1. **What is the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative?**

The Bloomberg PhilanthropiesData for Health Initiative aims to strengthen the collection and use of critical public health information. Working in selected low-and middle-income countries (LMICs), the three components of this initiative seek to: i) strengthen the quality of birth and death registration systems and improve information on cause of death; ii) explore innovative approaches to noncommunicable disease (NCD) surveillance, including the use of mobile phone surveys for NCDs; and iii) enhance the country’s capacity in using health data to inform policy development and priority setting. Through the support of the Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Australian Government, this initiative will partner with governments, international and national organizations, and public health leaders in 20 LMICs (<https://www.bloomberg.org/program/public-health/data-health/>).

1. **Who are the partners and their specific roles in the NCD Surveillance component?**

Partners for the NCD Surveillance component include participating countries’ ministries of health, as the lead implementing and coordinating agency, in collaboration with relevant ministries of information and technology, national statistical offices, and ministries of interior. Other national partners include telecommunication providers and regulators in participating countries.

International partners include the World Health Organization (WHO), responsible for WHO supported STEPS household surveys in collaboration with ministries of health country partners; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in collaboration with RTI International and Innovative Support for Emergencies Diseases and Disasters (InSTEDD), supports protocol and technology development and implementation for the mobile phone surveys; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH), leads the research agenda on use of mobile phones for NCD surveillance; and CDC Foundation (CDCF), provides resource and program support. All partners work in concert with the ministries of health and country partners.

1. **What is the NCD Surveillance component of the initiative?**

The NCD Surveillance component will determine the feasibility, quality, and validity of using nationally representative mobile phone surveys as an interim data collection method to supplement periodic national NCD household surveys. NCD mobile phone surveys using technology platforms such as interactive voice response technology (IVR), short message service (SMS), mobile web, or mixed modes for data collection will be implemented in 10 countries. A globally standardized protocol for using mobile phones will facilitate rapid data collection, and provide feedback and analysis on key findings to inform policy decisions and programs. In six of these countries, WHO will support ministries of health and other local partners to carry out independent household face-to-face WHO STEPS surveys. The estimates will be compared to those from the mobile surveys.

1. **What is the impact of the NCD mobile phone surveys?**

Mobile phone surveys may serve as a quick and inexpensive source of interim data on selected NCD risk factors and supplement national surveys such as the WHO supported STEPS.

1. **Why use mobile phones for surveillance?**

Household surveys have traditionally been used to gather population-level information on health and risk factors. However, household surveys are resource intensive and are usually recommended to be undertaken at least once every five years. As many countries are in the process of scaling up action on NCD prevention and control, interim data from mobile phone surveys can aid program planning and policy decisions.

Use of mobile phones is becoming widespread globally and can be leveraged to explore innovative survey methodologies to collect high quality data. Mobile phone surveys can offer several advantages compared to household surveys, as they are less expensive, can quickly collect data, and provide anonymity when responding.

1. **What topics will be addressed in the NCD mobile phone survey?**

The NCD mobile phone survey core questionnaire collects data on noncommunicable disease risk factors, including questions on tobacco use, alcohol use, diet, blood pressure, diabetes, and demographic characteristics. Countries can adapt the core questions to their context, and include additional questions and modules from a supplemental question database.

1. **What are the steps for implementing the NCD mobile phone survey?**

The implementation process consists of five stages: i) engagement and orientation; ii) mobile phone technology planning and pretest; iii) data collection; iv) data management and analysis; and v) data release and use.

1. **How will data be collected using mobile phones?**

Data will be collected using a web-based technology platform via modes such as SMS, IVR, and mobile web. The platform will have a simple, easy-to-use interface that allows countries to design and implement mobile phone surveys. It is built on open source technology so that the source code will be free and available to the public.

1. **Will the data from the NCD mobile phone survey be nationally representative?**

The sample design will aim to produce nationally representative estimates of adults 18 years of age and older. The NCD mobile phone survey will use a country’s census data to adjust the sample to reflect the population’s age and sex characteristics.

1. **How is the data obtained from the survey secured?**

The data management server will be password protected, and all files will be encrypted and will not contain personally identifiable information (PII). Backups of the survey data can be performed on a regular basis either automatically or by survey staff to a secure storage source. Access to the survey platform will also be password protected, and users will be assigned roles to segregate their duties within the system. Refer to [www.ncdmobile.org](http://www.ncdmobile.org) for further details.

1. **Will the data be available after a country completes the NCD mobile phone survey?**

Open data is important to inform national, regional, and global NCD priorities. In addition, standardized datasets will facilitate cross-country comparisons and promote research. Countries are encouraged to make their data available in the public domain, with the exclusion of any confidential information. The country factsheet will be released within four months of data collection and public use datasets will be available in the subsequent two months, as permitted by in-country data release policies.

1. **Are the survey implementation materials and technical tools publicly accessible?**

The online portal, available in a public domain, features a searchable repository for NCD Mobile Phone Survey manuals, instructional videos, and other support tools. A collaborative forum, Knowledge Base, is also featured on the NCD Mobile Phone Survey website ([www.ncdmobile.org](http://www.ncdmobile.org/)) to share user experiences, work with other users and experts and discuss general issues related to survey implementation.

Technical assistance for NCD mobile phone surveys is available from CDC, in collaboration with RTI International and InSTEDD. Additionally, manuals, guidance videos and other resources will be available to support country implementation.