

Annex II

Criteria to ascertain the feasibility of conducting the 2021 baseline cost-of-living surveys

1. There is broad agreement within the Commission that the next round of surveys should be launched in 2021. There is also an agreement for the Commission to consider criteria to determine whether surveys can take place in specific duty stations.
2. Based on comments on the proposals put forward by Commission members, the HR Network and Staff Federations, there was consensus that criteria should be clear, transparent, and easy to understand.
3. The ICSC secretariat and the local survey committees (LSCs) work together on every aspect of the surveys including decisions about the feasibility of conducting them.
4. The place-to-place surveys in specific duty stations will be conducted subject to:

I. Re-opening of restaurants and non-essential shops

5. In many duty stations, many restaurants and non-essential shops are either closed or have imposed some restrictions in terms of capacity. Many non-essential businesses have resorted to increased online presence and curbside pickups. In some duty stations, department stores that sell both essential and non-essential commodities have sections with non-essential commodities closed off. The re-opening of non-essential shops and restaurants, including shopping centres/malls and restaurants in full or partial capacity but both inside and outside, can be an indication of a return to normalcy.

II. Access to cultural and recreational facilities

6. Like non-essential businesses, recreational facilities were among the first to close doors due to restrictions put in place by governments to curb the spread of the COVID-19. Depending on the level of the spread of the virus, there were instances where recreational facilities could operate under certain capacity limitations.. The re-opening of recreational facilities can be an indication of a return to normalcy.

III. Availability of international flights

7. The availability of international flight is an indication of the ease with which staff members can go in and out of the duty station. While there could be varying restrictions based on nationality or destination of the traveller, the important point to consider is the extent to which international flights are available at the duty station. Travel should be overall allowed by national authorities, potentially under certain conditions, but not limited to compelling reasons.

IV. Public transportation allowed

8. The availability of public transportation is an important consideration as it would indicate the ease with which pricing teams can move within the duty station.

V. General return to the office

9. While telecommuting arrangements might persist for both the public and private sectors, consideration should be given to the measures implemented by the local authorities. Are workers, including national civil servants, generally allowed to return to the office? Are the government offices fully functional and serving in person?

VI. General availability of goods and services

10. Scarcity of goods and services was one of the most visible impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. For price data collection to be conducted successfully, it is important that retail outlets be sufficiently stocked with the relevant goods and/or services.