

Retail Price Survey (Structural Survey)

Outline of the Survey (as of January 2022)

1 Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the Retail Price Survey is to clarify the monthly trend of prices and the price structure by region and nation-wide information on the retail prices of goods and fees for services that are important in consumer life. And the survey has been conducted as “Fundamental Statistics Survey” in accordance with the provisions of the Statistics Act.

The survey consists of two parts: the “Trend Survey” that aims to clarify the monthly trend of prices, and the “Structural Survey” that aims to clarify the price structure by region.

2 History of the survey

The price structure had been grasped by the National Survey of Prices conducted once every five years. However, as changes in the consumption and distribution structure had accelerated, it became difficult to understand the changes in the price structure accurately by conducting a statistical survey on a 5-year cycle. A survey to annually check the price differences between regions and prices by store type and specification, which had been conducted in the National Survey of Prices, was added to the Retail Price Survey as “Structural Survey”. The survey has been conducted since January 2013.

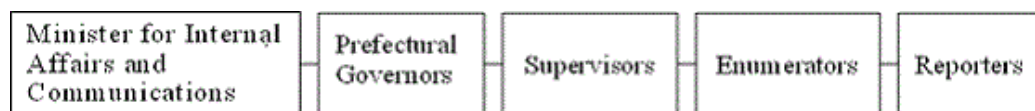
With the introduction of the “Structural Survey”, the existing survey is called “Trend Survey”, and the National Survey of Prices was ended after the last survey in 2007.

In 2016, we have changed the survey items for the first time as an effort toward the promotion of utilizing the results of the Survey and the improvement of the accuracy of the results. From now on, we are going to conduct the Survey timely and appropriately by reconsidering the Survey items every year.

The survey on prices by store type and the survey on prices by specification were ended in December 2021 and were moved to the analysis using POS (point of sales) information, etc.

3 Survey organization

The survey is conducted through the following channel.



“Supervisors”, who are prefectural officials, supervise the field work of enumerators and take charge of collecting the prices of certain items. In total, approximately 130 supervisors are appointed for the “Structural Survey”.

“Enumerators”, who are appointed in each sample city, town and village by the prefectural governors. They have charge of survey. In total, approximately 90 enumerators are appointed for the “Structural Survey”.

4 Sample cities of survey

The survey covers 91 non-capital cities in the country which are not covered by the “Trend Survey”

※The sample cities of survey has been selected with the goal of covering 50% for each prefecture, including “Trend Survey”.

We regularly review the sample cities of survey.

5 Selection of survey stores

The entire areas of cities surveyed are designated as price survey areas. A predetermined number of representative stores that mainly aimed at supermarkets in order of the sales amount by survey item (if it is difficult to select them by sales amount, in order of management scale based on the number of employees, sales floor space, etc.) and are designated as survey stores. The survey stores are approximately 1,000 stores in total.

For the survey stores, the enumerators and the prefectural officials have purposive sampled the latest representative stores in the survey area for each survey item. For this reason, there is no concept of a sampling error generated in a sample survey by random sampling. In addition, the Establishment Frame Database and other information are not used as population. As described above, since the retail price survey is a purposive sampling, the target accuracy is not set, and since it is necessary to always set a representative store, no duplicate corrective measures are taken.

6 Survey Items and Specifications

The name or type of surveyed goods is called "Survey Item" or "Item". Attributes of surveyed goods that are specified for each item are called "Survey Specification" or "Specification".

The survey aims to grasp price differences between regions, such as prefectures. 57 items (58 specifications) that are expected to show price differences between regions and account for a large percentage of the household consumption expenditure, such as "Non-glutinous rice", "Food wrap", and "Hair tonic", are surveyed.

7 Survey item category

Survey items are classified into two categories as follows:

Survey item category	Criteria for items	Examples of items that apply
(a)	Items that consumers purchase mainly in their neighborhood, and that are subject to the Structural Survey	Food, household consumables, etc.
(b)	Items that consumers purchase mainly in representative commercial districts or large-scale stores in each municipality, and that are subject to the Structural Survey	Hair dressing and beauty products, etc.

8 Number of prices collected

For each survey item and specification, the number of prices to be collected is defined in each type of item category and population size of cities.

Survey item category	Population size of cities	Number of prices collected
Item (a)	Cities with a population of 150,000 or more	4
	Cities with a population of less than 150,000	2
Item (b)	Cities with a population of 150,000 or more	3
	Cities with a population of 150,000 or more	1

9 Survey dates

The survey is conducted on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday of the week that contains the 12th day of each odd month.

10 Survey method

Before conducting the survey, enumerators have received, from the Statistics Bureau, various up-to-date information needed for the survey to be conducted in the month, such as survey items and specifications information, via their price collection devices.

Enumerators visit the stores to be surveyed in the area in their charge to collect data such as retail prices of the survey items by interviews with the reporters of each store, and enter the data into their devices. As described above, in the retail price survey, the enumerators use price collection devices, so the online response rate is 100%.

After the enumerators finish entering all the data including prices in the area in their charge, they send the collected data to the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications on an appointed day.

All data sent are reviewed by the Statistics Bureau and prefectures.

11 Prices surveyed

In principle, prices to be collected for the survey are normal retail prices for products sold to consumers at the stores surveyed. In terms of the purpose of the survey that aims to check the representative price of each item, bargain basement prices offered in a short period time (less than eight days) and for an inventory-clearance sale are not collected.

12 Publication of survey results

The survey results are compiled by the Statistics Bureau, and are released in principle by June in the year following the survey year. (The aggregated results for the base year (years ending with 0 or 5) of the consumer price index are released in principle around September in the year following the survey year.)

The results are published by Internet, the reports of "Annual Report on the Retail Price Survey (Structural Survey)", etc.