stationery (papers, pencils, pens, folders, etc.)<br/>           Identification cards<br/>           Envelopes for filing<br/>           Computer supplies (paper, CD-ROMs, USB flash drives, cartridges)</p> <p><b>Equipment</b><br/>           Measuring equipment (scales and boards)<br/>           Salt test kits<br/>           Geographic Positioning Systems<br/>           Other fieldwork kits (torches, first aid kits, sleeping bags)</p> <p><b>Other costs</b><br/>           Printing (for questionnaire, etc.)<br/>           Photocopies of maps, listings, instruction manuals<br/>           Equipment maintenance<br/>           Communications (phone, fax, postage, internet use, cell phone cards, etc.)<br/>           Report writing and printing</p> | <p><b>Preparation/sensitization</b><br/>           Adaptation of questionnaire<br/>           Adaptation of dummy tables<br/>           Translation and back-translation<br/>           Pre-testing of adapted questionnaire<br/>           Publicity before and after fieldwork</p> <p><b>Pre-test</b><br/>           Training<br/>           Data collection<br/>           Data analysis<br/>           Report on the pre-test</p> <p><b>Survey design and sample preparation</b><br/>           Planning<br/>           Sample preparation and listing</p> <p><b>Training</b><br/>           Preparation of training materials<br/>           Translation into training language<br/>           Implementation of training</p> <p><b>Main survey implementation</b><br/>           Implementation<br/>           Monitoring and supervision<br/>           Data retrieval</p> <p><b>Data input</b><br/>           Data entry<br/>           Editing</p> <p><b>Data processing and analysis</b><br/>           Data processing<br/>           Data cleaning<br/>           Indicator production<br/>           Tables of analysis</p> <p><b>Report writing</b></p> <p><b>Dissemination and further analysis</b><br/>           Report printing<br/>           Distribution<br/>           Feedback meetings<br/>           Further analysis<br/> <br/>           Archiving</p> |

**Table 4  
MICS Costing Framework**

| COST CATEGORIES                     | TOTAL COSTS | ACTIVITY CATEGORIES           |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------|--|----------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
|                                     |             | Preparation/<br>sensitization | Pre-test | Survey design<br>and sample<br>preparation | Training | Main survey<br>implementation | Data<br>input | Data<br>processing and<br>analysis | Report<br>writing | Dissemination<br>and further<br>analysis |
| Personnel                           |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| Per diems                           |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| Transportation                      |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| Consumables                         |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| Equipment                           |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| Other costs                         |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| <b>TOTAL COSTS</b>                  |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |
| Implementing<br>partners<br>(names) |             |                               |          |  |          |                               |               |                                    |                   |  |

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**Supplementary details**

1. **Sample size:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of households per cluster:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of clusters:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Fieldwork staff (numbers of)** Interviewers: \_\_\_\_\_ Field supervisors: \_\_\_\_\_ Field editors: \_\_\_\_\_ Measurers: \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Duration of training for main fieldwork (number of days):** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Duration of fieldwork (number of days):** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Number of data entry clerks:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of clusters per data entry clerk per day:** \_\_\_\_\_
6. **UNICEF contribution: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Other UN/international/bilateral agency contribution: \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Government contribution: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total budget: \$** \_\_\_\_\_