

**Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices  
7-9 May 2018, Geneva, Switzerland**

## **Call for papers and poster presentations**

The meeting of the Group of Experts will discuss the following topics for which contributions are invited:

- 1. Services in the CPI**
- 2. New Data sources**
- 3. Understanding and meeting different user needs**
- 4. Methodological issues in CPI compilation**

The topics will be discussed both in plenary sessions and in poster sessions. Contributions are therefore invited in the form of either papers or posters. Poster presentations addressing other relevant CPI issues are also welcomed. Examples and suggestions of papers or presentations that could be submitted under each of the topics are provided below.

### **Practical information for submitting contributions**

Papers and presentations are invited for both plenary sessions and poster sessions. Authors who would like to submit a paper or a presentation to the meeting should send a brief abstract to [economic.stats@unece.org](mailto:economic.stats@unece.org) by **15 December 2017**, and indicate any preference for having the presentation in a plenary session or in a poster session. Based on the received abstracts the Steering Group of the CPI Expert Group Meeting will select contributions for presentation at the meeting.

Completed papers of accepted abstracts should be received by **20 March 2018**. Papers received before 20 February 2018 may be translated into the UNECE working languages, English, French and Russian.

Presentation slides for plenary sessions should be received by 20 April 2018. Posters should be received by 20 April 2018, or brought by the presenter to the meeting.

### **1. Services in the CPI**

The share of services in households' consumption is growing and in many countries accounts for half of households' consumption expenditure. The treatment of services in the CPI therefore has a significant effect on the quality of the overall index. Services constitute specific challenges, for instance, it may be difficult to identify the units to be sampled and ensuring that the units are kept constant from period to period. The quantity and the quality of the services may change and appropriate adjustments should be made to account for such changes. In some cases the service may be bundled with a product which makes the identification of the service even more difficult. What are the problems of particular services such as insurance, health, transport, legal and financial services, telecommunication services and web based services in terms of identification of suitable units and adjustments for quality changes, and which solutions or models can be suggested? Rentals for housing possess a particular challenge – different approaches are used and because of its weight this may have significant influence on the overall CPI. The emergence of difficult to measure software and web based services raises additional challenges. How to cover the digital economy and the sharing

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economy, including the growing importance of digitally intermediated services (e.g. in transport or accommodation), and what are the conceptual and practical measurement issues involved?

## **2. New Data sources**

Exploring new data sources may potentially lead to more and better official price statistics, efficiency gains, and reduced response burden, but also raises conceptual, methodological and practical measurement problems. Papers on scanner data may address issues such as calculation methods, combination of scanner and data compiled through traditional methods, use of scanner data for sampling purposes and expenditure weights estimation, classification issues and quality changes. An increasing number of countries have implemented scanner data in their regular production of the CPI. Papers dealing with the practical implementation of scanner data are welcome, including sharing of experiences on the quality of scanner data, IT and software, costs and benefits from moving to scanner data, and organisational and legal issues (access to data, relationships with scanner data providers).

Papers on Big Data may present methodological and practical experiences with the use of Big Data for compiling CPIs, web-scraping and other methods for collecting or harvesting data, calculation formulas for the regular CPI and/or for compiling superlative indices, analysis of the performance of Big Data price indices over time, how to maintain the sample, comparing like with like versus other approaches. Papers on experiences with data collection from websites for goods/services, which increasingly are only available from Internet, are also welcome.

## **3. Understanding and meeting different user needs**

While historically the CPI primarily was developed to measure the cost of living and used for compensation purposes, CPIs today are used for a variety of purposes. The two main uses of the CPI are for compensation (indexation of wages, social transfers, pensions etc.) and for measuring inflation, which in turns are based on two different theoretical approaches. CPIs, however, are also used for other purposes, such as deflation of economic time series and indexation of contracts. Papers for this topic would describe the compilation of CPI for the different purposes and highlight which particular practical consequences there would be when targeting different uses of the CPI, for instance in the sampling and weighting of the index and in calculation methods. Papers may also address communication and dissemination issues and ways to identify and meet user needs. Issues related to perceived inflation and household experience may also be discussed.

## **4. Methodological issues in CPI compilation**

A number of methodological issues pose challenges for the compilation of the CPI. To some extent different methods and practices are applied in countries, which influence the quality and international comparability of the CPI. Papers on methodological issues may cover a broad range of issues in relation to e.g. sampling, weighting, calculation of elementary and higher-level price indices, CPI target indices, adjustment for quality changes, the treatment of seasonal products or, more generally, the treatment of missing observations and their replacements.

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