

Modes of Data Collection – An Overview

The table below presents an overview of the different modes of survey data collection. The main four modes of data collection are presented for general understanding and for future survey projects.

	Enumerator-administered		Self-administered	
	Face-to-face (1)	Telephone interview (2)	Paper-based (3)	Internet-based (4)
Mode description	Enumerators visit respondents in person, at their homes, an IOM program location or a public place	Enumerators call respondents on their phones	Printed questionnaires are sent to respondents' homes (alternative: respondents fill out the survey at a dedicated location, on paper or on tablets)	Respondents are invited to fill out a questionnaire online on their mobile phone and/or laptop
Feasibility	✗ Difficult due to COVID (lockdown, uncertainties around travel, safety of enumerators and respondents)		✗ Ill-suited for populations with unstable housing situation (unless administered in another location e.g. administered to beneficiaries of IOM projects at IOM office(s). In this case, using a tablet rather than pen and paper would be more efficient)	
Coverage (i.e. population included)	✓ Best coverage (inclusion of illiterate respondents, non-users of internet/phone)	✗ Excludes non-users of phones ✗ Excludes respondents who do not have phone/internet network ✗ If conducted over WhatsApp, costs for the respondents (internet credit usage)	✗ Excludes functionally illiterate respondents (e.g. never learnt to read, cognitive impairment, bad eyesight)	✗ Excludes non-users of phones/laptops ✗ Excludes respondents who do not have internet network ✗ If no free access to WiFi, costs for the respondents (internet credit usage)
Response rates	✓ Higher response rates (enumerators motivate respondents)		✗ Lower response rates, but can be improved by using incentives ✗ In many countries, mobile users may receive a vast amount of advertisement via SMS. In order to catch their attention and highlight that the survey is not advertisement it might be worth calling respondents once, ask them to save the enumerators' number and then send the survey link via SMS or WhatsApp	
Data quality	✓ Lower item nonresponse, but ✗ enumerator effect (potential bias for sensitive questions and social desirability bias) -> This is crucial, given the nature of some of the questions, and the fact that enumerators would most probably come from the host-country		✗ Higher item nonresponse, but ✓ Privacy: No interviewer effects/ biases – i.e. more standardized (Higher measurement quality)	
Questionnaire length	✓ Longer questionnaires are possible (due to the presence of the enumerator) ✓ Longer interviews (up to 45-60 min)	✓ Medium/long interviews (15-30 min)	✗ Questionnaires should not be too long ✓ Short/medium questionnaires (10-20 min)	✗ Only relatively short questionnaires (max. 15 min), and even shorter if answered on mobile phone

	Enumerator-administered		Self-administered	
	Face-to-face (1)	Telephone interview (2)	Paper-based (3)	Internet-based (4)
Duration of fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Medium/long due to enumerators' travel. If paper-based, this also requires data entry – not needed if answers are entered on tablets. (In general, we recommend the use of tablets over paper whenever possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fast - Time to reach respondent and conduct the interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Long. It requires sending the questionnaires, waiting to receive them and then entering the data. If respondents enter answers on a tablet, no data entry is required so it is shorter, but respondents have to travel to the survey place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Very fast - Time to reach respondent and to fill the questionnaire
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Higher cost (enumerators' salaries or IOM staff time) ✗ Higher cost (travel cost) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews can be conducted through mobile phone calls or via WhatsApp calls using the survey firm or IOM office's WiFi, whichever is cheaper and more reliable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low cost (no enumerators' salaries or staff time/no travel costs) Cost of printing, sending and providing stamp for return envelop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low cost
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Contract a survey institute to carry out the fieldwork (one institute for the three countries, or three different institutes, one for each country) ✗ Hire bilingual interviewers for DR (Spanish, French, Creole) and B (Portuguese and Spanish) ✗ Organize training sessions for the enumerators 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize printing (out sourced), mail-post cost, data entry (requires development of data entry guidelines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Survey programming can be done in-house (Qualtrics / LimeSurvey / SurveyMonkey, etc.) ✗ Questionnaire layout should be adapted to mobile mode (Qualtrics already offers a mobile-friendly option)
Sampling Frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sampling frame with addresses of target population required (or interviews are conducted in public spaces where target population meets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sampling frame with telephone numbers of target population required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sampling frame with addresses of target population required (or interviews are conducted in public spaces where target population meets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sampling frame with telephone numbers or email addresses of target population required
Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the COVID restrictions in the target country? Would they allow this survey mode? Are they likely to change? Would this mode put enumerators/respondents at risk? - How scattered are respondents? This has implications on the travel costs and duration of field work - How safe is travelling to places where respondents are located? - Do you have respondents' address? If not, how could you get this or reach them? - Can the interview be conducted in a safe space? (confidentiality) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have a list of phone numbers? - If not, how would you get this information? - What share of the target population uses a phone? - What share of respondents uses WhatsApp (or Viber, Telegram)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What share of respondents is illiterate? - Can incentives be considered? If yes, what amount and what type of incentives would be more appropriate? Would incentives costs be within your budget? - Do respondents have a (fixed) address? Do you have their address? - Is the post office reliable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have a list of phone numbers/email addresses? - If not, how would you get this information? - What is the share of respondents who use internet? - What is the share of respondents who have a phone? - Does each household member have his/her own phone or is it a shared phone? - What is the share of respondents who is illiterate? - Can incentives be considered? If yes, what amount and what type of incentives would be more appropriate? Would incentives costs be within your budget?