



THE INTER-SECRETARIAT
**WORKING GROUP ON
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS**

Data Collection — UN Handbook of Surveys of Households and Individuals Chapter Preview

June 16, 2026



unstats.un.org/iswghs

The Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS)

- Established in 2015 under the aegis of the UNSC
- Objectives:
 - Improve coordination of household surveys
 - Advance cross-cutting survey methodology
 - Enhance communication and advocacy
 - Support capacity building
- Governance
 - Membership: 12 international agencies + 10 (rotating) member states
 - Secretariat: UN Statistics Division/ECLAC Statistics Division
 - Current co-chairs: World Bank and UNESCO
- Work through time-bound Task Forces, led by and with contribution from members and non-member experts.

Housekeeping rules

- ☐ Please keep yourself muted when you are not speaking
- ☐ Keep video off when you are not speaking, to save bandwidth
- ☐ Type your questions in the chat box and Q/A
- ☐ The session is recorded and will be available on UNStats YouTube
- ☐ Link to the session will be shared after the event

Chapter 6 Authors

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Today's Panelists

Speakers

- ❑ Elizabeth (Liz) **Zechmeister**, *Vanderbilt University*
- ❑ Johannes (Joost) **Kappelhof**, *Netherlands Institute for Social Research*
- ❑ Michael **Robbins**, *Arab Barometer / Princeton University*

Discussants

- ❑ Björn **Janssen**, *Statistics Netherlands*
- ❑ Maen **Salhab**, *Palestinian Bureau of Statistics*
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Presentation Outline

1. Overview of the Handbook
2. Highlights from Selected Chapter Sections
3. Discussant Comments
4. Audience Q&A



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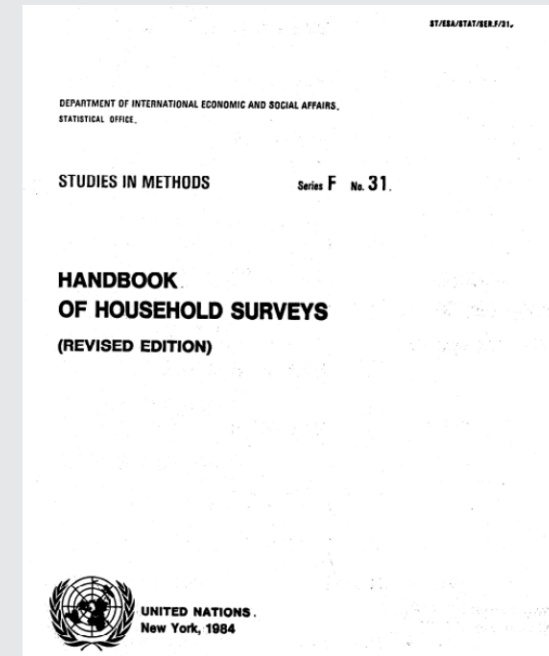
Overview of the Handbook



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Revision of the UN Handbook on Household Surveys

- ❑ Mandated by the UN Statistical Commission, March 2024
- ❑ The previous versions:
 - United Nations Handbook on Household Surveys, 1984
 - Other handbooks covering different aspects of household surveys: 1982-2008
- ❑ Guided by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys
- ❑ Draft handbook submitted to the UN Statistical Commission March 2026



Key features of the Handbook

- ❑ Coverage of emerging approaches: to motivate NSOs to continue to experiment and adopt innovative approaches:
 - Methods are still an active area of research
 - Methods that are well-tested but have yet to be broadly adopted in national surveys
- ❑ Inclusion: to cover individuals living in and outside of households
- ❑ Surveys as an integral component of a broader national data ecosystem: data integration and interoperability
- ❑ Keeping as a living document

The Handbook structure

Part I

Chapter	Title
0	Introduction
1	Overview of the current survey landscape
2	Survey needs assessment and initiation
3	Survey Management
4	Questionnaire design, translation, and instrument
5	Frames and Sampling
6	Data Collection
7	Data Processing
8	Weighting
9	Analysis
10	Dissemination

Part II

Chapter	Title
11	Measuring education
12	Measuring governance and crime victimization
13	Measuring labour
14	Measuring wealth
15	Mainstreaming the gender perspective
16	Surveys of Forcibly Displaced people
17	Surveys in Small Islands Developing States



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Overview of Ch. 6: Data Collection



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Data Collection: Chapter 6 Overview

This chapter provides guidance on how to collect survey data *efficiently* and *effectively*

- **Efficiency** relates to time and budget considerations
- **Effectiveness** relates to realizing the intended sample while minimizing Total Survey Error

Additional considerations are local regulations, ethical principles, and managing challenges.

Focus is on interview data and paradata, mostly in interviewer-administered surveys

Advance planning is critical! Design related to mode (ch. 2), schedule (ch. 3), questionnaire (ch. 4), sample (ch. 5) must be completed in advance. Pre-planning is required to establish the nature of the team and approach to training(s), advance messaging, implementation, production monitoring, and quality control. Challenges will occur, and many can be anticipated with advance planning.

Chapter 6 Sections

- ☐ Overview (Section 6.1)
- ☐ Planning for data collection (Section 6.2)
- ☐ **Organizing a data collection team (Section 6.3)**
- ☐ Training (Section 6.4)
- ☐ Publicity of survey activity (Section 6.5)
- ☐ Data collection implementation (Section 6.6)
- ☐ Production monitoring (Section 6.7)
- ☐ Quality control (QC) (Section 6.8)
- ☐ Data collection in times of crisis (Section 6.9)
- ☐ Emerging approaches (Section 6.10)

6.3 Organizing a data collection team*

* *Focus is on functions and qualifications; team models vary by country, organization, mode, and project*

- ☐ Management
 - ☐ Sampling
 - ☐ Data processing
 - ☐ Supervision
 - ☐ Training
 - ☐ Interviewing
 - ☐ Public engagement
-
- Key considerations: hourly vs. completed interview payments; local vs non-local interviewers; experienced vs. inexperienced interviewers; traits that boost recruitment vs. data quality; diversity vs. homogeneity; recruitment and retention

6.4 Training*

** Approaches vary by mode, language, and other factors; advance preparation is critical to success*

- ☐ Centralized vs. decentralized
- ☐ Number and types of trainees
- ☐ Training techniques
- ☐ Training logistics
- ☐ Training materials
- ☐ Training content
- ☐ Training of trainers, supervisors, and other trainings

6.5 Publicity of survey activity

☐ Planning

- Who (targets), what (messaging), and how (implementation plan)

☐ Testing

- Pretesting (discussion-focused) and piloting (field testing)

☐ Implementation

- General public: websites, ads, social media
- Local authorities: individual or small group meetings

An example: Paraguay's Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) teams– e.g., a field supervisor – deliver a letter to each local police station. The team must receive a written acknowledgment that authorities permit the activity. This document can be shown to potential respondents or others interacting with the data collection team, in order to show that local authorities have been notified.

6.6 Data collection implementation

☐ Approach strategy

- How to consider incentives, letters, contact logistics

☐ Recruiting respondents

- How to request consent, issue incentives, substitute, establish report, respond to and code refusals

☐ Interviewing

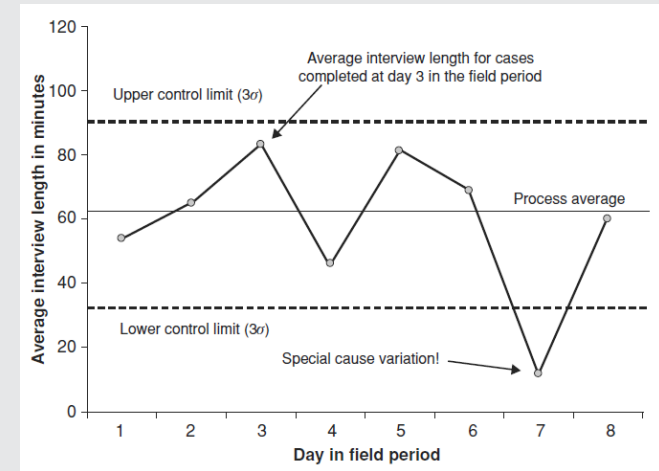
- *See box ->*

High quality interviewers:

- ✓ Read questions (and response options) verbatim
- ✓ Present show cards (if applicable)
- ✓ Speak clearly (at a good volume and pace)
- ✓ Do not interpret or translate (unless by design)
- ✓ Stay neutral (in appearance, reaction, and when probing)
- ✓ Record all responses accurately, including open-ended
- ✓ Use a standardize approach across interviews
- ✓ Avoid and/or record the presence or influence of bystanders
- ✓ Keep respondent burden low
- ✓ Are trained in sensitive questions

6.7 Production monitoring

- ❑ **Goal:** *detect and address irregularities*
- ❑ Project-specific considerations inform the selection of **meaningful KPIs** from copious amounts of potential paradata
 - E.g., response rates, sample coverage, interview times
- ❑ KPIs must be **recorded, processed, and displayed**
- ❑ KPIs must be **monitored continuously or at regular intervals**
- ❑ **Interventions** during fieldwork increase efficiency and efficacy
- ❑ **Pre-planning for adaptation and accurate documentation is essential**



6.8 Quality control

- ❑ Planning and design
- ❑ Paradata review
- ❑ Substantive data review
- ❑ Audio review
- ❑ Visual review
- ❑ Location tracking
- ❑ Verification

Data type	Definition	Types of checks
Paradata	Data collected survey process	Unexpected outcomes such as short interview duration, unlikely hour of the day, or irregularities in response rates for interviewers
Substantive	Core information (typically, responses) gathered in interviews	Illogical response patterns, deviant statistical patterns, item non-response, or satisficing
Audio	Recordings of oral components	Accurate reading of questions, response entry
Visual	Photographs of location, interviewer	Locations that deviate from protocol, unauthorized interviewers
GIS	Geolocation coordinates (for face-to-face interviews)	Ensuring the interview is occurring in the intended location
Verification	Third party checking of interviews	Ensure validity of entry by checking if answers are consistent with the recorded interview

6.10 Emerging approaches

- ☐ Interactive voice response: respondents use voice or keypad
- ☐ SMS: self-administered surveys via short message services
- ☐ CAVI (aka VMI): Live interviewer via remote connection
- ☐ Machine learning and other software applications