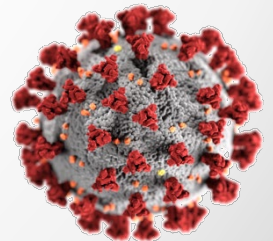# Adapting household surveys for better measurement of poverty in the context of the pandemic

Mr. Rafkat Hasanov, UNECE Consultant

Survey 2020 (summer): telephone interview becomes the main survey method

- All NSAs (who responded) used the telephone survey as the main survey method (only *Latvia, Canada* additionally used the web survey method)
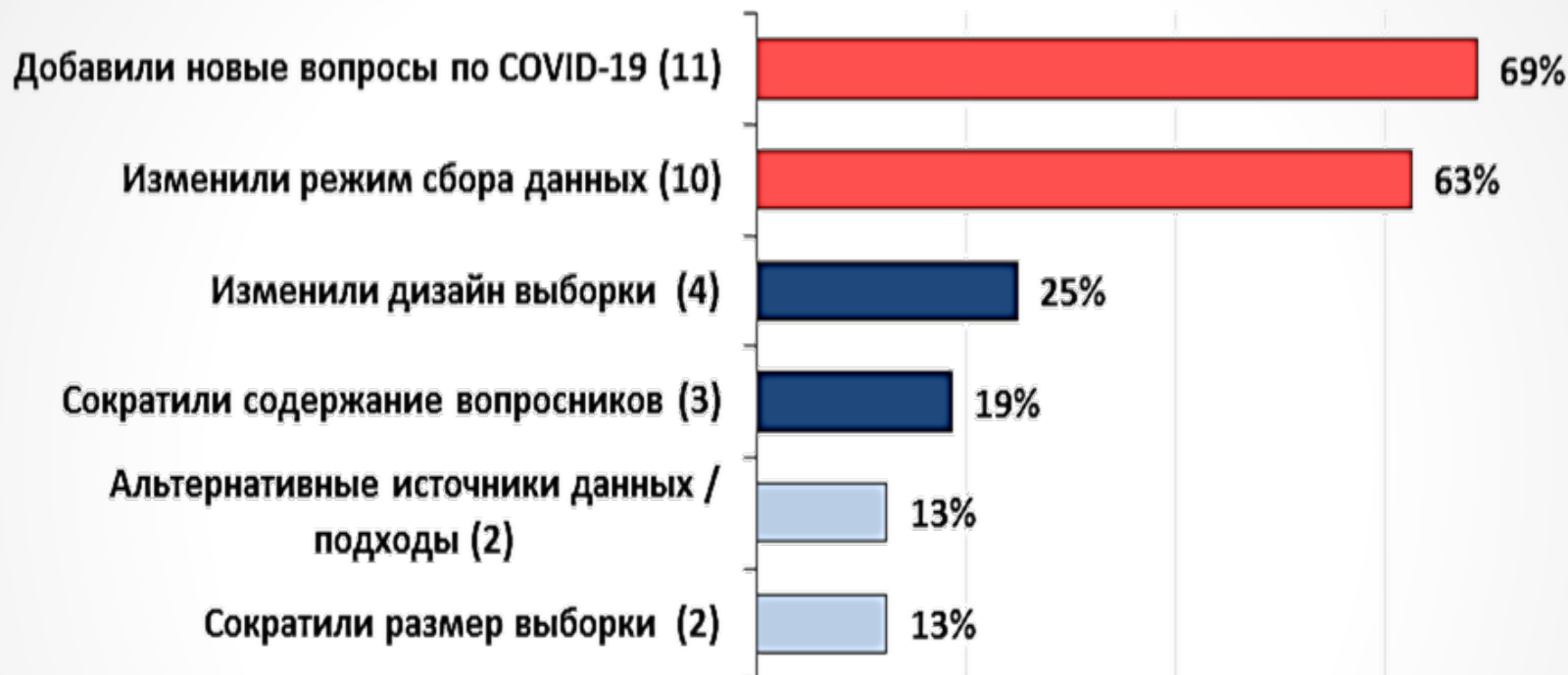
Challenges of *telephone interviewing*:

- limited availability of respondents' telephones;
- an increase in the percentage of respondents not responding to telephone surveys / interruption of the survey before its completion;
- low level of confidence in telephone interviewing

Transition to *new survey methods* (to account for the impact of COVID-19):

- *Kazakhstan and Russia:* website survey; video interviews; phone records
- *Russia:* modelling-based assessments
- *Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan:* survey via social networks

Survey 2020: household questionnaires slightly changed

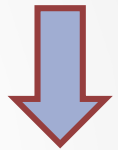|	
Добавили новые вопросы по COVID-19 (11)	69%
Изменили режим сбора данных (10)	63%
Изменили дизайн выборки (4)	25%
Сократили содержание вопросников (3)	19%
Альтернативные источники данных / подходы (2)	13%
Сократили размер выборки (2)	13%

- *Moldova, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia:* added new questions
- *Latvia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, Slovenia:* changed data collection mode
- *Latvia:* changed sample design

Survey 2021 (March): how have data collection methods changed during the pandemic?

- pre-pandemic: CAPI + direct visits to respondents (face-to-face interviews)

restrictions on face-to-face interviews during a pandemic (the deterioration of the epidemic situation)

- telephone surveys (using the same electronic questionnaires);

- correspondence via smartphones; data transmission from respondents, in the form of photocopies or scanned copies of paper questionnaires via Viber, WhatsApp, telephone or e-mail to regional NSAs;

- if telephone numbers of respondents were not available the survey was not conducted and information was counterbalanced by calibration of statistical weights

Survey 2021 (March): data collecting challenges during the pandemic

- unadaptability of the questionnaires to the telephone survey: large volume and the questionnaire complexity; increased time to conduct the survey over the telephone;

- inaccessibility of households due to compliance with isolation; restriction and complete cessation of mobility;

- increase in refusals, including "...for health reasons";

- lack of a database with telephone numbers of respondents in the NSA;

- lack of telephones in the households;

- parents' phones were involved in the children's online learning process, so data collection was only possible for limited time;

- significant increase in the data collection workload of interviewers after the lifting of strict restrictions

- there were no difficulties (only one answer!)

Directions for further adaptation of household surveys during the pandemic: a major dilemma

Reducing survey time and simplifying questionnaires

vs

The need to consider the provisions of the GUIDE ON POVERTY MEASUREMENT 2017, 2020

Directions for further adaptation of household surveys in the context of the pandemic

I. **Further work on the consultant's recommendations prepared in 2018.**

Conclusions-2018 regarding questionnaires:

- **on consumer expenditures**: largely adapted at the class level

- **on household income**: differences are evident at the upper levels of income classification (as defined by the Canberra Group Handbook);

there are methodological differences in the calculation of gross household income,

disposable and adjusted household income is not calculated

- **on deprivations**: there is no common approach

Further work on the consultant's recommendations prepared in 2018

- *on consumer expenditures*: adaptation of the sections of the module questionnaire with edition of COICOP-2018

- *by household income:*

  - clarifying the definitions of income components and sub-components

  - a clearer distinction between current income and income from assets (Guide Recommendations 24 and 25)

  - clarifying the measurement of social cash transfers (Recommendation 23)

- *on deprivations:* further adaptation of the questionnaires to the EU-SILC, considering country-specific features (Recommendation 28)

Directions for further adaptation of household surveys in the context of the pandemic

II. Redesign of questionnaires and reduction of survey time

- elimination of modules and questions not related to poverty measurement (Recommendation 28: Deprivation indicators should be based on normative definitions of poverty and not on similar concepts)

- the revision of the questionnaires, especially the Core Interview Questionnaire, to exclude certain questions

- conversion of certain modules (supplementary, thematic) into online surveys on the NSA website

Directions for further adaptation of household surveys in the context of the pandemic

III. Ensuring the maximum possible disaggregation of poverty:

- Sustainable development goal indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, residence and other characteristics (Recommendation 2)

- the minimum set of variables can be supplemented by more detailed indicators based on the country context

Disaggregating poverty measurement - the basis for developing appropriate support measures

According to the Guide (Recommendation 2), disaggregation of poverty should be performed on 11 variables:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability status
- Migration status
- Ethnicity
- Household type
- Current employment status
- Household ownership status
- Receipt of cash (or "nearly cash") social transfers
- Urbanization rate
- Education level

SDG national platforms: disaggregating poverty indicators

Indicator	How many variables?	Disaggregation variables
SDG 1.1.1	from 0 to 5	Gender, age, employment status and urbanisation rate
SDG 1.2.1	from 0 to 4	Gender, age, disability, urbanisation rate
SDG 1.2.2	from 0 to 3	Gender, age, urbanisation rate
SDG 10.1.1	from 0 to 1	Urbanisation rate
SDG 10.2.1	from 0 to 3	Gender, age, disability

There is virtually no disaggregation on such grounds as

- migration status, ethnicity, household ownership status, receipt of cash (or "nearly cash") social transfers, education level

Directions for further adaptation of household surveys in the context of the pandemic

IV. Increased coverage (accounting for hard-to-reach groups):

Improving sampling of the population not covered by poverty statistics (*Recommendation 3*): ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, homeless people, people living in different types of institutions

Survey 2021: Which segments of the population are hard-to-reach groups?

- young families (very rarely at home);
- families with children under 2 years of age (time pressure and reluctance to let a stranger in);
- high-income groups living in private houses;
- people in large cities (time pressure);
- representatives of certain religious views

Incomplete understanding of the term " hard-to-reach groups"

Directions for further adaptation of household surveys in the context of the pandemic

IV. Possible disaggregation of poverty indicators by sex and age of each household member (Recommendation 26)

V. Improving methods to increase respondent engagement in online surveys

VI. Adjustment for non-response and calibration of weights

Thank you for your attention!