Group of National Experts for the International Survey for Teachers, Teaching and Learning

PROCEDURES, PLANS AND TIMELINES FOR THE RELEASE AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS AND DATA FROM TALIS

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PROCEDURES, PLANS AND TIMELINES FOR THE RELEASE AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS AND DATA FROM TALIS

Introduction

1. This paper describes the procedures and timelines for the release of the national and international TALIS datasets as well as the plans for the dissemination of the initial TALIS report. This includes plans for the embargoed access to the TALIS international data prior to the report release and the confidentiality conditions that will apply. It also considers the steps necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of individual survey respondents in the planned public release of the international dataset. In other words, what steps are needed to prevent disclosure, which can occur if the release of the file leads to or allows the identification of a respondent. It is anticipated that these requirements may vary by country.

2. The TALIS BPC is asked to:

   - **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the plans and timelines for the release of results and data from TALIS and issues arising, namely:
     - The feedback of results to participating schools;
     - The need for participating countries to sign a confidentiality agreement regarding access to and use of TALIS data prior to publication;
     - Steps to prevent disclosure of information about individual respondents.

   - **COMMENT** on the national requirements to protect against identification or disclosure of respondents’ information;

   - **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the plans for dissemination of the initial results from TALIS.

Release of national results and data

3. This section sets out the plans for the release to countries of their national data and proposes standards concerning the use of those data.

   - **Weighted national data** and documentation of the data were sent to countries, via the NPMs, on **29 September 2008**. Data modifications were possible following the 4th NPM meeting in Dublin 22-24 October 2008 and NPMS were requested to put forward any concerns or proposed edits by 31 October 2008. Minor corrections were applied and a revised weighted national data were sent to countries, via NPMs, on **13 November 2008**.

   - Until the first public release of the international data through the publication of the TALIS initial international report on **16 June 2009**, the national data should not be published and should be used solely for the preparation of national reports or documents.
Following the publication of the TALIS initial international report on 16 June 2009, countries are free to publish their national data subject to the confidentiality undertakings given during the national implementation of TALIS.

**Issues**

4. An issue has been raised about reporting information back to participating schools and whether this is appropriate given the confidentiality declaration stated in the questionnaires to survey participants: “...you are guaranteed that neither you, this school nor any of its personnel will be identified in any report of the results of the study” (page 2 of the Principal Questionnaire). If no additional clarification was made nationally that stated clearly that information would be fed back to participating schools (and what that information would be) then it would indeed seem inappropriate to do so. If, nevertheless, a country wishes to do this, then it would be advisable to seek the agreement of all participating schools. The TALIS BPC is asked to ADVISE on this issue.

**Release of the international results and data**

5. This section sets out the plans for the release of international data and proposes standards concerning the use of those data.

- **A preliminary set of dummy tables** proposed for the initial report were presented to the 5th meeting of the BPC in April 2008.

- **First draft of descriptive data tables** were presented to the 4th NPM meeting in Dublin in October 2008. Feedback on these helped in identifying some data issues which have since been rectified with countries as well as providing some national explanations for the data reported. In addition, some presentational suggestions were made.

- **Review of the preliminary results** - the BPC will review a detailed outline of the initial report chapter contents including anonymised international tables at its 6th meeting on 8-9 December 2008. It is felt necessary to anonymise these as they are closer to the final tables that will be published in the initial report.

- **First full draft of the TALIS initial report** - will be provided to countries on 24 February 2009 under embargo for BPC review and comment.

- **Final full draft of the TALIS initial report** - will be provided to countries on 23 March 2009 under embargo for BPC review and comment.

- **Preliminary international database** – A preliminary version of the international dataset will be made available to participating countries under embargo in end March 2009. The database will include all final weights and replicates for sampling variance computations and national adaptations will be reflected in all variables. Also, it will contain the questionnaire constructs, indices and ratios that have been finalised to that point. No further data modifications are planned after this version. It is planned that IEA will organise a data analysis workshop to coincide with the release to participating countries of the preliminary dataset. The workshop will cover the calculation and application of weights, the derivation and use of scales and the computation of basic statistics.

- **Final international database** – A documented database incorporating all national data files (fully anonymised in terms of teachers and schools) will be made available in three different file
formats: SPSS, SAS and RAW. The file structure will be specified in codebook files and in printed versions of these structure files. The documented international database is planned to be released at the same time or shortly after the TALIS initial report is published.

Issues

Confidentiality of TALIS data products prior to first publication

6. It is important that the embargo is observed in the release of TALIS data, analyses and reports. According to the plans provided in this paper, the embargo applies to the provision to countries of their national data, the drafts of the initial report and the preliminary international dataset. This raises the question as to whether, prior to receiving these further data products, the TALIS BPC members should be asked to sign a declaration concerning their use. This could follow similar procedures to those adopted by PISA. Such an agreement would stipulate:

- The materials covered by the agreement;
- The limitations on the use of the materials prior to their official public release;
- Who nationally is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the materials (normally the BPC member of the participating country).

7. The TALIS BPC is asked to COMMENT on the need for such an agreement and what it should cover.

Disclosure

8. A particularly important issue is to preserve the confidentiality of individual respondents in the planned release of the micro datasets. The data held internationally of course includes no direct identifiers such as names of individual respondents or names of individual schools but instead has the school and teacher IDs as used in the national data collections. Nevertheless, a common challenge in the release of microdata is to prevent unintended or indirect disclosure, which can occur if the release of the file leads to or allows the identification of a respondent.

9. All other things equal, the risk of such disclosure is greatest in cases where the combined characteristics of a respondent in a sample, leads to a unique individual in the population. And, the higher the sampling fraction is, the more likely a unique record in the sample will also be unique in the population.

10. In seeking to manage the risk of disclosure, the publicly released TALIS international datasets will have the following modifications:

- The teacher and school IDs will be scrambled and so will not match those used during data collection, though the structural link between the school and teacher level will be maintained;
- The specific age (which was collected in the sampling frames) will not be included, though the age group as collected in the questionnaire will be retained;
- Information that has been used in the calculation of final sample weights will be removed, such as selection probabilities and adjustment factors (e.g., adjustments for school or teacher non-response);
• Variable used purely for stratification will be removed.

11. The extent to which, after taking these steps, there remain concerns for countries will depend on the characteristics of the sample drawn for TALIS and the national requirements for dealing with disclosure issues. The TALIS BPC is asked to **COMMENT** on this issue and **AGREE** if any additional steps are needed to be taken at the national and international level to maintain the confidentiality of survey respondents.

**Dissemination events**

12. The 5th meeting of the TALIS BPC agreed on a mid-June 2009 release date for the initial TALIS report, noting that at that stage a pdf document may only be available. A **release date of 16 June 2009 for the pdf has been agreed** with the OECD Publications and Communications directorate. It is planned that the printed publication would then be available in mid July 2009.

13. In response to the call from the Secretariat for countries interested in hosting an international press event to coincide with the release on 16 June 2009, the Ministry of the Flemish community in Belgium has offered to host an event in Brussels on that date. Discussions are underway to extend this press conference to a joint event also with the European Commission, in recognition of its support and interest in the results. Further details of this will provided in due course.

14. Other countries have registered an interest in holding dissemination events though the plans at this stage are more tentative.

15. During the discussion at its 5th meeting, the BPC also supported a further international dissemination event(s) later in the year, perhaps in September 2009, though the BPC noted also the need for additional funding to support this. Prospectively such funding will be available through the CERI Governing Board’s support for TALIS as part of its 2009-10 Programme of Work [doc ref. EDU/CERI/CD(2008)6/REV2], though final decisions on that will not be made until the CERI Governing Board meets on 24-25 November 2008. The outcome will be reported to the 6th meeting of the TALIS BPC.