CHAPTER 2

GETTING STARTED

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

- 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, some important steps must be taken:

- First, identify a survey coordinator and a senior resource person who will be in charge of the design, implementation and analysis of the data.
- Second, decide whether a nationally representative sample is sufficient or whether there is also a need for subnational estimates – for example, at the regional, state or provincial level.
- Third, establish a timetable for the survey. Early planning is crucial because the full survey cycle, from inception to publication of results, may take several months.
- Fourth, calculate how much the survey will cost.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL RESOURCE PERSONS

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

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

A senior resource person should be identified who will collaborate closely with the survey coordinator, especially at the survey design stage. The resource person should have ample technical expertise in survey design, implementation and analysis (UNICEF Regional Offices as well as UNICEF Headquarters in New York will be able to provide a list of qualified candidates). In some cases, it may be easier to select an institution that can provide the survey coordinator with the necessary support. In the last round of MICS, in 2000, national statistical offices were selected in many countries to perform this function, which proved to be a successful strategy.

DECIDING ON THE LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

Sample size depends partly on whether indicators will be measured at the national and/or subnational level. 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. Countries will have to consider a number of factors when deciding on whether or not to undertake subnational estimates, since this will have sample size, cost and management implications (see Chapter 4). In some instances, there will be interest in one or two subgroups. In this case, one option would be to oversample these groups to make sure that estimates with some precision are obtained. But this will also increase the overall number of households to be surveyed. The potential gains from these options need to be carefully weighed against the additional costs in both time and money that they will invariably entail.

ESTIMATING HOW LONG THE SURVEY WILL TAKE

Due to the pressing need for reporting, survey planning should start as soon as possible. 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 2.1 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, etc.

Table 2.1
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 and resource person; plan survey	■										
Adapt and pre-test questionnaires		■	■								
Carry out sampling			■	■							
Complete logistical arrangements			■	■	■						
Select and train interviewers					■						
Conduct pilot study and collect data						■	■				
Enter and clean data						■	■	■			
Complete data processing								■	■		
Prepare reports (preliminary and final) and disseminate widely								■	■	■	■

☞ **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.

Table 2.2 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, by 8 fieldwork teams, each comprising 1 supervisor, 1 field editor 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 Chapter 5, 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 2.3 and 2.4). Country offices are advised to use this framework to help make the process of cost-sharing more transparent and MICS3 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 MICS3 costs across time and countries.

To calculate how much the survey will cost, estimate the funds needed for each type of activity using the standard categories provided in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 (which can be expanded if necessary). Note that these tables include some additional cost and activity categories not included in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2
Common Survey Budget Items and Approximate Estimates for a Survey of 6,000 Households

Budget item		Basis for calculation
Personnel (salaries plus indirect costs)		
Consultants		variable
Pre-test	Pre-test interviewers	20 individuals x 10 days
	Driver	1 driver x 5 days
Training	Trainees (field staff, data entry clerks + 10 %)	60 individuals x 18 days
Fieldwork	Field supervisors	8 supervisors x 54 days
	Field editors	8 editors x 54 days
	Interviewers	32 interviewers x 54 days
	Drivers	8 drivers x 54 days
Data entry clerks		4 clerks x 60 days
Computer programmers		1 programmer x 100 days
Transportation		
Vehicle rental (fieldwork)		8 cars x 54 days
Vehicle rental (pre-test)		1 car x 5 days
Public transportation allowance (urban areas)		variable
Fuel		provision for 8 cars x 54 days
Contingency costs (repairs, ferries, etc.)		variable
Consultant visits		variable
Per diems (room and board)		
Pre-test	Pre-test interviewers	20 individuals x 10 days
	Driver	1 driver x 5 days
Training	Trainees (field staff, data entry clerks + 10 %)	60 individuals x 18 days
Fieldwork	Field supervisors	8 supervisors x 54 days
	Field editors	8 editors x 54 days
	Interviewers	32 interviewers x 54 days
	Drivers	8 drivers x 54 days
Consumables		
Stationery (paper, pencils, pens, etc.)		variable
Identification cards		variable
Envelopes for filing		variable
Computer supplies (paper, CD-ROMs, diskettes, cartridges)		variable
Equipment		
Boards, scales, Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS), salt test kits		10 boards, 10 scales, 10 GPS, salt test kit
Other costs		
Venue hire (pre-test)		10 days
Venue hire (training)		18 days
Equipment maintenance		variable
Sending questionnaires to implementing agency		variable
Questionnaire and form printing		6,000 sets
Photocopies of maps, listings, instruction manuals		100 of each item
Communications (phone, fax, postage, etc.)		variable
Report writing and printing		variable

Table 2.3
MICS Costing Framework:
Items Included in Cost and Activity Categories

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

Table 2.4
MICS Costing Framework

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

Supplementary details

1. **Sample size: _____ Number of households per cluster: _____ Number of clusters: _____**
2. **Fieldwork staff (numbers of) Interviewers: _____ Field supervisors: _____ Field editors: _____**
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: $ _____