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## Guide to Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID -19 on enterprises and workers in the informal economy

**Webinar 3:** Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on enterprises and workers in the informal economy

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Florence Bonnet (bonnet@ilo.org)

# Why do we need rapid assessments?

- ✘ **Informal economy workers and units highly impacted**
  - **1.6 billion** informal economy workers globally (76%) are severely impacted by COVID-19 and the necessary measures to ensure physical distancing.
  - **61%** in Eastern Europe and the proportion reaches **90%** in Central and Western Asia
  
- ✘ **Pre-Covid-19 vulnerabilities in the informal economy are exacerbated by the crisis**
  - In the absence of alternative source of income, no real alternative option than to work
  - Higher exposure to occupational health and safety risks without appropriate protection
  
- ✘ **Usual measures to support income and sustain the economic fabric hardly reach the informal economy**
  - The « invisible » : In the absence of social protection, legal recognition of activities and jobs, proposals related to unemployment benefits (partial or total), tax breaks, new lines of credit or business subsidies tend to limit the response to formal businesses and formal workers.

# Rapid assessment: a twofold objective

## ✘ A twofold objective

- I. To **give voice** to women and men in the informal economy, as well as to their organizations, in order to make them heard ...
- II. ... to better understand the diversity of situations they are confronted with, the challenges, needs, perceptions but also opportunities to guide governments, social partners, informal economy organizations and any other non-governmental support initiatives to develop and implement **immediate** and **medium-term measures reaching the informal economy**



# The method: Qualitative assessments

## ✘ Collecting information remotely.

- ✘ Use of methods of collecting information remotely, avoiding interpersonal contact to respect the necessary measures of physical distancing
- ✘ Rethinking the modalities of face-to-face interviews and focus groups.

## ✘ Primarily qualitative

- ✘ In situations of **absence of a recent list of contacts** (businesses, entrepreneurs and workers) in the informal economy the method is **primarily qualitative**
- ✘ the objective is **not to ensure the representativeness** of the results (through a representative sample) ...
- ✘ ... but rather to **reflect the diversity of situations** and points of view from different sectors and actors
  - Does not exclude some questions with predefined answers
  - Complements in several countries quantitative rapid surveys carried out by the National statistical office or other agencies
  - Importance of finding the right channels to identify the respondents



# 3 phases & levels of assessment

✘ First phase | Identifying sectors and subsectors in the informal economy most affected by COVID-19 and adopted preventive measures

✘ **Method & target groups:**

Desk reviews, key informant telephone interviews with ministries, social partners, service providers and main informal economy organizations

✘ Information collected to:

- ✘ Identify on going & planned assessments/ surveys in the country (potential partners)
- ✘ Identify main organizations, groups, cooperatives active in the informal economy
- ✘ Select sectors most impacted (why and how), size and features of the groups / sectors concerned (including gender, rural/ urban dimensions)
- ✘ Identify the main channels to reach entrepreneurs & workers in the informal economy
- ✘ Establish an overview of measures adopted so far to:
  - ✘ Reduce exposure of workers and their families to COVID-19
  - ✘ Enhance an effective access to health care and health financial protection;
  - ✘ Provide income and food support to individuals and their family (social protection)
  - ✘ Reduce and prevent the damage on informal economy activities and maintain employment opportunities (economic stimulus package)



# 3 phases & levels of assessment

✘ **Second phase** | **Intermediary level** (the entry point) — Organizations (often sectoral) representing the main branches of activities affected in the informal economy

- ✘ **Target groups:** Sectoral/ professional informal economy organizations, cooperatives, associations active in the selected sectors, social partners
- ✘ **Method:** Telephone interviews / online survey

## Essential contributions to:

- ✘ Access to members of the organization, selection to ensure the diversity; identify other organizations/ groups to reach out to IE workers & units
- ✘ Direct contribution to the assessment during telephone interviews and through the online survey.

## Main issues covered

- ✘ Knowledge and perception of sanitary measures adopted so far;
- ✘ Perception of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on workers and enterprises in the informal economy, units and workers the most affected;
- ✘ Involvement in the definition and implementation of current measures
- ✘ Their means of action to provide support and services to their members
- ✘ Challenges they face and support needed to enhance their action





# 3 phases & levels of assessment

✘ **Third phase** | **Individual level.** Entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy in selected sectors

- ✘ **Target groups:** Entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy, members and non-members of organizations in selected sectors
- ✘ **Method:** Telephone interviews / WhatsApp (or equivalent) group discussions

## Main issues covered (1)

- ✘ Perception of the **risk of exposure** and adoption of measures in the workplace to reduce exposure of workers and prevent contagion, challenges and support needed
- ✘ **Economic impact of Covid-19 on informal sector enterprises** (beyond the immediate impacts of lockdown measures)
  - ✘ *Operational status of business during lockdown and after (if relevant), impacts on benefits, production, cash flow, sales, customer attendance, access to raw materials, indebtedness adoption of new working arrangement; staff management*
- ✘ **Economic consequences on working conditions and income for workers** (and business owners) **and their capacity to meet basic needs for themselves and their families**



# 3 phases & levels of assessment

## ✘ Third phase | Cont. Main issues covered

### Main issues covered (2)

✘ **Opportunities-coping strategies adopted by entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy**, including challenges, support received and support needed to allow for the full realization of those opportunities

✘ **Government measures:** i) The Government's Economic Stimulus Package & recovery; ii) Measures to enhance an effective access to health care and health financial protection; iii) income and food support to individuals and their families to compensate loss or reduction of economic activity

- ✘ Awareness, perception and access to (or not) to those measures & benefits

- ✘ Use of other collective solidarity based mechanisms

- ✘ Perceived priority support & measures needed (including for recovery)

✘ Looking at the near and ... not so near future

- ✘ Assessment of the situation in the near future

- ✘ How to improve resilience: formalization (main perceived benefits and constraints); extension of social security coverage





# Summary of target groups and collection tools

| Target groups  | Telephone interviews | WhatsApps Discussion groups | Online survey |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Organizations active in the informal economy:</b><br>Informal economy organizations, professional organizations, cooperatives, other structures of the social and solidarity economy active in the selected branches of activities. | ●                    | ●                           | ●             |
| <b>Social partners</b>   | ●                    | ●                           |               |
| <b>Government</b>  | ●                    | ●                           |               |
| <b>Entrepreneurs in the informal sector</b>  | ●                    | ●                           |               |
| <b>Workers in the informal economy</b>   | ●                    | ●                           |               |
| <b>Formal enterprises</b>  | ●                    |                             |               |
| <b>Services Providers</b>  | ●                    |                             |               |

● Planned and organized ● Open for voluntary participation



# Some **examples** of Rapid-assessments in **countries**

With technical and/or financial support from the ILO, national institutions in (so far) Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia or Zambia are all in different stages of conducting rapid assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy.

**Different focus** depending on countries, such as:

- ✘ Senegal, Burkina Faso: Informal sector entrepreneurs & workers
  - ✘ **Sectors** include the food value chain (production, processing and marketing), accommodation and restaurants, transport and associated activities, textile and clothing, beauty salons and hairdressers. Construction in Burkina Faso, fishing in Senegal
- ✘ Côte d'Ivoire: similar sectors + domestic workers
- ✘ Niger: focus on migrants and refugees with UNHCR
- ✘ Mexico: WebApp and traditional taxi drivers and delivery workers
- ✘ Nepal: entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector as well as undeclared workers in the formal sector



# Some issues to consider

- ✘ **Joining forces:** Enhancing collaboration and joint activities with other organizations, international, regional or national institutions
  - ✘ Joint assessments or enhancement of complementarities between different initiatives / combining both quantitative and more qualitative methods.
- ✘ Endorsed by the Government
- ✘ **Multiple waves.** one at the earlier stage of the crisis and another one 3-6 months later, contacting again all a sub-group of people.
- ✘ Take into account the different phases from confinement to deconfinement
- ✘ **Set priorities.** Do not try to cover everyone in the informal economy: focus on those that are the most affected and fix priorities (eg sectoral/ value chain approach)
- ✘ **Aim at supporting immediate but also medium- and longer-term responses**
  - ✘ Sustaining some of the measures adopted during the crisis as a mean of promoting the transition to formality; extension of social protection
  - ✘ enhance the involvement of professional and other intermediary organizations in the development and/or implementation of measures
  - ✘ How to make the invisible => visible?



# Available resources

- ✘ Guidelines on Rapid impact assessment of COVID-19 on enterprises and workers in the informal economy in developing and emerging countries
  - [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS\\_743032/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_743032/lang--en/index.htm)
- ✘ Some examples of questionnaires and guides of questions for the 3 phases of the Rapid assessment, including adjusted questionnaires for particular target groups (domestic workers, platform workers)
  - ✘ Guide of questions for the selection of sectors
  - ✘ Phase 2 - Questionnaire for organizations of informal economy workers and entrepreneurs
  - ✘ Phase 3 – Questionnaire for entrepreneurs and questionnaire for workers (telephone interviews)
- ✘ Forthcoming: examples of country reports (early July)

