GTSS  Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS)

Implementing Agency Selection Guidelines
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Implementing Agency Selection Guidelines

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1. Introduction

The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), a component of the Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS), is the global standard for systematically monitoring adult tobacco use and tracking key tobacco control indicators. GATS is a nationally representative household survey of adults 15 years of age or older, using a consistent and standard protocol across countries. It is intended to enhance the capacity of countries to design, implement, and evaluate tobacco control and prevention programs. It will also assist countries to fulfill their obligations under the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). To further assist countries in addressing selected demand-related articles of the WHO FCTC, WHO developed the MPOWER package, which is comprised of six evidence-based tobacco control measures:

- Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies
- Protect people from tobacco smoke
- Offer help to quit tobacco use
- Warn about the dangers of tobacco
- Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship
- Raise taxes on tobacco

GATS is intended to generate comparable data within and across countries, and monitor the key indicators of the MPOWER package. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to partner agencies in effective implementation of GATS.

Partners and Partner Roles

Partners and partner roles in GATS include the following:

- National governments provide leadership and coordination at the country level;
- WHO provides global, regional and in-country leadership as well as monitoring of global tobacco control policy implementation;
- CDC, a WHO Collaborating Center for Global Tobacco Surveillance, provides technical assistance for implementation of the surveillance system;
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) provides technical assistance on data analysis and reporting;
- RTI International provides training and technical assistance in electronic data collection;
- CDC Foundation provides resources and program support.

Funding for GATS is provided by the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use, a program of Bloomberg Philanthropies. Funding for China and selected countries in Africa is provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
2. Criteria to Select the GATS Implementing Agency

In most countries that have previously conducted GATS, the GATS implementing agency (GIA) has been either the national statistical office (NSO) or a national surveillance agency (e.g., census bureau). In selecting the GIA, the criteria listed below should be considered and followed.

2.1 Experience

Partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH): It is desirable that the agency has experience or has expressed interest to partner with the MoH.

National Household Surveys: The agency should have demonstrated experience in conducting large-scale, nationally representative household surveys, preferably public health surveys (i.e., National Health Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys, Reproductive Health Surveys), income, labor and expenditure surveys, international surveys, etc.

2.2 Infrastructure and Human Resources

Infrastructure: The agency should have a central headquarters where the overall project is coordinated and managed. In addition, sufficient infrastructure and resources should be available for training activities, fieldwork preparation, implementation, networks and data management procedures at sub-national and local levels.

Information Technology Support: An informatics department to provide support for software and hardware needs, data management procedures, and other related activities.

Communication and Connectivity Facilities: Communication between central and regional survey teams is essential and must be operational, permitting frequent communication by telephone, fax, and e-mail. The agencies should have internet connections between central offices, and regional and local staff, which allows for quick and secure data transfer. Remote or distant offices may need other necessary communication and connectivity facilities or equipment, including telephones or computers.

Human Resources: A dedicated team of survey coordinators, supervisors, interviewers and IT teams, and availability of key personnel and their time to engage in this initiative is essential.

Administrative Support: The agency should provide administrative and management staff and support system for the entire course of the survey.

Dedicated GATS Project Manager: The GATS implementation will require leadership, oversight, coordination, and management of the entire process. The implementing agency should provide a dedicated project manager to liaise with GATS partners and oversee the entire GATS process from initial preparations of survey to data release. The individual serving in this position should have relevant experience in managing and overseeing large-scale, national household surveys and should be capable of managing teams and resources, and making decisions. This position is important, and the GIA may consider assigning one of its staff to this position, or if possible, recruit using its internal recruiting procedures.

2.3 Coverage

National and/or Sub-National: The implementing agency should have the capacity to undertake national or sub-national surveys as per the country GATS sample design directly and/or through a contractor.
3. Capability and Capacity to Implement Standard Procedures

Generally, agencies that implement large-scale surveys have standardized procedures for planning and implementing surveys, including staff training, fieldwork and data management, and record keeping and reporting. In addition to these capacities and given the global standards of GATS, the agency should also have the willingness and ability to comply with the procedures set forth in the GATS Comprehensive Standard Protocol. Specific details regarding standardized procedures are listed below.

Administrative Support: Administrative requirements apply to both central and regional levels. Standard procedures should be available to all agency offices, staff, and contractors.

Connectivity and Communications Procedures: Standard communication procedures should be in place between the central offices and regional/local sites regardless of communication method (telephone, fax, e-mail, radio, or other).

Sample Frame and Sample Design: The agency should have access to or ability to generate an updated and most recent national sampling frame that covers the entire country. The agency should also be able to select and implement a probability sample in accordance with guidelines outlined in the GATS Sample Design Manual.

Availability of Mapping and Listing Information: The agency must have access to geographical, cartography and census data, not only to design and draw the sample, but also to provide the field staff with addresses or maps to households and neighborhoods, traveling alternatives, routes and itineraries.

Training Facilities: The agency should either have a training department or access to training facilities. The agency should also have experience in training all personnel involved in survey fieldwork and implementation.

Translation Capacity: The implementing agency should have the capacity to translate the questionnaire and key manuals and guidelines internally or through a contractor.

Quality Assurance: Quality assurance must occur at all levels of GATS, including pre-data collection, data collection and management, and post-data collection. Quality assurance activities vary for different stages of the GATS process, and guidelines are available for each survey stage. Detailed guidance on quality assurance processes and procedures is available as part of the GATS Comprehensive Standard Protocol in the Quality Assurance: Guidelines and Documentation Manual. The implementing agency should be prepared to comply with all guidelines set forth in that manual.

Confidentiality Policies: All personnel in contact with respondents’ data should preserve the confidentiality of those data in all ways. Access to all files in paper and electronic format may be granted only with appropriate authorization.

Data Management: The agency should be prepared to comply with all the requirements set forth in the Data Management Implementation Plan, which is part of the GATS Comprehensive Standard Protocol. The agency should identify and assign staff knowledgeable and capable of using at least one of the statistical software packages, such as SPSS/PASW, SAS, or STATA. In addition to familiarity with statistical packages, the agency should have its staff capable of efficiently learning new software systems such as the General Survey System (GSS), which is the software used to implement GATS using electronic handheld devices. The GSS contains modules that allow for data collection, management, and aggregation. Using these modules, the agency must have the ability to securely store and access survey data in a manner that is most appropriate to the country’s specific IT context and analysis needs.

Data Analysis: A statistical analysis plan is outlined in the Analysis and Reporting Package, which is part of the GATS Comprehensive Standard Protocol. The agency should have the capacity to operate internationally acceptable
statistical software for data analysis such as SPSS/PASW, SAS, or STATA. The GATS partners will be available to provide technical support.

GATS Data Release Policy: The agency should review the GATS Data Release Policy. The policy addresses important information regarding data collection and processing, and conditions regarding release of the GATS data.

4. Sustainability

Sustainability of GATS is important and the agency should have the ability to repeat the survey in the future. The agency is encouraged to refer to and use Tobacco Questions for Surveys: A Subset of Key Questions from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey into ongoing national surveys where appropriate to maintain consistency and comparability in monitoring tobacco use. These questions aim to improve survey comparability over time and harmonize them with international, national, and sub-national surveillance and monitoring activities.

5. Practical and Administrative Considerations

Problem Solving: The implementing agency should have the necessary planning and management approaches to overcome challenges and ensure successful and timely implementation and completion of the survey.

Contract Administration: The ability to administer contracts efficiently is critical to the timely implementation of the survey. The implementing agency should be able to enter into international contracts, including those that allow for hiring staff, procuring equipment and receiving foreign funds from GATS partners.

Budget and Funding Process: The implementing agency should have the ability to develop budget proposals and have the mechanisms to receive and process funding from donor agencies or GATS partners. To the extent possible, the agency should be able to receive funds in U.S. dollars (USD). Appropriate documentation should be submitted with the GATS proposal certifying the existence of a USD bank account that can be used to receive funds. The GATS funding disbursements are linked to the receipt of deliverables. The agency should be prepared to produce the appropriate technical and financial reports in a timely manner required for the release of funds. Funding disbursements are not released until agreed upon deliverables are received by the appropriate partners. Further details are available in the GATS Proposal Development Guidelines.

Timeline and Availability: An approximate timeframe of 8 to 12 months is required from the start of pretesting to the completion of final reports and data release. The agency should commit to conducting and concluding the survey within the agreed and specified time.

6. Selection of the GATS Implementing Agency (GIA)

Using the criteria contained in these guidelines and in consultation with GATS partners, the MoH will nominate the GIA that is most suitable for survey implementation. The nomination of the GIA will need to be confirmed by the MoH in a formal letter to the GATS Partners. In addition, the GIA should also confirm its interest and commitment to implement the survey in a formal communication to MoH and GATS partners. For examples, please see the letters attached in the GATS Country Engagement Process. Final approval of an agency as a GIA will be made by the WHO Contract Review Committee procedures.
7. Resources

7.1 GATS Process Chart

Global Adult Tobacco Survey
The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) is the global standard to systematically monitor adult tobacco use and track key tobacco control indicators.

GATS is a nationally representative household survey of adults 15 years of age or older, using a standard protocol. It is intended to generate comparable data within and across countries. GATS enhances countries’ capacity to design, implement and evaluate tobacco control interventions.

GATS aims to assist countries address selected demand-related articles of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). It will further support the WHO MPOWER policy package which includes:
- Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies
- Protect people from tobacco smoke
- Offer help to quit tobacco use
- Warn about the dangers of tobacco
- Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship
- Raise taxes on tobacco

GATS Process Chart

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Implementation Guidelines
- Country Engagement Process
- Implementing Agency Selection Guidelines
- Proposal Development Guidelines
- Implementation Instructions

Comprehensive Standard Protocol
GATS Questionnaire
- a. Core Questionnaire with Optional Questions
- b. Question by Question Specifications

GATS Sample Design
- a. Sample Design Manual
- b. Sample Weights Manual

GATS Fieldwork Implementation
- a. Field Interviewer Manual
- b. Field Supervisor Manual

GATS Data Management
- b. Core Questionnaire Programming Specifications
- c. Data Management Implementation Plan
- d. Data Management Training Guide

GATS Quality Assurance: Guidelines and Documentation
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GATS Analysis and Reporting Package
- a. Fact Sheet Template
- c. Indicator Definitions

GATS Data Release and Dissemination
- a. Data Release Policy
- b. Data Dissemination: Guidance for the Initial Release of the Data

GATS Partner Organizations
- a. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- b. CDC Foundation
- c. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- d. RTI International
- e. World Health Organization

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7.2 GATS Comprehensive Standard Protocol

GATS Questionnaire
a. Core Questionnaire with Optional Questions
b. Question by Question Specifications

GATS Sample Design
a. Sample Design Manual
b. Sample Weights Manual

GATS Fieldwork Implementation
a. Field Interviewer Manual
b. Field Supervisor Manual
c. Mapping and Listing Manual

GATS Data Management
a. Programmer's Guide to General Survey System
b. Core Questionnaire Programming Specifications
c. Data Management Implementation Plan
d. Data Management Training Guide

GATS Quality Assurance: Guidelines and Documentation

GATS Analysis and Reporting Package
a. Fact Sheet Template
c. Indicator Definitions

GATS Data Release and Dissemination
a. Data Release Policy
b. Data Dissemination: Guidance for the Initial Release of the Data

Tobacco Questions for Surveys: A Subset of Key Questions from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS)

Available at: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/global