

# Global Adult Tobacco Survey

## Implementation During COVID-19 Pandemic



[The Global Adult Tobacco Survey \(GATS\)](#) follows a Comprehensive Standard Protocol for implementation. During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, GATS implementation is ongoing in countries worldwide. The purpose of this document is to provide recommendations for successful implementation of GATS during the COVID-19 pandemic. GATS partners understand that timelines might need to be modified throughout the process because of local COVID-19 epidemiology and COVID-19 related movement

restrictions.

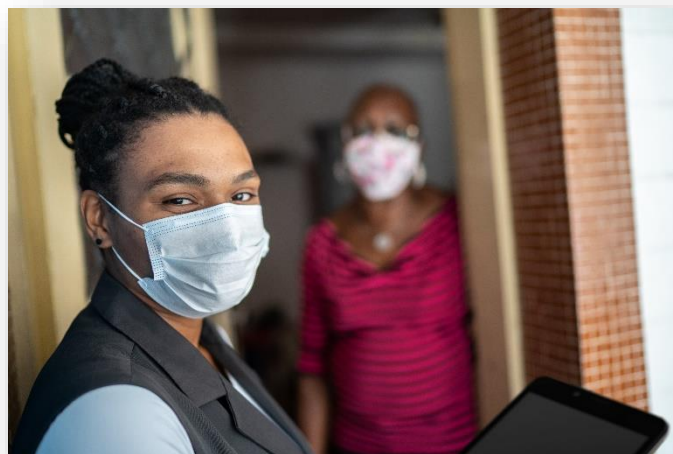
The spread of COVID-19 has brought a unique set of challenges to GATS data collection. GATS processes have been affected by the pandemic and, therefore, there is need to develop GATS safety procedures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission among all participants working to implement GATS, including supervisors, interviewers, and survey participants.

GATS COVID-19 safety procedures cover all stages of the GATS process, starting from engagement to data dissemination. The safety procedures will allow the implementation of [GATS Comprehensive Standard Protocol](#), taking into consideration prevention measures to protect partners, trainees, field teams, and respondents. The safety procedures also build on preventive measures instituted for countries that have implemented GATS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Overview of Safety Procedures

The overall goal of GATS safety procedure is in line with the principles outlined in the [Belmont Report on the Protection of Human Subjects of Research](#), thus ensuring the highest ethical standards consistent with the personal autonomy, beneficence to maximize benefit, non-maleficence to minimize harm, and fair distribution of benefits and burdens. In line with this, the safety procedure recommends:

- Putting in place COVID-19 safety measures for face-to-face meetings, workshops, and trainings, including assessment of vaccination status.
- Using movement control strategies to prevent secondary transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 in various public and community settings
- Optimizing the effectiveness of [masking](#) to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19
- Modifying timelines throughout the GATS process based on local epidemiology and COVID-19- related movement restrictions.
- Moving some of the face-to-face meetings, workshops, and trainings to a virtual format.



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and Prevention**  
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## GATS Engagement Mission:

For the safety of all participants, a GATS engagement mission will be conducted in a virtual format.

- Participants could also consider joining as a group—with approval from the Ministry of Health—using adequate COVID-19 prevention measures, such as [well-fitted masks](#), temperature checks, physical distancing, and being vaccinated to help prevent COVID-19 transmission.

## GATS Orientation:

For the safety of all participants, a GATS orientation will be conducted in a virtual format.

- Participants could also consider joining as a group with adequate COVID-19 prevention measures such as masking, temperature checks, physical distancing, and being vaccinated to help prevent COVID-19 transmission.

## GATS Questionnaire:

- Additional questions focused on tobacco use during the COVID-19 pandemic will be shared by CDC to consider including in GATS.
- COVID-19 screening questions for interviewees can be added to the beginning of the GATS questionnaire. If the interviewee has a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C), recent exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19, or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the interview should end, and the household can be revisited at a later date. Examples of these questions include:
  - What is the respondent's temperature?
  - Have you or someone in your household been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
  - Are you experiencing symptoms such as cough, fever, runny nose, loss of smell or taste, or chills?

## Information Technology (IT Training):

IT training will take longer in the virtual environment than in person because of the shorter sessions. IT team leads will create a country-specific timeline for IT training once the GATS proposal is approved. The timeline will vary based on the number of languages required.

- IT training can take between 4- to 6-weeks and will consist of 3- to 4-hour sessions each workday.
- IT training includes language review, GATS PC setup, transmission system configuration, General Survey System (GSS) overview, data management, case management system (CMS)/GSS/reporting, and training for IT lead to train field interviewers and supervisors.

## Pre-Test and Full Survey Training:

There are two options for pre-test training:

1. Country partners meet in person, and CDC, WHO, and RTI International (RTI) join remotely.
2. All participants join remotely.

For country participants meeting in person, it is recommended that:

- Each country should establish a protocol, including daily temperature checks and [COVID-19 symptom](#) screenings.
- Each participant be required to wear a [well-fitted mask](#) over their nose and mouth properly.
- The venue has adequate space for physical distancing (i.e., at least 6 feet [1.8 meters] of distance between two people).
- The agenda includes time for daily temperature and symptom screening and a clear protocol for an individual experiencing [COVID-19 related symptoms](#).
- Considerations are made regarding any local or regional travel restrictions.
- A reliable Internet connection and camera are available in the venue so CDC/RTI/WHO representatives can join remotely.

If a larger meeting space for accommodating physical distancing, thermometers, or masks are needed, please include this in the GATS budget proposal request.

If all participants join remotely, virtual breakout rooms can be used.

For either option, a 3- to 4-hour debrief will be conducted with all partners.

## Data Collection:

Each country should establish a protocol for GATS fieldwork. GATS Fieldworkers should undergo daily COVID-19 screening and temperature checks. PPE and temperature guns may be included in the GATS budget. Fieldworkers should immediately report COVID-19-related symptoms to supervisors.

- Any breaks in data collection should be reported to the CDC Focal Point and IT team as soon as possible.

## Analysis Workshop:

- Analysis workshop could be in person for country team observing the COVID-19 prevention protocol, while international partners can join virtually.
- Participants could also join as a group with adequate COVID-19 prevention measures such as using well-fitted masks temperature checks, physical distancing, and being vaccinated to help prevent COVID-19 transmission.

## GATS Release:

- Each country will develop GATS dissemination activities in line with COVID-19 prevention protocol, including limiting in-person attendance, temperature checks, and [COVID-19 symptom](#) screenings.

If you have questions regarding this document, please email [GTSSinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:GTSSinfo@cdc.gov)