

Guidelines for Review of Price Data Analysis By Independent Experts

1. The procedures and guidelines approved by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for the 2016 baseline surveys at headquarters duty stations and Washington, DC, provide for a review of the price data analysis conducted by the ICSC secretariat by independent experts engaged by the organizations and staff federations based at each duty station.
2. The proposed schedule for the visits is provided in the following table:

Duty Station	Proposed Dates
New York	12-16 December 2016
Washington, DC	13-14 December 2016
Geneva	13-14 December 2016
Rome	13-14 December 2016
Paris	15-16 December 2016
Vienna	15-16 December 2016
London	19-20 December 2016
Montreal	20-21 December 2016
Madrid	20-21 December 2016

3. The ground rules for this review are as follows:
 - The examination should be done by experts, who are familiar with the cost-of-living survey methodology applied by the ICSC. The expert should be acceptable to all parties concerned. Individuals selected for this task should be neither serving staff members nor close family members of serving staff. They will be subject to the same rules of confidentiality and privacy of statistical data as those applicable to the staff of the ICSC secretariat;
 - It would be highly desirable if organizations and staff associations could agree on one expert per duty station to visit the ICSC secretariat to examine the price data. Two working days will be allocated for the examination of price data per expert per duty station;
 - Detailed information and/or explanations regarding all aspects of the calculations, including the primary data, will be made available to the experts. However, for reasons of confidentiality and privacy, copies of those details must not leave the premises of the ICSC secretariat.
 - It must be borne in mind that the primary responsibility for the analysis of survey data rests with the ICSC secretariat. Such analysis consists of processing of the data in accordance with the approved methodology. The role of the independent expert during the survey analysis and data processing phase is to ensure that the analysis is carried out in accordance with the approved methodology; and to make comments and suggestions for improvement, as necessary, under the framework of the approved methodology;

- Following the examination of price data, the experts might submit written and/or oral questions/comments to the secretariat of ICSC during the visit or within one week following their visit. Such questions/comments should be within the framework of the existing methodology approved by Commission for the collection and processing of price data. The secretariat will respond to questions and provide additional information if needed. Corrections to price data proposed by the experts, if deemed appropriate during data processing, will be made within the framework of the Commission's guidelines and general statistical practice;
 - At the end of the visit, the experts are expected to submit to the Chairman of ICSC brief notes summarizing their general observations. These reports will be part of the report submitted to ACPAQ by the secretariat of ICSC. Suggestions and/or comments made by the independent experts will be taken into account by the ICSC secretariat to the extent possible;
 - Drafts of survey reports will be published, at the latest, two weeks before the opening of the 39th session of ACPAQ (that is, by 6 February 2017) as part of duty station-specific documents to be prepared by the ICSC secretariat for submission to the session. Furthermore, the reports of the independent experts will be submitted, verbatim, to ACPAQ, along with the ICSC secretariat's responses to the issues raised in the reports, where necessary or appropriate; and
 - Once the report of the price collection for a duty station is approved by ACPAQ, the price data will not be subject to further scrutiny or review by any party, and will then be used for cost-of-living comparisons for the duty station, and the derivation of post adjustment indices and multipliers for each duty station.
4. Following the completion of the price data analysis for the various duty stations by the ICSC secretariat, the survey report submitted to ACPAQ will include the following information::
- a. For each duty station, the list of outlets used for price data collection;
 - b. For each item:
 - i. the number of price quotations obtained;
 - ii. the number of price quotations retained after price verification;
 - iii. the minimum, maximum, and average price; and
 - iv. the price ratio, using base city (New York) prices for comparisons;
 - c. For each basic heading, the average price ratio.

Prepared by:
 Ibrahim S Yansaneh
 Chief, COLD/ICSC
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